



**Syntactic passive structures in
Old Turkic**

The aim of the presentation

In Old Turkic and in some modern languages (Tuvan, Tofa, Shor, Altay Turkic, Khakas, Yakut, Karakalpak, Kazakh) the passive structure is marked with a causative morpheme.



- How this structure was formed
- Possible motivation for this formation

An example

(1) *süčig sav-ï-ŋa yimšaq aği-sï-ŋa ar-tur-up üküš*
türk bodun öl-tü-g (KT S6)

sweet word-POSS.SG.3-DAT soft material-
POSS.SG.3-DAT deceive-CAUS-CV many Türk people
die-PAST-SG.2.

‘Having **been taken in** by their sweet words and
soft materials, you Turkish people, were killed in
great numbers.’

(Source of the transcription: Berta 2004: 129; Source of the translation: Tekin 1968: 262)

Main contributions to the topic

- Röhrborn, K. (1972): Kausativ und Passiv im Uigurischen. *Central Asiatic Journal* Vol. 16. 70-77.
- Johanson, L. (1974): Zur Syntax der Altürkischen Kausativa. *Zeitschrift der Deutschen Morgenländischen Gesellschaft* Supplement 2. 529-537.
- Erdal, M. (1991): *Old Turkic word formation. A functional approach to the lexicon*. Leiden – Boston.
- Robbeets, M. (2007): The causative-passive in the Trans-Eurasian languages. *Turkic Languages* Vol. 11. 158-201.

- Johanson 1974: „transcendence” → the first actant can be the initiator and the goal of an action
- Erdal 1991: the Old Turkic causative seems to be reversive
- Robbeets 2007: the Turkic $-(X)t-$ morpheme is causative and passive at the same time

Corpus

- *Köli Čor, Toñuquq, Köl Tegin, Bilgä Qağan*
Inscriptions
- *Chuastuanift*
- *Le Coq: Türkische Manichaica aus Chotscho*
- *Ač Bars*
- *Kalyāṇamkara and Pāpamkara*
- *Clauson: An etymological dictionary of pre-thirteenth-century Turkish*
- Röhrborn 1972
- Erdal 1991

Voice morphemes in different diathetic structures

- Proto-Indo-European * *s(w)e-* reflexive pronoun



- German *sich* pronoun: reflexive, anticausative and middle

(2) *Vor der Kasse hatte sich eine Schlange gebildet.*

‘A queue developed in front of the cash desk.’

- Russian the *-sya* morpheme: reflexive, anticausative, middle and passive

(3) *Эта задача решается нами.*

‘This problem is solved by us.’



In German and Russian the originally reflexive marking is used in the middle and passive clauses as well.

Causative in Old Turkic

- Old Turkic causative morphemes

-(U)r-

-Ar-

-gUr-

-(X)z-

added (mostly) to intransitive stems

-(X)t-

-tUr-

could be added to transitive stems as well

Base sentence (intr.)	Causative sentence	Marking in the causative sentence
	Causer (Subject)	Nominative
Subject	Causee (Direct object)	Accusative

Base sentence (tr.)	Causative sentence	Marking in the causative sentence
	Causer (Subject)	Nominative
Subject	Causee (Indirect object)	Dative
Direct object	Direct object	Accusative

(Cf. e.g. Comrie 1989)

(4) *ol maṇa aš aša-t-ti* (Kašy. I 210)

(s)he I.DAT food(-ACC) eat-CAUS-PAST(SG.3)

‘(S)he made me eat food./ (S)he fed me.’

The formation of the passive (3 criteria)

1) **Base verb** must be **transitive**

- The morphemes $-(U)r-$, $-Ar-$, $-gUr-$, $-(X)z-$ cannot be added to transitive stems



- The passive can only occur with the morphemes $-(X)t-$, $-tUr-$ in Old Turkic

- In Tofa the passive can emerge besides the morpheme *-GXs-* as well.

(5) *men a't-ka ka-as-ti-m*

I horse-DAT toss off-CAUS-PAST-SG.1

‘I was tossed off by the horse.’

Source of the example: Rassadin 1978: 137-138



The view that the Turkic passive structures marked with causative morpheme are peculiar to a given morpheme (e.g. $-(X)t-$ in Old Turkic) can be rejected.

The evolvment of these passive structures is in connection with the syntactic structure of the causative and not with one morpheme.

2) The **causer** (subject of the causative clause) and the **direct object** must be **coreferent**

(6) *anig qilinč-ga 'irinčü-kä kántü öz-ümüz-ni ämgä-t-ir-biz* (T II D 178 VI)

evil deed-DAT sin-DAT own self-POSS.PL.1-ACC suffer-CAUS-PRAS-PL.1

‘we make ourself suffer pain with evil deed(s) (and) sin(s) ’



The direct object can be ellipted.

Ellipsis of the direct object in Old Turkic

- The ellipsis of the **direct object coreferent with the subject** of the clause is a known phenomenon in Old Turkic. (cf. Röhrborn 2001)

tizlärin čökit- ‘move down their knee, kneel’

čökit- ‘kneel’ (instead of ‘move down (tr.)’)

ätözin täprät- ‘move themselves’

täprät- ‘move themselves’ (instead of ‘move (tr.)’)

3) The **direct object** must be **ellipted**.



The passive appears.

(7) *ač ämgäk-kä* *ägir-t-ip, änük-in ye-gäli qil-miš-in.*

(Suv. S. 607 Z. 8ff)

hunger pain-DAT surround-CAUS-CV / kölyök-POSS.SG.3.ACC
eat-CV do-PART-INST

‘She was possessed by hunger and pain, so she almost ate
her whelp(s) [...]’

Indirect object

No direct object

Ambiguity

yaği-qa yaliñ tąg näj-inj al-ma-su uzat-sa bas-üt-ti-ŋ (KB 2369)

enemy-DAT naked attack(IMP.SG.2) property-POSS.SG.2 take-NEG-IMP.SG.3
[make longer]-COND **crush-CAUS-PAST-SG.2**

‘attack the enemy, do not let him take your property, if you procrastinate,
you will (have let yourself) be beaten’

‘you’ (‘yourself’) (‘**the enemy**’-DAT) *basit-*

Agent

→ Causative

‘you will have let yourself be beaten’

‘**you**’ (~~‘yourself’~~) (‘**the enemy**’-DAT) *basit-*

Patient

→ **Passive**

‘you will be beaten’

deponed subject of the base sentence

Avoiding ambiguity

- The base verb expresses a **violent action**

bas-īt- ‘suppress-caus’, (*bas-īn-dur-* ‘suppress-refl-caus’), *ar-tur-* ‘deceive-caus’, *ar-tīz-* (?) ‘deceive-caus’, *ägir-t-* ‘surround-caus’, *qavza-t-* ‘surround-caus’, *qov-īt-* ‘chase-caus’, *öl-ür-t-* ‘die-caus-caus’ *sanč-īt-* ‘stab-caus’, *siñir-t-* (?) ‘swallow-caus’, *soq-tur-* ‘hit-caus’, *toq-īt-* ‘hit-caus’, *yayī-t-* ‘shake-caus’.

(9) *sü-dä är-sär sanč-üt-ur* (TT I 67)

campain-LOC be-COND pierce-CAUS-PRAS(SG.3)

[if this omen comes to anyone] ‘if (s)he is on a campaign (s)he will be routed’

Clauson 1972: 836: [if this omen comes to anyone] ‘if he is on a campaign he lets himself be routed’

- The base verb expresses **affection** or **respect**

ağirla-t- ‘respect-caus’, *alqa-t-* ‘praise-caus’, *aya-t-* ‘respect-caus’, *ög₁-üt-* ‘praise-caus’, *säv-it-* ‘love-caus’, *tapla-t-* ‘be satisfied-caus’.

(10) *ög-üt-miš alqa-t-miš č(ä)r(i)k türk uluš* [...] (T. II D. 171)

praise-CAUS-PART praise-CAUS-PART combative(?) Türk
country

‘the praised (Hend.) and combative (?) Türk country ’

- The case of *tet-*

(11) *ol közsüz kişi ayig bilgä te-t-ir* (KP 74,5-6)

that blind man very wise say-CAUS-PRAS(SG.3)

‘That blind man is said to be very wise’

- The subject of the base sentence („causee”) is a phenomenon or entity over which the causer has no authority.
- The subject of the sentence („causer”) is inanimate
- Morpheme *-tXl-* ~ *-(X)tXl-*, *-tUrXl-* (cf. Erdal 1991: 694-700)

No syntactic passive in Old Turkic?

- Syntactic passive:

- Chomsky 1981: the passive absorbs the external thematic role

The policeman arrested the criminal.



External thematic role (Agent)

Patient

The criminal was arrested.



Patient

(No external thematic role)

- Baker 1988: the external thematic role is assigned to the passive marker

The criminal was arrested.



Patient

External thematic role

The „absorbed” agent can:

- be antecedent of anaphoras

Such a privilege cannot be kept to **oneself**.

- control *pros*

The bureaucrat was bribed [**pro** to gain privilege.]

- be the subject of adjunct predicates

Such petitions should be presented **kneeling**.

- appear in the passive clauses (marked with *by* (in English))

- Adjectival passive

The external thematic role is eliminated.

The „absorbed” agent **cannot**:

- be antecedent of anaphoras

 - *Boats should remain unsunk for **oneself**.

- control *pros*

 - ?*The book remained unsold [**pro** to make money].

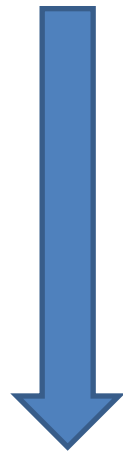
- be the subject of adjunct predicates

 - ?? This game remains unplayed barefoot.

- appear in the passive clauses

(Source of the examples: Baker 1988: 319)

- Kornfilt 1991, Kornfilt 2008 gives arguments against the structures marked with $-(X)l-$ (and its allomorph $-(X)n-$) being syntactic passives in the early Old Turkic texts.



One of her arguments is:
(cf. Erdal 1991: 691-693)

- The Agent is never present in these clauses.

(12) *yariš yazı-da ter-il-älim te-miš* (T N9)

Yariš plain-LOC assemble-PASS-OPT.PL.1 say-
REP.PAST(SG/PL.3)

‘They apparently said: ‘Let us gather together on the Yariš plain.’”

(13) *tavgač bodun birlä tüz-ül-dü-m* (KT S4-5)

Chinese people together [put in order]-PASS-PAST-
SG.1

‘I came to an amicable agreement with the Chinese people.’

Source of the transcription: Berta 2004: 62, 127-128;

Source of the translation Tekin 1968: 287, 261.

- **No Agent** in the $-(X)l-$ (and $-(X)n-$) marked clauses in the early Old Turkic



- The $-(X)l-$ (and $-(X)n-$) marked clauses are **not syntactic passive** in the early Old Turkic

- The **Agent can be present** in the passive clauses marked with the causative morphemes



- The causative-marked passive clauses are **syntactic passive**

Hypothesis

The formation of the passive from the causative clauses was motivated by the fact that in early Old Turkic there was no way to express the agent in the passive-like sentences. In the causative-marked passive clauses, however, the agent can be present.

Summary

- The formation of the passive from causative clauses is due to a usual linguistic process.
- This formation can only happen in a strictly determined *syntactic* environment, so the formation of the passive has no relation with only one particular morpheme.
- This formation may have been motivated by the fact that there was no syntactic passive in early Old Turkic.

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