Evidence of a reflexive cycle across Selkup dialects

While the most widely known example of a linguistic cycle is Jespersen's cycle of negation in French (*ne... pas*), cyclical change as a phenomenon has since been observed for various items in many languages of the world (see, e.g, van Gelderen 2009, van Gelderen 2016). This talk puts forward the idea that the diachronic dialectal differences in the Selkup reflexive pronoun forms reflect such a change in the past.

Following the definition of a reflexive construction in [Haspelmath 2023], we may call a construction reflexive when two argument positions of a clause require coreference and a special form that signals the coreference is present. In case of Selkup, that form is the reflexive (and intensifying) pronoun *on*- that displays considerable variation between lects.

So, for Northern (Taz) Selkup [Kuznetsova 1980] mentions three following possibilities to use a reflexive pronoun in a sentence:

(a) ima **onti-qin-ti** n'en'n'a-mɔ:s-si
woman oneself.3SG-LOC-3SG get.angry-DRV-PST.[3SG.S]
"The woman got angry with herself." [Kuznetsova 1980:292]

(b) **onäk-qoša-qäk** n'en'n'a-mɔ:s-sa-k oneself.1SG-LOC-1SG get.angry-DRV-PST-1SG.S "I got angry with myself." [Kuznetsova 1980:291]

(c) ima **onti pi:ro:-qin-ti** n'en'n'a-mɔ:s-si woman oneself.3SG height-LOC-3SG get.angry-DRV-PST.[3SG.S] "The woman got angry with her own height." (= with herself) [Kuznetsova 1980:292]

In (a), the 3SG form of the pronoun *on*- is treated as a stem morpheme that accrues the relevant case, person, and number values using the possessive declension. In (b), a second stem *qoš*- appears; the lexical meaning of *qoš*- is unclear. In (c), a different stem, *pi:r*-, meaning "height", is used in the same manner. Kuznetsova notes no difference in meaning between these three forms.

Using the corpus data (SLC - Budzisch et al. 2019; INEL Selkup Corpus - Brykina et al. 2021) as well as fragmentary grammatical sketches of Southern Selkup lects in (Bykonya 2005), one may summarize the distribution of reflexive pronoun forms as follows:

	ACC	OBL (DAT, LOC, ALL)
Ket Selkup	on- + si(ja) + ACC.poss	on- + OBL
Northern (Taz) Selkup	on- + qoš- + TRSL.poss	on- + OBL.poss on- + qoš- + OBL.poss on- + pi:r- + OBL.poss
Central Selkup	on- + pi:r- + ACC.poss	on- + OBL.poss on- + pi:r- + OBL.poss
Southern (Chaya) Selkup	on- + pi:r- + ACC.poss pi:r- + ACC.poss	pi:r- + OBL.poss

Southern (Middle Ob) Selkup	pi:r- + ACC.poss	on- + OBL.poss
		on- + pi:r- + OBL.poss

One way to analyze these data is to view the rise of *pi:r*-based forms as an example of a Jespersen's cycle, with different Selkup lects displaying different stages of the process. Based on the fact that the pronoun *on*- performs the double duty as a reflexive and an intensifier, we argue that, at first, a complex form with a second stem appeared in order to differentiate between a strictly reflexive and an intensified reflexive uses of the pronoun; later, some speakers reanalyzed the double construction and grammaticalized *pi:r*- to a new reflexive — that is, the change follows the outline of a classical Jespersen's cycle. Additional evidence in favor of such an interpretation may be found in Chaya Selkup materials, where *on*- *pi:r*- forms of the reflexive were used only in early 20th century texts, and by mid-century gave way to *pi:r*- forms. As one may see on the table above, there is a difference between accusative and oblique forms of the reflexive: the cycle leading to the grammaticalization of *pi:r*- diachronically produces different results for these case forms so that it would be more correct to view them as two separate sub-cycles.

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