

## Negation, Adverbial Clitics and the Insertion of a Dummy Copula:

Arguments for postsyntactic verb cluster formation in Mari and Udmurt

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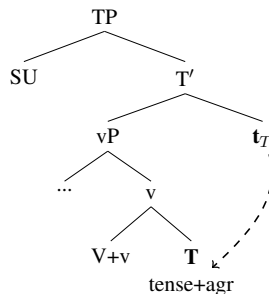
**Claims:** In this talk, we investigate the properties of negated verb clusters in the Finno-Ugric languages Udmurt and Mari. We argue that: (i) these verb clusters are not formed via syntactic head-movement but via the postsyntactic lowering operation; (ii) verb cluster formation is triggered by the requirement of negation to appear in a local relation with the verb.

**Background:** Negation in Mari and Udmurt is expressed by a negative verb (Saarinen 2015; Edygarova 2015) which we analyse as a (syntactic) proclitic to the highest verb. This is supported by the fact that nothing can intervene between negation and the connegative verb (CN). As a result of negation procliticizing, other affixes such as tense, agreement (cf. (1)–(2)), desiderative (3) that usually suffix to the verb, precede the verb as well.

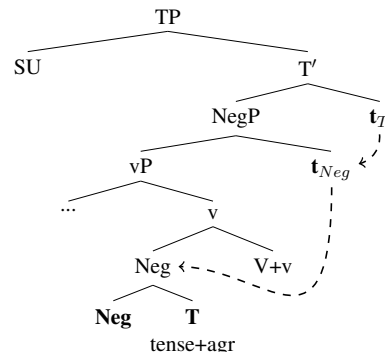
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|---|---|---|
| (1) pur-eš-na<br>go-PAST-1PL<br>'we went' | (2) ê-š-na puro<br>NEG-PAST-1PL go.CN<br>'we didn't go' | (3) ê-ne-na puro<br>NEG-DESID-1PL go.CN<br>'we don't want to go' <span style="float: right;"><i>Mari</i></span> |
|---|---|---|

**Analysis:** We argue that the unusual behavior of the affixes in (1)–(3) arises as a result of the postsyntactic complex head formation process. Since the negation determines the form of the highest verb and obligatorily takes semantic scope over it, it is plausible to assume that negation is a functional head generated high in the clause. Further, higher functional heads such as T, Neg, Desid, etc. lower to *v* in order to fulfill their morphosyntactic requirement to form a complex word with *v* (cf. Embick & Noyer 2001 for English). If the complex head that lowers includes negation, which is explicitly specified as a proclitic, then the whole complex head must left-adjoin to *v* to satisfy Neg's requirement (4). Otherwise the lowering head right-adjoins to *v* following the default direction for the otherwise strictly suffixing languages (5). We provide evidence that a top-down Lowering approach is to be preferred over a bottom-up head-movement approach.

(4)



(5)



**Further Arguments:** We provide two pieces of evidence in favour of the postsyntactic approach, namely, clitic placement in Udmurt and constituent negation in Mari.

① Udmurt allows for certain adverbial clitics such as *ni* 'already, anymore' or *na* 'still, yet' to be interleaved in the cluster (Arkhangelskiy 2014). In affirmative contexts, the clitic is typically the final element in the cluster (6). In negative contexts, the clitic can either occur at the end of the cluster or between the negation and the verb (7).

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| (6) Ta piči pijaš lǝdžǝ(íšk)ǝ-nǝ bǝgate= <b>ni</b> .<br>this little boy read-INF can.PRS.3SG=CL<br>'This little boy can already read.' | (7) Ta pešanaj ug(= <b>ni</b> ) kǝrdža(= <b>ni</b> ).<br>this grandma NEG.PRS.3=CL sing.CN.SG=CL<br>'This grandma does not sing anymore.' <span style="float: right;"><i>Udmurt</i></span> |
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The lowering approach can derive the optionality in (7) by assuming that the clitics are ambiguously heads or phrases and Lowering therefore either picks them up on its way to *v* or skips them leading to cluster-final position of the clitic. We will show that such a solution is not possible in a head-movement account.

② Further evidence for the postsyntactic analysis comes from phenomena where the morphological requirement of the negation to form a complex head with *v* is not satisfied by inversion with the lexical verb but where instead a form of the copula follows the negation. One case is constituent negation in Mari (8).

- (8) Təj [ʃaxmat dene o-g-ə], a [šaške dene] mod-ən-at  
2SG chess with NEG-3SG-BE, but checkers with play-GER-2SG  
'You played not chess but checkers.'

*Mari*

In (8), a PP is negated, and the copula has no semantic or syntactic features. We propose that the semantically vacuous dummy-copula is inserted at PF a to fulfill Neg's requirement to form a complex head with *v*. Thus, the copula insertion is as a repair to remedy Neg's requirement to be in a local relation with *v* in cases where lowering is impossible.

## References

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