

Two types of optionality in Mari and Udmurt verb clusters

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We investigate two instances of optionality in the syntax of verb clusters in the two Finno-Ugric languages Mari and Udmurt. We argue that one of these is a genuine instance of an optional syntactic operation (namely extraposition), the other arises as an indeterminacy of rule ordering. The verb cluster forming operation can either precede or follow cliticization leading to different results (Embick & Noyer 2001, Arregi & Nevins 2012).

Data: Negative verb clusters in the two Finno-Ugric languages Mari and Udmurt make use of a negative auxiliary verb, which governs a special form of the highest verb in the clause (referred to as the connegative form) (see Edygarova 2015, Saarinen 2015). In unmarked orders, the negative verb, which also takes semantic wide scope, occurs in the second-to-last position. In 3-verb-clusters, the unmarked order is thus [312] (with 1 being the negative verb)(cf. (1)). Alternatively, [123]-orders are acceptable (cf (2)).

(1) Mari

a.	<i>Tud-əm uʒ-ən</i>	<i>o-m</i>	<i>kert.</i>
	3SG-ACC see-INF	NEG-1SG	can.CN
b.	<i>Tud-əm o-m</i>	<i>kert</i>	<i>uʒ-ən</i>
	3SG-ACC NEG-1SG	can.CN	see-INF

‘I cannot see him.’

We show that the negative verb and the verb in the connegative form an indivisible unit, whereas the embedding verb *kert* (can) in (1) and (2) can be separated from the verb it embeds.

The second instance of optionality arises with adverbial clitics that can be interleaved in various positions in the cluster (Archangelskiy 2014). While affirmative verb clusters only allow the attachment after the highest verb, negative verb clusters allow for more options:

(2) Udmurt:

a.	<i>Ta pešanaj</i>	<i>kyrdža-ny</i>	<i>ug=ni</i>	<i>bygaty.</i>
	this grandma	sing-INF	NEG.3=anymore	can
b.	<i>Ta pešanaj</i>	<i>kyrdža-ny</i>	<i>ug</i>	<i>bygaty=ni.</i>
	this grandma	sing-INF	NEG.3	can=anymore

‘This grandma cannot sing anymore.’

References: • Archangelskiy, T. 2014. Clitics in the Beserman dialect of Udmurt. *Linguistics*, WP BRP 10/LNG/2014. • Arregi, K. & A. Nevins. 2012. *Morphotactics*. Dordrecht: Springer • Edygarova, S. 2015. Negation in Udmurt. In M. Miestamo et al. (eds.), *Negation in Uralic languages*, 265–292. Amsterdam: Benjamins. • Embick, D. & R. Noyer. 2001. Movement operations after syntax. *Linguistic Inquiry* 32(4). 555–595 • Saarinen. 2015. Negation in Mari. In M. Miestamo et al. (eds.), *Negation in Uralic languages*, 325–352. Amsterdam: Benjamins.