

EKATERINA GEORGIEVA

**Non-finite adverbial clauses in  
Udmurt**

PhD dissertation summary

Supervisors:

DR. ZSUZSANNA GÉCSEG

DR. ISTVÁN KOZMÁCS

University of Szeged  
Graduate School in Linguistics  
Uralic Studies Programme  
Szeged, 2018.

## **1. Introduction**

This dissertation deals with non-finite adverbial subordinate clauses in Udmurt (Uralic; Permian). My goal is two-fold: firstly, to provide a description of the various non-finite adverbial clauses in Udmurt with special reference to their morphosyntax and syntax. Secondly, I aim at analyzing the Udmurt data using the tools of generative grammar.

The detailed description is needed since Udmurt is an endangered and understudied language from a syntactic point of view. Thus, the in-depth description of non-finite adverbial clauses makes an important step towards the syntactic analysis of the Udmurt language. Non-finite adverbial clauses have received much less attention in comparison to relative and argument clauses in recent studies on Udmurt (cf. Serdobolskaya et al. 2012; Brykina & Aralova 2012; Klumpp 2016; Dékány & Tánzos 2015, 2017). So far the only existing monograph dealing exclusively with non-finite adverbial clauses is Perevoshchikov (1959). This dissertation is meant to overcome this void on both a descriptive and a theoretical level. I aim at laying out some foundations based on which more detailed theoretical accounts can be built in the future.

In this dissertation I use a large amount of data collected during four fieldwork trips in Udmurtia between 2013 and 2016. The fieldwork methodology used in this dissertation relies on a mix of techniques, such as semi-structured interviews and elicitation tasks. The elicited examples are particularly important since they provide information about ungrammatical patterns. Furthermore, I also use corpus data based on the Udmurt Corpus, Udmurt Social Media Corpus and Turku–Izhevsk Corpus in order to provide information about frequency of certain non-finite clauses and/or morphosyntactic patterns.

The dissertation has six chapters. After the introduction in Chapter 1, Chapter 2 provides general background about the Udmurt language: the genetic affiliation, sociolinguistic situation, language varieties, writing system, the transliteration systems, resources and basic

grammar with special reference to morphology and syntax. Chapter 3, 4 and 5 contain the main research questions investigated in this work. Chapter 3 presents a general description of non-finite clauses in Udmurt, with special reference to adverbial clauses. This chapter is written in a (fairly) theory-neutral framework. I take into account the main advances of the typological literature, specifically, I make use of the typological classification of adverbial clausal relations proposed by Kortmann (1996). In Chapter 4 and 5, I take a closer look at several syntactic phenomena related to non-finite adverbial clauses. The tools used in these two chapters come from the Chomskyan generative grammar. Chapter 6 sums up the thesis. Below I summarize the main results presented in Chapter 3–5.

## **2. Non-finite clauses in Udmurt (Chapter 3)**

Chapter 3 provided a detailed description of non-finite clauses in Udmurt. The following questions were addressed:

- (i) the notion of finiteness, and the criteria for distinguishing finite and non-finite clauses in Udmurt;
- (ii) the classification of Udmurt non-finite verbs, with special reference to nominalizations;
- (iii) non-finite relative, argument and adverbial clauses.

### **2.1 (Non-)finiteness in Udmurt**

The traditional approach to finiteness implies that finiteness is a property of the verb. This is the standpoint advocated in traditional grammars of Udmurt as well. In the typological literature, finiteness is viewed as a scalar concept, determined by a cluster of parameters. These include the loss of verbal properties (such as TAM and agreement morphology) and presence of nominal properties (case-marking, use of determiners, reduced argument structure, etc.). In generative syntax, the notion of finiteness has been viewed as crucial for the licensing of nominative case on the subject (Chomsky 1981). In recent publications, finiteness is viewed as a sentential property

(Bianchi 2003; Adger 2007). Moreover, it has been proposed that finiteness is associated with the complementizer domain (and not the inflectional domain).

In unison with recent theoretical studies on finiteness, I proposed that finiteness is a clausal property in Udmurt. It was shown that Udmurt non-finite and finite clauses differ in a number of morphosyntactic and syntactic properties. These include: tense morphology, obligatory agreement, the case-marking of the subject, negation (with negative verb), word order, question formation, use of modal particles/clitics. Thus, it seems that non-finite clauses differ from finite clauses with respect to the inflectional domain, as well as of the complementizer domain.

## **2.2 The classification of non-finite verb forms**

Traditionally, non-finite verb forms in Udmurt have been divided into three main types: participles, converbs and the infinitive (GSUJa I 1962; Winkler 2001; Bartens 2000; Kelmakov & Hännikäinen 1999). In this dissertation, I depart from this traditional classification at several points. Firstly, I propose is that the *-m*-non-finites and the *-n*-non-finites should be included in order to complete the classification of Udmurt non-finite verb forms. These two suffixes are usually discussed in the chapters on derivational morphology, together with other deverbal nominalizers (GSUJa I 1962). However, they crucially differ from all other deverbal nominalizers since they have clausal properties.

I took a closer look at the two nominalizations, formed with the suffixes *-(e)m* and *-(o)n*, and refined several claims made in previous studies regarding their temporal meaning, argument structure, and syntactic distribution. For instance, I claimed that both nominalizers can be used to form ‘event’ and ‘non-event’ nominalizations, and only the latter can be pluralized. I also showed that *-(e)m*-nominalizations have a perfect/anterior meaning, while *-(o)n*-nominalizations have a prospective meaning, thus, the temporal differences between them are

aspectual. As for their syntactic distribution, both nominalizations can be used as in relative (1), argument (2) and adverbial clauses (3).

(1) Relative clause

[*Peťa-len tue mertt-em*] *pispu-ez*  
Petya-GEN this.year plant-NMLZ tree-3SG  
'the tree planted by Petya this year'

(2) Argument clause

[*Djšetiš-leš urok-ez pjr-poć valekt-em-ze*]  
teacher-ABL lesson-ACC in.detail explain-NMLZ-3SG.ACC  
'[I know] that teacher explained the lesson in detail.'

(3) Adverbial clause<sup>1</sup>

[*eke-mj kematek skripka-ze kutj-le-mte-ištj-z*]  
son-1PL long.time violin-3SG.ACC touch-FREQ-NMLZ.NEG-ELA-3SG  
'because our son hasn't/doesn't touch his violin for a long time'

One possible approach to (1)–(3) is to distinguish between homonymous 'participles', 'deverbal nouns' and 'converbs', respectively. I argued against this approach, and suggested that the division between clause types, i.e. relative, argument and adverbial clauses, proves to be more accurate than the division between participles, converbs and nominalizations. Furthermore, I proposed that the morphosyntactic and syntactic differences are to be explained with the structure of the three different clause types.

### 2.3 Non-finite relative, argument and adverbial clauses

I took a closer look at the three major clause types: relative, argument and adverbial clauses. Although the discussion of relative and argument clauses was rather brief, it provided background for comparison between relative and argument clauses, on the one hand, and adverbial clauses, on the other, in terms of their morphosyntactic

---

<sup>1</sup> The example comes from the Udmurt Corpus (Удмурт дунне 2008.05.06).

properties. These include the case-marking of the subject and agreement.

With respect to relative clauses, I pointed out that the existing studies make very different claims about the possible morphosyntactic patterns in non-subject relative clauses, thus, the questions regarding non-finite relative clauses are far from settled in the literature. According to one of the patterns, the subject of the relative clause bears genitive case and agreement is marked on the head noun (this pattern poses problems in terms of locality) (1). As for argument clauses, they seem to be nominalized, in other words, they look like possessive constructions: their subject is genitive/ablative and there is agreement on the non-finite verb (2) (Dékány & Tánzos 2017; Georgieva & Ótott-Kovács 2016; Serdobolskaya et al. 2012).

Before turning to non-finite adverbial clauses in Udmurt, I provided an overview of adverbial clauses from cross-linguistic perspective, based on Kortmann (1996), Givón (2001), Hetterle (2015) and Thompson et al. (2007). Additionally, the main properties of converbs were discussed.

Non-finite adverbial clauses in Udmurt are formed with the two nominalizations when they are selected by semantic cases and postpositions, as in (3), as well as with converbs. With respect to their morphosyntax, it was shown that the most common pattern in non-finite adverbial clauses with independent subjects is when the subject bears nominative case and there is no agreement. However, other patterns are also attested: ‘nominative subject and agreement’ or ‘genitive subject and agreement’.

The detailed description of adverbial clauses revealed several features of theirs, previously unrecognized in the existing literature, both with respect to their functions and morphosyntactic properties. For instance, I showed that the *-(e)men*-clauses used as subcategorized adverbials preferred the nominalized pattern (i.e. their subject is genitive), whereas that the *-(e)men*-clauses used as cause/reason adjunct have nominative subjects. I discussed one curious and

previously undescribed case: *-(o)nja*-clauses. I showed that these temporal clauses imply that the event described by the adjunct clause not only happens simultaneously with the event denoted by the matrix clause, but it is also required that the two events happen at the same place, thus, a spatial mismatch is excluded. This observation was made for the *-(o)nja*-clauses in the Middle Cheptsá dialect, and similar facts have been presented for the Beserman Udmurt *-(o)ñhiga*-clauses (Usachova & Serdobolskaya 2015). The discussion of *-(o)nja*-clauses also touched upon the status of the so-called ‘adverbial case’, for which I argued that there is compelling evidence to analyze it as (an allomorph of) the inessive/illative marker (at least when used in certain non-finite clauses).

### **3. The internal structure of Udmurt non-finite adverbial clauses (Chapter 4)**

In this chapter, I addressed on two questions regarding adverbial non-finite clauses in Udmurt. Firstly, I raised the question of how many converbs are to be distinguished in Udmurt. Then, I discussed the size of the extended verbal projection in these clauses.

With respect to the first question, I demonstrated that most adverbial clauses are syntactically postpositional phrases, i.e. non-finite clauses selected by a semantic case or postposition. Thus, I argued that number of converbs can be reduced to one (its marker is *-sa*).

It has been observed in the literature that non-finite clauses often lack certain clausal projections. The truncation analysis has been proposed for nominalizations, gerunds, infinitives and converbs (Kornfilt & Whitman 2011; Pires 2006; Wurmbrand 2001; Weisser 2015, a.o.). Thus, the main question was whether Udmurt non-finite adverbial clauses have a full-blown CP, and if not, at which clause level does truncation takes place. I demonstrated that we find solid evidence for the VP domain (based on arguments, various adverbials, causative constructions, low aspect morphology in these clauses), cf. (4).

(4)  
 [Peta pinal-jos-iz kniga lidži-tj-lj-ku]  
 Petya child-PL-ACC book[ACC] read-CAUS-FREQ-when  
 ‘when Petya made the children read a book (several times)’

With regard to the inflectional domain, one of the most interesting question was whether the presence of nominative subject suggest that its case is licensed by a T head. This is a very debated question in the generative literature, with two main proposals on the market: (i) nominative case is licensed structurally or (ii) nominative as a default/unmarked case. I argued that even if we do not adopt the structural approach to nominative case, an inflectional domain must be present. This is motivated with the temporal properties of adverbial clauses (which express relative tense, i.e. aspect) and the possibility of episodic interpretation. In the case of the proper converb *-sa*, I argued that it heads a VoiceP when used as a manner adverbial, while temporal *-sa*-clauses have an inflectional domain. I argued that we do not find convincing evidence for a CP layer in the Udmurt non-finite adverbial clauses, thus, I proposed that they are truncated at the TP level.

#### 4. Subjects, agreement and adjunct control (Chapter 5)

In this chapter I discussed several topics related to subjects of non-finite adverbial clause, such as subject agreement, the variation between null and overt subjects, and adjunct control.

I touched upon some problematic issues with respect to the agreement used in non-finite adverbial clauses. These included the abundance of morphosyntactic patterns in non-finite adverbial clauses formed with nominalizations, for which the existing theoretical approaches do not provide a satisfactory account, and the optionality of agreement in non-finite adverbial formed with non-finite forms traditionally called converbs.

Furthermore, I discussed the variation between null and overt subjects. I drew parallels with other languages in which similar



variation is found. The existing studies make very different proposals with respect to the nature of the null subjects in non-finite adverbial clauses and their interpretive properties. I argued that there is compelling evidence for analyzing the referential dependency between the null subject and its antecedent as a control structure and not as (accidental) coreference.

Null subjects of adverbial clauses were analysed in light of adjunct control. In the generative literature, two types of control structures are assumed: obligatory and non-obligatory control (Williams 1980). Adjunct control has been largely understudied in comparison to complement control (Hornstein 2001; Williams 1992; Kawasaki 1993; Landau 2013, 2017). Generally, it has been observed that the relevance of pragmatic factors plays a bigger role in adjunct control than in complement control.

Based on the well-established tests for distinguishing obligatory from non-obligatory control, I showed that null subjects of (certain) non-finite clauses show obligatory control. However, non-obligatory control is also found in Udmurt. Non-obligatory control into adjuncts is triggered by several factors, such as lack of (suitable) controller, logophoricity, experiencer thematic role and world knowledge. I argued that at least two of these factors should be present in order for non-obligatory control to obtain. Thus, the interpretation of the null subject is by no means free, but at the same time, the Udmurt data prove that a very restrictive analysis of adjunct control cannot be on the right track either since non-obligatory control into adjuncts is attested in a number of cases.

## Selected references

Adger, David. 2007. Three domains of finiteness: a minimalist perspective. In: Irina Nikolaeva (ed.), *Finiteness: theoretical and empirical foundations*, 23–58. Oxford & New York: OUP.

Brykina & Aralova 2012 = Брыкина, Мария М. & Н. В. Аралова 2012. Системы причастий в марийском и пермских языках. In: Кузнецова, Ариадна И. (отв. ред.), *Финно-угорские языки: Фрагменты грамматического описания. Формальный и функциональный подходы*, 476–521. Москва: Рукописные памятники Древней Руси.

Dékány, Éva & Orsolya Tánczos. 2017. The structure of the Udmurt past participle. Talk given at Budapest Linguistics Conference 2, Budapest.

GSUJa I 1962 = Перевошиков, П. Н. (отв. ред.). 1962. *Грамматика современного удмуртского языка. Фонетика и морфология*. Ижевск: Удмуртское книжное издательство.

Hetterle, Katja. 2015. *Adverbial Clauses in Cross-Linguistic Perspective*. Berlin & Boston: Mouton de Gruyter.

Hornstein, Norbert. 2001. *Move! A Minimalist Theory of Construal*. Oxford: Blackwell Publishing.

Kawasaki, Noriko. 1993. *Control and Arbitrary Interpretation in English*. UMASS: PhD Thesis.

Kornfilt, Jaklin & John Whitman. 2011. Introduction: Nominalizations in syntactic theory. *Lingua* 121: 1160–1163.

Kortmann, Bernd. 1996. *Adverbial Subordination: A Typology and History of Adverbial Subordinators Based on European Languages*. Berlin & Boston: Mouton de Gruyter.

Landau, Idan. 2013. *Control in generative grammar: a research companion*. Cambridge: CUP.

Perevoshchikov 1959 = Перевошиков, Петр Н. 1959. *Деепричастия и деепричастные конструкции в удмуртском языке*. Ижевск: Удмуртское книжное издательство.

Serdobolskaja et al. 2012 = Сердобольская, Н. В., Ильевская, А. А., Минор, С. А., Митева, П. С., Файнвейц, А. В., Матвеева, Н. С. 2012. Конструкции с сентенциальными актантами в финно-угорских языках. In: Кузнецова, Ариадна И. (отв. ред.), *Финно-угорские языки: Фрагменты грамматического описания. Формальный и функциональный подходы*, 382–476. Москва: Рукописные памятники Древней Руси.

Usacheva & Serdobolskaya 2015 = Усачева, Мария Н. & Наталья В. Сердобольская. 2015. Грамматикализация новой деепричастной формы на -оннига- в бесермянском удмуртском. In: Е. А. Лютикова, А. В. Циммерлинг, М. Б. Коношенко (ред.) *Типология морфосинтаксических параметров 2015*, 366–392. Москва: МГПУ.

Williams, Edwin. 1980. Predication. *Linguistic Inquiry* 11: 203–238.

Williams, Edwin. 1992. Adjunct Control. In: Richard Larson, Sabine Iatridou, Utpal Lahiri & James Higginbotham (eds.), *Control and Grammar*, 297–322. Dordrecht: Kluwer Academic Publishers.

Winkler, Eberhard. 2001. *Udmurt*. München & Newcastle: Lincom Europa.

## **Publications in the topic of the dissertation**

2017 Az 'ahelyett, hogy'-mellékmondatok az udmurt nyelvben. *FUD* 24: 15–38.

2017 Person agreement on converbs in Udmurt. In: Kiefer, F., Blevins, J., & Bartos, H. (eds.), *Perspectives on Morphological Organization: Data and Analyses*, 86–122. Leiden: Brill.

2017 A nem véges mellékmondatokról: a magyar -ván/-vén képzős határozói igeneves szerkezetek elemzése finnugor és törökségi nyelvek adatainak tükrében. In: Szécsényi T. & Németh T. E. (eds.), *STRATÉGIÁK ÉS STRUKTÚRÁK: Tanulmányok Kenesei István 70. születésnapjára*, 55–69. Szeged: JATEPress.

2016 The case-marking of subjects in Udmurt, Komi-Zyryan and Meadow Mari non-finite clauses. *NyK* 112: 77–107.

2016 Kitett alanyok az udmurt nem-finit mellékmondatokban. In: Gécseg Zs. (ed.), *LingDok Kötet 15*, 31–50. Szeged: JATEPress.