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Contrastive Analysis of Verbal Quasi-constructions in Uralic and Neighbouring Languages♦

Lauri Hakulinen has brought forth the concept of the *Finnish* verbal quasi-construction (Finnish *kvasirakenne*) and two of its semantic groups, e.g., 1) *Olin minä sitä tarkkaan hakevinani, mutta en vain löytänyt* 'It were as if I had been looking for it assiduously yet not finding it (i.e. I suppose I had been looking for it, to my mind I had assiduously been looking for it)', 2) *Sitä ei Matti ollut kuulevinaan ... katsoi ulos ikkunasta* 'Matti, pretending as if he had not heard it ... looked out of the window'. The first component of the construction is always the verb 'to be'. The second component of the construction is the verb in the plural essive of possessive declension of active present participle, e.g., *hake-vi-na-ni* = present participle plural of the verb *haeta* 'look for' (participle *hake-va* + plural marker *-i-* >) *hake-vi* + essive case ending *-na-* + singular 1st person possessive suffix *-ni*. In western dialects and Old Literary Finnish the participle may occur also in the singular and without possessive suffixes. (Hakulinen 1968: 469–470.) Such a quasi-construction expresses a pretended, imagined or probable action that one cannot be quite certain of (see e.g. Punttila 2001: 279–280). Finnish quasi-constructions have been highlighted in Taru Salminen's special monograph (Salminen 2000).

Owing to the notoriety and thorough research of Finnish linguistic matter we are going to proceed from Finnish research data because verbal quasi-constructions in Uralistics and in linguistics in general have been relatively superficially studied and therefore they are hard to specify. In

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this paper we are going to name *as if* (= Latin *quasi*) -verbal constructions *quasi-constructions* in which *as if* -action is not expressed (directly) by the verbs meaning ‘to pretend, simulate, feign’, but the action is expressed by other means with the exception of subordinate ‘as if’ clauses.

According to Hakulinen, other Finnic languages do not seem to have an equivalent to this Finnish construction. In other Finnic languages, overlapping with the Finnish construction under review, a few equivalents combined with verbs ‘to know’, ‘to hear’ and ‘to be’ + plural essive of possessive declension of present participle can be found in *Karelian*, e.g., *en_olluh tippo(sen) tiedä-vi-nä-h* ‘I made as if I didn’t know at all’. Also, in Karelian there are quasi-constructions with the plural syncretic adessive/allative of the possessive declension of participle, e.g., *minä hänel kyzyin g_ei olluh ni kuule-vi-lle-h* ‘I asked him when he made as if he didn’t hear ~ ..., when he didn’t want to hear’, and with the singular essive of possessive declension of the adjectives ‘such as knows’ and ‘such as hears’, derived from the present participle by means of the suffix *-ise-*, e.g., *ei ole kuulo-va-ise-na-h* ‘he makes as if he didn’t hear’. Besides, in the case of the verb ‘to see’ Karelian has quasi-constructions with the translative of the agent noun, e.g., *hä_ei mene nägi-(j)ä-kse* ‘he makes as if he had not seen ~ he would not admit having seen (“he would not do as a seer” – our remark)’. Karelian constructions are prevailingly negative. (Salminen 2000: 20–21.)

Definite equivalents can be found in other Finnic languages. In *Estonian*, pretence is usually expressed by a subordinate clause, e.g., *teeb, justkui ei teaks* ‘he makes as if he doesn’t know’. But sometimes a particular construction may be used instead, formed by the first component *tegema* ‘to make’ and second component of the *ma*-infinitive form. “A Defining Dictionary of Literary Estonian” states that the verb *tegema* is well used in “the connection with the rendition of reality as different”, e.g., *tegin end maga-ma* ‘I pretended as if I were sleeping (“made myself sleeping” – our remark)’, *ei tee ... kuul-ma-gi* ‘he makes ... as if he didn’t hear (“he doesn’t make hearing” – our remark)’ (Eesti 1998–2001 VI 1: 140–148, Tragel 2003: 44–45). In the function of a second component there are mainly verbs that express immediate perception while the construction is usually negative, e.g., *sa ei tee mind nägemagi* ‘you make as if you do not see me’, *ta ei teinud meest märkamagi* ‘he made as if he did not notice the man’, *nad ei tee meid*

tundmāgi ‘they make as if they do not know us’. (For more examples see Eesti 2006.) Estonian dialects have or used to have more constructions of this type or at least a combination of the verb ‘to make’ and the partitive of present participle, e.g., *ei tee ennast tead-va-t* ‘he makes as if he doesn’t know (“he doesn’t make himself knowing” – our remark)’ (see Wiedemann 2005: 583). The second component of the construction is the verb in the singular partitive of active present participle, e.g., *tead-va-t* (present participle of the verb *teadma* ‘to know’ *tead-va-* + partitive case ending *-t*).

Likewise, *Finnish* has a negative quasi-construction which consists of a first component ‘to be’ and a second component in the translative form of infinitive possessive declension, e.g., *ei ollut tietä-ä-kse-en* ‘he made as if he didn’t know’. It expresses a pretended or an imagined action. (See e.g. Salminen 2000: 18–19, Punttila 2001: 280–281.) In *Livonian* the constructions with the verbs ‘to put’ and ‘to place’ + preposition *pa* + instrumental in the translative meaning could be regarded as translative quasi-constructions, e.g., *Ta paŋ ēŋšta pa kūōlōnō-ks* ‘He pretended (to be) dead (“He made as if he were dead” – our remark)’ (see also Halling 1998: 129). Livonian *pa* is a non-obligatory preposition of Latvian origin whose complement is supposed to be a noun of the instrumental form in the translative meaning (138), cf. Latvian *Viņš izlikties par mirušu* (instrumental) ‘He pretended (to be) dead’ (129) (“He pretended-himself (to be) dead” – our remark). A definite model for the Livonian construction can be found in German, cf. *er stellt sich krank* ‘he pretends (to be) ill’ (“he puts/places himself (to be) ill” – our remark) (see also Salminen 2000: 23). Similar translative construction with the verb ‘to put’ can be found also in *Veps*, e.g., *rebāņe paņhe kol’ja-ks* ‘the fox pretended (to be) dead (“the fox placed-itself (to be) dead” – our remark)’, *mužik paņhe kol’ja-ks* ‘the man pretended (to be) dead (“the man placed-himself (to be) dead” – our remark)’ (Kettunen 1943: 149, 262).

Obviously, a Finnish quasi-construction can find a definite equivalent in *Saamic* in which a quasi-construction with a negative meaning is formed by means of a first component ‘to make’ and a second component in the essive possessive form of the participle of verbs expressing perception (Hakulinen 1968: 470, see also Nielsen 1926: 394–395), e.g., *ii dahkan ipmirdeaddjin* ‘he made as if he never understood’ (Salminen 2000: 22).

Boris Serebrennikov has supposed evidence of a specific *pretending conjugation* in Mari and Udmurt (Russian *притворное наклонение*), e.g., Mari *лудшыын койын* or *лудшыла койын* ‘I make as if I were reading (had been reading)’ (actually something like “reading (having been reading) I seem” or “as if reading (as if having been reading) I seem” – our remark), *возышыын койын* or *возышыла койын* ‘I make as if I were writing (had been writing)’ (actually something like “writing (having been writing) I seem” or “as if writing (as if having been writing) I seem” – our remark), Udmurt *черламъяськыны* ‘to pretend to be ill’ (actually very roughly “to make oneself (to be) ailing” – our remark). To express a similar construction, Mari is supposed to have a specific gerund. (Serebrennikov 1960: 263, 281.) V. I. Alatyrev, having observed Mari quasi-constructions in particular, does not regard them as a separate pretending conjugation since they have also other functions (aspectual, for instance) which surpass the limits of an ordinary conjugation. (Alatyrev 1959: 94–95).

Serebrennikov writes that in local Turkic languages (i.e. Chuvash, Tatar and Bashkir) pretending conjugation (i.e. a particular participle) occurs in *Chuvash*, e.g., *сывайранси пул, сыврши пул* ‘to pretend to be sleeping’. Serebrennikov regards the latter incidence as one of the expressions of interrelationships among Finno-Ugric and Turkic languages of the Volga-Kama area. (Serebrennikov 1960: 263, 281.) In local Turkic languages similar features can be found at least in *Tatar*, e.g., *Sin şayarğan bulasin* ‘You make as if you were joking’ (Tatar: § 153. 1. а), в)). In Chuvash and Tatar the successive component of the constructions is *bul-*, *pul-* ‘to be, shall/will be’ (see e.g. Räsänen 1969: 79b).

Alho Alhoniemi mentions that in *Mari* a construction reminding the Finnish quasi-construction is formed by a combination of an active participle (suffix *-še, -šo, -šö, -šä, -šə*) and the verb *lijaš* ‘to be, shall/will be’, e.g., Meadow Mari *Ol’ana škalanže ške kalasə - še liješ* ‘Oljana as if talks to herself’ (Alhoniemi 1985: 136) (in fact something like “Oljana to herself t a l k i n g i s” – our remark). Keeping in mind Serebrennikov’s Mari examples above *лудшыла койын* and *взышыла койын*, Alhoniemi’s example also attracts attention where the passive participle (suffix *-me, -mo, -mö, -mê, -mə*) is used to express seemingness: Hill Mari *Kñiyäm lät - mē-la kaješ* ‘It seems that books are read’ (136, 138) (in fact something like “The book as if seems to be read” – our remark).

Both in the above examples by Serebrennikov and in the latter example by Alhoniemi the particle *-la* is the comparative case ending (meaning roughly ‘as if’, see Alhoniemi 1985: 46, 59–60), in Serebrennikov’s examples *-n* is a suffix of instructive gerund (see Serebrennikov 1960: 141–144). The Mari successive components are represented by the verbs *койам* ‘I show myself, I seem’ or *лиям* ‘I am, I’ll be, I make (myself)’ (see also Alatyrev 1959: 94). Owing to semantic proximity of these verbs and the verb *койам* in particular to meanings like ‘pretend, simulate, feign’, as well as in the case of the comparative (with an approximate meaning ‘as if’) it is not certain that the Mari constructions in question or at least the *койам* constructions can be grouped together with quasi-constructions in the frames set for this paper. This applies also to the respective Chuvash and Tatar constructions, resembling rather Mari constructions by their structure.

Eberhard Winkler writes about *Udmurt*: “Udmurt has a derivational suffix marking primarily that the action expressed by the verb does not really take place, but only seems to. The suffix *-mjaški-* (*-emjaški-* in the shorter *-i-* stems) is compounded: *-m-* = PART[iciple] PERF[ect] (used in the sc perfect/evidential too...), *-ja-* is historically identical with the suffix of ADV[erbia]L and the last part *-ški-* = ... Refl[exive]. Examples: *gir-emjaškiŋi* ‘pretend ploughing’, *uža-mjaškiŋi* ‘pretend working’.” (Winkler 2001: 56, cf. Alatyrev 1959). *-ni* in Winkler’s examples is an infinitive suffix (see Winkler 2001: 56–57). The Udmurt construction, exceptionally, is non-periphrastic but it certainly accommodates in the limits set to quasi-constructions in this paper. On the other hand, we do not know whether the Udmurt construction has structurally similar equivalents in local Turkic languages.

We have no data about the occurrence of quasi-constructions either in Finno-Ugric languages other than those reviewed above or in Samoyedic languages. Based on the information we have obtained by now, the incidence and model of formation of quasi-constructions in Finno-Ugric languages do not suggest anything Common-Finno-Ugric. Probably those constructions were formed in different groups of languages (Finnic or Finnish-Karelian-Livonian-Veps-Saamic) or independently in individual languages (Finnish, Karelian, Estonian, Livonian, Veps, Saamic, Udmurt, Mari). Naturally, one cannot exclude interrelationships with non-Finno-Ugric neighbouring languages (Germanic, Baltic, Slavic and Turkic),

however, nothing definite can yet be said about the influence of these languages.

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