

## On Some Peculiarities of the Volgaic-Permic Future and Imperative<sup>◇</sup>

Our eminent jubilarian Professor Gábor Berczki is a distinguished and widely acknowledged researcher and research organizer in Uralic languages. For decades, he has had fruitful contacts with the Uralists of Tartu University. On the occasion of his jubilee I would like to greet my good colleague and friend of many years with some reflections on the problematics in the historical Uralistics.

As is reported, the 3rd person verbal inflection \*-sV occurs in the majority of Uralic – Finno-Ugric and Samoyedic – languages (see e. g. Sovremennyj 1955: 213–221, Grammatika 1962: 194–219, Osnovy 1976: 173–174, Hajdú 1985: 245–246, 323, Hausenberg 1996: 181, Csúcs 2001, Künnap 2004). One of the common peculiarities of the Mordvin, Komi and Udmurt usage is the fact that the 3rd person verbal inflection \*-sV is mainly used not in the present but in *f u t u r e* meaning (see about the Finno-Ugric future forms also Majtinskaja 1973, Metslang 1996). At that both in Mordvin and Komi any other future marker is lacking since the verbal inflection under review itself has become a future marker, e. g., Mordvin *кунды* ‘he tries’ : *кунда-сы* ‘he will try’ (Osnovy 1974: 318–319), Komi *мунӧ* ‘he goes’ : *муна-с* ‘he will go’ (Osnovy 1976: 175). Udmurt lacks the present tense with the personal ending \*-sV > -z altogether.

Additionally, a separate future marker *-o-* can be used (in *i*-stems but in *a*-stems the future marker comes from a probable compound origin *-l-o-*) in Udmurt future forms, e. g., *mjn-o-d* ‘you will go’ : *mjn-o-z* ‘he will go’, cf. the present *mjne* ‘he goes’ (*uža-l-o-z* ‘he will work’). Obviously the Udmurt *-o-* primarily designated also the present tense (actually, the present-future that has also been called aorist) and in Komi its equivalent is probably *-a-*. The latter, however, is not used in Komi today singularly in the function of the future marker (it is rather an aorist marker as indicated), e. g., *мунӧ* ‘he goes’ : *муна-с* ‘he will go’, cf. also *муна* ‘I go ~ I will go’ : *муна-н* ‘you go ~ you will go’. Obviously the Udmurt *-l-* in *-l-o-* is an old Permic frequentative suffix (Uotila 1933: 203–205, Serebrennikov 1960: 250, Serebrennikov 1963: 251, 319, Majtinskaja 1973: 83, Osnovy 1975: 173–175).

Supposedly, the Permic *-o-*, (? <) *a* under review is an earlier *a o r i s t* *m a r k e r* whose descent from the verbal derivative suffix \*-pV, the generalised stem vowel *a* of some verbs as well as a liquid vowel is considered as possible (Serebrennikov 1960: 247–248, Majtinskaja 1973: 83, Osnovy 1976: 176, Bartens 1993: 28). By way of comparison it should be mentioned that the derivative suffix \*-pV occurs in present/aorist forms also in other Finno-Permic languages, like in Finnic (Osnovy 1974: 307–308), e.g., Estonian *joo-b* ‘s/he drinks ~ s/he will

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drink'. Likewise, we should mention that the Saamic 3rd person present forms are supposed to have had, besides their earlier derivative suffix *\*-pa-/pä-*, probably also a monophthongal suffix *\*-a* that was a result of generalisation of the stem vowel *-a* (both of which have merged today with personal endings), e. g., Saamic *mânnâ* 'he goes' pro phonetically predictable *\*mânnâ* (see first of all Korhonen 1981: 100–101, 264–265, 270; cf. above Komi *munas* 'he will go' and *mung* 'he goes').

In Permic languages, besides indicative aorist/future the 3rd person verbal inflection *\*-sV* is also used in some other meanings: in Komi only in indicative preterite, in Udmurt also in other moods than indicative and in other tenses than aorist/future; e.g., Komi *муни-с* 'he went', Udmurt *мынй-з* 'he went' : *мынэме-з* 'he is said to have gone' : *мынысалы-з* 'he would have gone' (Osnoy 1976: 172–182). It is worth mentioning that in Mari, the present as a substantially imperfective tense expresses also the future tense (in fact, it is present-future or aorist there) (Alhoniemi 1985: 120, cf. Serebrennikov 1960: 157, 178), thus similarly to the Mordvin indefinite conjugation. The Udmurt 1st and 2nd present personal forms make use of the frequentative-durative suffix *-ško-* as a present marker, e.g., *мін-іško* 'I go'; this way a distinction has been achieved between present and future tenses in Udmurt (Osnoy 1974: 308–309, Osnoy 1976: 176, Winkler 2001: 46–47, cf. also Serebrennikov 1960: 252).

One should mention that separate (aspect) suffixes bring the present forth also in Vepsian and Ob-Ugric – Mansi and Hanti – languages, besides the future in Mansi (see e. g. Mägiste 1936, Osnoy 1976: 294–295, 322, Metslang 1996: 134). Samoyedic, too, uses separate (aspect) suffixes to express the future (see first of all Künnap 1978: 126–128, 133–135, 138–142). Thus it could be expected that linguistic means in Volgaic-Permic to distinguish the present and future tenses come first of all from a wish or necessity to keep the tenses apart.

Helle Metslang supposes believably that “Finno-Ugric languages seem to have been developing their futures for thousands of years already, very slowly, though. The development of the future has been accelerated by external factors, such as the appearance of literary languages (Hungarian, Estonian, Finnish, Komi), and the existence of futures in influential contact languages as in Germanic languages and in Russian.” (Metslang 1996: 139).

Hereby it is important to bear in mind that Mordvin and Mari use the 3rd person verbal inflection *\*-sV* to also express *i m p e r a t i v e / o p t a t i v e*. Thereby these languages do not display any traces about the common Uralic *\*k*-type imperative/optative marker anywhere else but in the singular 2nd person forms in Mordvin, e.g., *мора-к* 'sing', *мора-к-а* 'do sing!'. In Mordvin, the optative (in fact, hortative) marker of the verbal inflection *\*-sV* > *-za-* has spread further from the 3rd personal ending to the 1st and 2nd ones, cf. *мора-за-н* 'let me sing' : *мора-за-т* 'let you sing' : *мора-за* 'let him sing'. (Osnoy 1975: 317–318, 320, cf. also Volodin, Hrakovskij 1986: 21) In Mari, on the other hand, the 3rd person verbal inflection *\*-sV* > *-šV*, *-žV* in the function of the imperative marker has not spread into other persons, e. g., *нуро* 'come in' : *нурь-жо* 'let him come in' (Osnoy 1976: 70–71).

It has been supposed that sometime earlier Volgaic-Permic languages knew well the *\*k*-type imperative/optative marker but later it disappeared. Unluckily no unambiguously interpretable traces remained about the *\*k*-type marker, besides the above-named Mordvin singular 2nd personal imperative forms. However, not to forget that primarily the imperative in Uralic languages could have been expressed by a mere verbal stem (see first of all Rédei 1982: 1), just as it is expressed in Komi and Udmurt now. Besides, in Komi the imperative 3rd person form expresses a future meaning (Osnoy 1976: 180–181).

Use of the Volgaic-Permic 3rd person verbal inflection \*-sV as a future and/or imperative/optative marker is quite a unique phenomenon in Uralic languages. This phenomenon covers the whole Volgaic-Permic linguistic area. In the case of imperative, the equivalent of the phenomenon can be seen in the use of the suffix -s (identical to the 3rd person possessive suffix) in the formation of the Saamic imperative singular/dual/plural 3rd personal ending, cf. e.g. *mālēsta(h)* ‘make food’ : *mālēstu-s* ‘let her/him make food’ (< Proto-Finnic-Saamic \*-sa/sä; Korhonen 1981: 260–263, 273, 279, 284). If, on the other hand, the supposition that the imperative forms of the Saamic 3rd personal ending were borrowed from the Finnic imperative forms with the imperative marker \*-ko(i)-, cf., e.g., the Saamic *lē-kku-s* ‘let her/him be’ and Finnish *lieköön* id. (< \**lē-kö-hen* < \**-zen* < \**-sen*) (260, 264, see also Rédei 1982: 6–7), then we could presume that the personal ending under review was borrowed into Saamic along with the Finnic 3rd personal ending \**-sen*, following it.

The phonetic evolution of Finnic \**-sen* > Saamic -s is proved by a phonetically identic evolution in Saamic, namely the history of the 3rd personal ending -s of the imperative dual, e. g., *tapp'o-s* ‘let (two-of-)them shoot (with a bow and arrows)’ (-s < \**-sen*, where \**-n* was the dual marker) (Korhonen 1981: 279). If this has descended from the Saamic imperative 3rd personal ending -s, there is no necessity to look for its functional link with the use of the 3rd person verbal ending \*-sV as an imperative/optative marker in Volgaic-Permic languages. As far as the Finnic 3rd person verbal inflection \**-sen* is concerned, then it is probably of somewhat different origin than the Volgaic-Permic 3rd person verbal inflection \*-sV: the point of departure is the personal suffix \**-sen* (? < personal or demonstrative pronoun, cf. Finnish *hän* ‘s/he’ < \**sen*; see first of all Itkonen 1966: 273–274, Posti 1980: 111–112, Hajdu 1985: 244–247).

I believe it were fully natural to see a definite bond among all the above mentioned exceptional incidence of the future and imperative/optative in Volgaic-Permic where the 3rd personal ending \*-sV is used as an imperative/optative marker on the one hand and as a future marker, on the other. Namely, s e m a n t i c a l l y imperative/optative can from a temporal aspect be associated with future (see e. g. Volodin, Hrakovskij 1986: 21). Concerning Uralic languages, this particular bond was studied more closely by Nadežda Kuznecova on the basis of Southern-Samoyedic Selkup. She gives examples about the interpretation of Selkup optative forms as future forms, e.g., *hīrīl nadem me-la-i* ‘we (two of us) will make a girl out of snow’ (the form of the 1st personal ending of the *la*-marked optative dual in the future meaning), also the penetration of optative forms into imperative paradigm, e.g. *nop peldi-la* ‘help me god’ (the form of the 3rd personal ending of the *la*-marked optative singular in the imperative meaning) (Kuznecova 1991: 260–261, see also Kuznecova 1996: 20–25, cf. also Kuznecova et al. 1980 : 245–246, Tereščenko 1973: 153 ).

Boris Serebrennikov has indicated that the interpretation of optative as a future tense occurs also in a number of Turkic languages (Serebrennikov 1974: 242). Volgaic-Permic linguistic area testifies to a strong mutual interaction between Finno-Ugric and Turkic languages of the area (see first of all Berecki 2005; the same can be said about Southern-Samoyedic – Selkup, Kamass and Mator – linguistic areas). That is why I would not exclude the Turkic influence on such a use of the future tense or penetration of optative forms into imperative paradigms of the Volgaic-Permic linguistic area. Here I would like to recall that in Mordvin the paradigmatic use of the primary \**k*-type imperative/optative marker is lacking, in Komi and Udmurt the marker does not exist (see e. g. Osnovy 1974: 312).

I believe that the fact helps to understand the peculiarity of the use of the future tense in Volgaic-Permic languages: instead of lacking imperative forms it has been possible to use forms of the future tense that are semantically associated to imperative or there may have been such replacements as a consequence of the pressure by the system. It should be remembered that imperative is one of the oldest and most central linguistic categories (see e. g. Volodin, Hrakovskij 1986: 18–19). An earlier unmarkedness of imperative in Mordvin, Komi and Udmurt may have led to m a r k e d r e p l a c e m e n t s. I cannot yet open the so called replacement mechanism but obviously it is there. Above mentioned deviations in Selkup verbal forms, described by Kuznecova, could also be associated to the fact that consistently paradigmatic future and imperative markers in Selkup are partially lacking (Künnap 1978: 96–100, 133–134, Kuznecova et al. 1980: 239–240, 247–248).

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