

Word order change and disharmony: the case of Udmurt

Erika Asztalos

Eötvös Loránd University

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Research questions

- ongoing (S)OV > (S)VO change in Udmurt
(cf. Tánczos 2013, Asztalos, Gugán & Mus 2017, Asztalos 2018)
- 1. How is it proceeding at the clausal and the phrasal level?
 - What are the correlation pairs (cf. Dryer 1992) that change their head-directionality first?
 - Which constructions are less prone to word order change?

Research questions

2. How does the case of Udmurt relate to
 - a) other languages that underwent an (S)OV > (S)VO change?
 - b) the predictions of the Final-over-Final Condition? (FOFC: disallows structures where a head-initial phrase is contained in a head-final phrase in the same syntactic domain) (Biberauer et al. 2014, 2017)

The Udmurt language

- Uralic language family, Finno-Ugric branch
- agglutinative
- traditionally classified non-rigid SOV (Vilkuna 1998)
- 340 338 native speakers in Russia (2010)
- strong Russian influence



Ongoing OV > VO change in Udmurt under Russian influence

Pieces of evidence:

1. VO (and other head-initial) constructions can appear in discourse-neutral sentences (cf. Asztalos, Gugán & Mus 2017, Asztalos 2018)
2. generational difference: younger informants: produce and accept head-initial constructions more frequently than older ones (Asztalos 2018)
3. textual analysis: head-initial constructions: higher frequency in contemporary texts than in old ones (ibid.)

1. Does the head-directionality change affect different construction types on an equal level?

The examined constructions

- correlation pairs (Dryer 1992)
- modal Aux-s + lexical V-s
- Adj + AdpP: *rich + in minerals*
- N + AdpP: *presentation + about the typological change of Udmurt*

Data (cf. Asztalos 2018)

- questionnaire:
 - 90 native speakers of Udmurt
 - from all main dialect groups
 - discourse-neutral sentences (defined as all-new sentences)
 - production testing tasks + grammaticality judgements
- written texts (folklore texts vs. contemporary blog posts and newspaper articles)

Rigid word order

- lexical V + temporal/aspectual Aux:

(1) ***tod-o*** ***val***
know-PRS.3PL be.PST

- Postp:

(2) ***konferencija*** ***bere***
conference after 'after the conference'

- Neg Aux + lexical V (! head-initial in Uralic):

(3) ***ug*** ***tod-o***
NEG.PRS.3PL know-CNG.PRS.3PL1 'they do not know'

Examples

V O AdpP AdpP:

(4) *Odig žit-e öt'-i kol'l'ega-os-me*
one evening-ILL invite-PST.1SG colleague-PL-1SG.ACC
doram kuno-je.
ALL.1SG guest-ILL

'One evening I invited my colleagues to my place to a party.'

(<http://udmurto4ka.blogspot.com/2016/06/> Accessed: 31.01.2019)

Examples

Comp + Sent:

- (5) a. *Tren'er-jos* *vera-lo,* *što* *sport* *tuž* *pajdajo.*
 trainer-PL say-3PL that sport very useful
- b. *Tren'er-jos* *vera-lo,* *sport* *tuž* *pajdajo* *šuyasa.*
 trainer-PL say-3PL sport very useful that
- 'Trainers say that sport is very healthy.'

Examples

N-Rel:

(6) *Mamont-jos – pöjšur-jos, kud-jos-jz*

mammoth-PL beast-PL which-PL-DET

ul-il'l'am vaškala dyr-jos-y.

live-PST2.3PL ancient time-PL-ILL

‘Mammoths are beasts that lived in ancient times.’

Examples

N-NP:

- (7) % *Doklad-e* *Kitaj* *śariś* *umoj* *pörm-i-z*.
presentation-1SG China about well succeed-PST-3SG
'My presentation about China went well.'

Adj-Stand:

- (8) *Taña* *köj-ges* *Aña-leś*.
Tania fat-CMPR Anne-ABL
'Tania is fatter than Anne.'

Constituents' inclination for word order change

Highest (frequency: > 50% acceptability: > 70%)	Average (frequency: 21–48% acceptability: 41–70%)	Lowest (frequency: < 17% acceptability: < 61%)
V + S (ex.)	Comp + Sent. V + O	AdvSub + Sent. V + Adv_{Manner}
N + Rel	V + PostpP 'want' + VP Aux_{Mod} + VP [Adj + PostP]_{Pred} [Adj + Stand]_{Pred}	Cop + Pred N + Gen N + PostP [Adj + PostpP]_{Attr} [Adj + Stand]_{Attr}

[
CP
IP
NP
AdjP
]

Possible factors

- position of the constituent on the hierarchical sentence structure:
 - AuxTemp, AuxNeg, Adp (affix-like elements) → no word order change
 - NP, AdjP → less prone to change
- syntactic function of the constituent:
 - predicative vs. attributive AdjP-s
- syntactic weight of the modifier (NRel vs. other NP-s)
- speakers' judgement about the lexical entry (Comp *što* 'that', *jesli* 'if')

Disharmonic word orders at the phrasal level in other OV > VO languages

- Uralic: SOV>SVO: Finnic (Finnish, Saami etc.), Komi-Zyrian, Komi-Permyak, Erzya, Moksha
typically disharmonic: **SV, GenN, NumN, PostP** (cf. Vilkuna 1998, Gulyás 2011)
→ NP-s and AdpP-s are less prone to change
- Indo-European (wals.info)
 - Germanic, Romance, Greek etc.: SVO; typically disharmonic: **SV** and **NumN**
- Mandarin Chinese: SVO (wals.info)
disharmonic: **SV, RelN, GenN, NumN, Postp/Prep, Qfin**

The Final-over-Final Condition (FOFC): a syntactic universal

- A head-final phrase P cannot dominate a head-initial phrase P, where and are heads in the same extended projection (Biberauer, Holmberg & Roberts 2014, 2017)

(9) *Milloin Jussi olisi romaanin kirjoittanut?* → [*Aux* [*O V*]]

when Jussi would.have novel written

‘When would Jussi have written a novel?’

(10) **Milloin Jussi kirjoittanut romaanin olisi?* → *[[*V O*] *Aux*]

when Jussi written novel would.have

(Biberauer, Holmberg & Roberts 2014: 177-178)

Diachronic predictions of FOFC

- "Change from head-final to head-initial order in the clause must go “topdown,” in that CP must be affected first, followed by TP, followed by VP"

(Biberauer, Holmberg & Roberts 2014: 192)

FOFC and the Udmurt data

- vast majority of the examined examples: FOFC-compliant
- but: sporadic exceptions

[[Aux V] Comp]

Context: 'Did not your grandmother tell you that bread should be respected?'

(11) *So-je* *ug* *jara* *kuja-ny* *šuyša (...)?*
3SG-ACC NEG.PRS.3SG allowed.CNG.SG throw_away-INF that
'That one should not (it is not allowed to) throw it away?'

(http://udmurto4ka.blogspot.com/2013/10/blog-post_1133.html

Accessed: 02.09.2019)

[[Adj Stand] N]

(12) % *Mon* *ćeber-ges* *kart-e-les'* *pijaš-en*

1SG nice-CMPR husband-1SG-ABL boy-INS

todmatsk-i (...).

get_acquainted-PST.1SG

'I got acquainted with a boy nicer than my husband.'

[[Adj NP] N]

(13) % *Ta* *uzyr* *ošmes-jos-yn* *šajer-yn* *tros*
this rich spring-PL-INS country-INE many
pörtem *pumo* *min'eral'noj* *vu* *bas'ty-ny*
different kind mineral water buy-INF
lu-e.

is_possible-PRS.3SG

'In this country rich in springs one can buy many different kinds of mineral water.'

Conclusion

- Udmurt behaves in many respects like other languages with respect to word order change:
 - phrases lower on the sentence structure hierarchy: less prone to change their order
 - the syntactic weight of the modifier may also play a role
- but: contrary to FOFC's prediction, CP-s did not turn out to be the most frequent/acceptable in head-initial order
- further influencing factors:
 - speakers' judgement about the Russian lexical entry (*što* 'that', *jes'li* 'if')
 - syntactic function of the constituent (AdjP-s)
- some disharmonic instances non compliant to FOFC → intermediate stages of language change?

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