

Syntactic similarities between Udmurt and Tatar non-finite clauses?

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1. Introduction

It is well known that the languages belonging to the Volga-Kama Sprachbund (Mari, Komi, Udmurt, Mordvin, Tatar, Bashkir, Chuvash, Russian) have developed several common grammatical features due to long-lasting language contacts (Bereczki 1983, Wintschalek 1993). In what follows we are going to take a closer look at a certain non-finite clause type in Udmurt (a Finno-Ugric language) and in Tatar (a Turkic language).

Our goal is to investigate whether there is any sign of language contact between Udmurt and Tatar in the syntactic structure of the non-finite clauses.

The questions we are addressing: is there any similarity between Udmurt and Tatar with respect to the internal syntactic structure of their non-finite clauses? And if there is, is there evidence for one of these languages having influenced the other?

2. Methods and Data

Both in Udmurt and in Tatar the non-finite clauses in questions can be used as:

- **relative clauses** (modifying noun phrases)
- **adjuncts clauses** (in this case they are complements of semantic cases or postpositions)
- **complement clauses** (e.g. as object of the matrix predicate)

In **Tatar** the following suffixes can head the non-finite clauses in question: **-GAN**, **-(y)AčAk**, **-(V)r**. (The difference between these is only aspectual.)

In **Udmurt** the suffix **-(e)m** marks these clauses.

Investigated parameters:

- **agreement marking**
- **case marking of the subject**

Data

- Non-elicited examples
- Grammaticality judgment questionnaire (9 Udmurt, 2 Tatar speakers)

3. Results

Relative clauses

	Agreement (on the modified noun phrase)	Case-marking of the subject
Udmurt	yes	*Nom/✓Gen
Tatar	no	✓Nom/*Gen



Differences:

In Tatar there can be no agreement marking indicated on the predicate of the relative clauses or on the noun phrase that the RC modifies. The subject, if overt, is in the nominative. In contrast, in Udmurt the agreement can be marked on the modified noun phrase and the subject bears the genitive.
→ There is no similarity with respect to agreement and subject case marking.

Adjunct clauses

	Agreement	Case-marking of the subject
Udmurt	no	✓Nom/*Gen
	yes	??Nom/✓Gen
Tatar	no	✓Nom/*Gen
	yes	✓Nom/*Gen



Similarities & Differences:

The two languages are similar in the availability of two agreement marking patterns (i.e. indicated or not indicated). Note that the not indicated agreement seems to be more common. But they are different with respect to the subject's case marking: there seems to be a rule in Udmurt according to which if the possessive/(nominal) agreement is indicated the possessor/non-finite's subject must bear the genitive. There is no such rule in Tatar, where the subjects of adjunct clauses are always in the nominative.

Complement clauses

	Agreement	Case-marking of the subject
Udmurt	*no	-
	yes	*Nom/✓Gen
Tatar	no	✓Nom/*Gen
	yes	*Nom/✓Gen



Differences:

In Udmurt complement clauses the agreement is obligatorily indicated on the non-finite predicate and the subject bears the genitive. This is possible in Tatar, too, but the agreement can also be left unmarked, in which case the subject must be in nominative.

4. Conclusions

It is indisputable that there are similarities between the Udmurt and Tatar non-finite clauses in question, such as the fact that the non-finite predicate can license a subject, or some properties (e.g. agreement and the subject's case marking) of non-finite clauses depend on the clause's syntactic position in the matrix sentence.

However, these similarities characterize most of the Finno-Ugric and Turkic languages in the area (and beyond, too), so they cannot serve as evidence for language contact between Udmurt and Tatar.

Our observations on the other languages of the Volga-Kama Sprachbund show that these languages display great amount of variation with respect to agreement and case-marking of the subject in non-finite clauses. This poses a challenge for the comparative or theoretical studies that focus on the non-finite clauses in these languages.

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Syntactic similarities between Udmurt and Tatar non-finite clauses? ~ Handout ~

1. Introduction

It is well known that the languages belonging to the Volga-Kama Sprachbund (Mari, Komi, Udmurt, Mordvin, Tatar, Bashkir, Chuvash, Russian) have developed several common grammatical features due to long-lasting language contacts (Berezki 1983, Wintschalek 1993). In what follows we are going to take a closer look at a certain type of non-finite clause in Udmurt (a Finno-Ugric language) and in Tatar (a Turkic language). Udmurt has had the closest contact with Tatar among the languages of this area. This is especially true for the Southern dialects of Udmurt and for the Udmurt dialects spoken in the Republic of Tatarstan. Our goal is to investigate whether there is any sign of language contact between Udmurt and Tatar in the syntax of the non-finite clauses in these languages. Since a detailed discussion of this topic would exceed the scope of a poster, we will focus on a non-finite clause type that, on a superficial level, seems similar in both languages. This clause type is traditionally called “participle” in the Turkological literature, and among Finno-Ugrists (see Nikolaeva 1999, Csepregi 2012). Both in Udmurt and Tatar these clauses can turn up in three different syntactic positions in the matrix clause (see the discussion in 2.).

The questions we are addressing: is there any similarity between Udmurt and Tatar with respect to the internal syntactic structure of these clauses? And if there is, is there evidence for one of these languages having an influence on the other?

2. Data and methodology

In **Tatar** the following suffixes can head the non-finite clauses in question: *-GAn*, *-(y)AčAk*, *-(V)r*. (The difference between these is only aspectual.)

In **Udmurt** the suffix *-(e)m* marks these clauses.

Both in Udmurt and in Tatar these non-finite clauses can occupy the following syntactic positions in the matrix clause:

- they can be **relative clauses** modifying noun phrases
- **adjunct clauses** (in this case they are selected by semantic cases (only in Tatar) or postpositions)
- **complement clauses** (e.g. as object of the matrix predicate)

Although the non-finite clauses in these three positions share similar properties, they are not identical: there are differences between them with respect to **agreement marking** and the **subject's case marking**. Hence we will take a closer look at the agreement marking and the case-marking of the subject, as well as the combination of the two parameters. Moreover, we will compare Udmurt and Tatar clauses to see if they share some common properties.

Since the Udmurt and Tatar non-finite clauses in question have not been described in great detail in the previous literature, it was necessary to consult native speakers of Udmurt and Tatar in order to check several morpho-syntactic combinations of agreement and case-marking in the non-finite clauses. We prepared two grammaticality judgment questionnaires about the non-finite clauses with respect to the above mentioned questions, as well as we included some non-elicited sentences. The questionnaires were filled out by 9 Udmurt and 2 Tatar native speakers. Based on the results of the questionnaires we could make generalizations about the agreement marking patterns and subject's case marking in these non-finite clauses.

3. Results

The following tables show the agreement patterns and the subject's case marking **in non-finite clauses that have an independent subject**. (The non-finite clause have the same subject like the

matrix clause's one behave different with respect to agreement.) The relevant examples are presented in the dataset below (section 4).

(Non-subject) Relative clauses

	Agreement	Subject's case marking	Example
Udmurt	indicated on the modified noun phrase	genitive	(1)–(4)
Tatar	cannot be indicated	nominative	(6)–(8)

Adjunct clauses

	Agreement	Subject's case marking	Example
Udmurt	not indicated	nominative	(9), (12)
	indicated (on the non-finite clause's predicate)	genitive	(10)
Tatar	not indicated /preferred/	nominative	(15)
	indicated (on the non-finite clause's predicate)	nominative	(16)

Complement clauses

	Agreement	Subject's case marking	Example
Udmurt	obligatorily indicated	genitive	(18), (19)
Tatar	indicated (on the non-finite clause's predicate)	genitive	(21)
	not indicated	nominative	(20)

4. Dataset

4.1. Relative clauses

Udmurt

The agreement can be unmarked (cf. (1)); if it is indicated, it is on the modified noun phrase (cf. (3)). In this latter case the subject bears genitive-marking. Unlike in Tatar, the subject cannot be in the nominative in Udmurt (cf. (2) and (6)). In Udmurt there is an additional pattern according to which the subject bears instrumental (5).

- (1) *[tue mertt-em] pispu-os-my* (Perevoščikov 1962: 259)
[this.year plant-NF] tree-PL-1PL
'the trees that were planted this year'
- (2) * *[mi mertt-em] pispu-os* (elicited)
[we plant-NF] tree-PL
Intended: 'the trees that we planted'
- (3) *[(mi'am) mertt-em] pispu-os-my* (elicited, based on: Perevoščikov 1962: 259)
[(we.GEN) plant-NF] tree-PL-1PL
'the trees that we planted' (subject reading)
- (4) *(mi'am) [mertt-em] pispu-os-my* (elicited, based on: Perevoščikov 1962: 259)
(we.GEN) [plant-NF] tree-PL-1PL
'our trees that were planted' (possessive reading)
- (5) *[Petja-jen mertt-em] pispu* (elicited)
[Petya-INSTR plant-NF] tree

‘a tree planted by Petya’

Tatar

The agreement cannot be indicated on the non-finite predicate (cf. (7)) or on the modified noun phrase (cf. (8)). The agreement is unmarked, the subject is in nominative (cf. (6)).

- (6) [*min uki-gan*] *kitap* (Tumaševa 1979: 142)
[I read-NF] book
‘the book that I read’
- (7) * [*uki-gan-īm*] *kitap* (elicited)
[read-NF-1SG] book
‘the book that I read’
- (8) * [(*minēm*) *kür-gen*] *kěšě-m* (elicited)
[(I.GEN) see-NF] man-1SG
Intended: ‘the book that I read’

4.2. Adjunct clauses

Udmurt

In Udmurt adjunct clauses the agreement can be indicated (cf. (10)) or not indicated (cf. (9) and (12)). If the agreement is indicated, the subject, if overt, must be in the genitive case (cf. (10) and the ungrammatical (11), but also see (14) which was accepted by some of our consultants). Note also that some subjects are more often in the nominative (cf. (12) and (13)) (we assume that this has to do with animacy).

- (9) [*Tolkien kul-em*] *bere so-len pi-jez Kristofer ataj-ez-leś*
[Tolkien die-NF] after s/he-GEN son-3SG Christopher father-3SG-ABL
potty-mte kniga-os-se pott-i-z. (elicited)
publish-NEG.NF book-PL-3SG.ACC publish-PST-SG3
‘After Tolkien’s death (/after Tolkien died) his son Christopher published some of his unpublished books.’
- (10) [*Tolkien-len kul-em-ez*] *bere so-len pi-jez Kristofer*
[Tolkien-GEN die-NF-3SG] after s/he-GEN son-3SG Christopher
ataj-ez-leś potty-mte kniga-os-se pott-i-z. (elicited)
father-3SG-ABL publish-NEG.NF book-PL-3SG.ACC publish-PST-SG3
‘After Tolkien’s death (/after Tolkien died) his son Christopher published some of his unpublished books.’
- (11) * [*Tolkien kul-em-ez*] *bere so-len pi-jez Kristofer*
[Tolkien die-NF-3SG] after s/he-GEN son-3SG Christopher
ataj-ez-leś potty-mte kniga-os-se pott-i-z. (elicited)
father-3SG-ABL publish-NEG.NF book-PL-3SG.ACC publish-PST-SG3
‘After Tolkien’s death (/after Tolkien died) his son Christopher published some of his unpublished books.’
- (12) [*Šundy pukś-em*] *bere agaj-e azbar-e pot-i-z.* (elicited)
[Sun set-NF] after elder.brother-1SG garden-ILL go.out-PST-SG3
‘After the sun set, my elder brother went to the garden.’
- (13) % [*Šundy-len pukś-em-ez*] *bere agaj-e azbar-e pot-i-z.* (elicited)
[Sun-GEN set-NF-3SG] after elder.brother-1SG garden-ILL go.out-PST-SG3

Intended: ‘After the sun set, my elder brother went to the garden.’

- (14) % [Kolja škola-je myn-em-ez] bere
[Kolya school-ILL go-NF-3SG] after
mon kniga lyddžy-ny kutsk-i. (elicited)
I book(ACC) read-NF start-PST.SG1
‘After Kolya left for school, I started reading a book.’

Tatar

In Tatar adjunct clauses the agreement can be indicated (cf. (16)) or not indicated (cf. (15)). If it is not indicated the subject is in the nominative, but, in contrast to Udmurt, even if the agreement is indicated, the subject cannot be genitive-marked (cf. the ungrammatical (17)).

- (15) [Tolkien vafat bul-gan]-nan sōŋ, ul-ĩ Kristofer eti-sě-něŋ
[Tolkien die-NF-3SG]-ABL after boy-3SG Christopher father-3SG-GEN
dōn’ya kūr-me-gen bėrniče eser-ėn bastır-dĩ. (NET1¹)
world see-NEG-NF some work-3SG.ACC publish-PST.SG3
‘After Tolkien died, his son, Christopher published some of his unpublished books.’

- (16) % [Tolkien vafat bul-gan-ĩn]-nan sōŋ, ul-ĩ Kristofer eti-sě-něŋ
[Tolkien die-NF-3SG]-ABL after boy-3SG Christopher father-3SG-GEN
dōn’ya kūr-me-gen bėrniče eser-ėn bastır-dĩ. (NET1¹)
world see-NEG-NF some work-3SG.ACC publish-PST.SG3
‘After Tolkien died, his son, Christopher published some of his unpublished books.’

- (17) * [Tolkien-nĩŋ vafat bul-gan-ĩn]-nan sōŋ, ul-ĩ Kristofer eti-sě-něŋ
[Tolkien-GEN die-NF-3SG]-ABL after boy-3SG Christopher father-3SG-GEN
dōn’ya kūr-me-gen bėrniče eser-ėn bastır-dĩ. (NET1¹)
world see-NEG-NF some work-3SG.ACC publish-PST.SG3
‘After Tolkien died, his son, Christopher published some of his unpublished books.’

4.3. Complement clauses

Udmurt

In Udmurt non-finite clauses that are complements of a superordinate predicate the agreement marking is obligatory and the subject is genitive (cf. (18) and the ungrammatical (19)).

- (18) Soos [(mynestym) lykt-em-me] vit’-i-zy. (elicited)
they [(I.ABL)² come-NF-1SG.ACC] wait-PST-PL3
‘They were waiting for me to come.’

- (19) * Soos [mon lykt-em]-ez vit’-i-zy. (elicited)
they [I come-NF]-ACC wait-PST-PL3
Intended: ‘They were waiting for me to come.’

Tatar

¹ Source: the Tatar Wikipedia article about J.R.R. Tolkien. URL: https://tt.wikipedia.org/wiki/%D0%94%D0%B6%D0%BE%D0%BD_%D0%A0%D0%BE%D0%BD%D0%B0%D0%BB%D1%8C%D0%B4_%D0%A0%D1%83%D1%8D%D0%BB_%D0%A2%D0%BE%D0%BB%D0%BA%D0%B8%D0%BD

² Since the possessive phrase is assigned the accusative, the possessor does not bear the genitive, but ablative case. This is a characteristic feature of the Permic languages.

In contrast to Udmurt, there are two agreement marking patterns in Tatar complement clauses: the agreement can either be marked (cf. (22)) or unmarked (cf. (20)). If the agreement is indicated the subject is genitive-marked, i.e. it cannot be in the nominative (cf. the ungrammatical (21)).

(20) *Alar [min kil-gen]-ně kōt-e idě-ler.* (elicited)
they [I come-NF]-ACC wait-CONT COP.PST-PL3
'They were waiting for me to come.'

(21) * *Alar [min kil-gen-ěm]-ně kōt-e idě-ler.* (elicited)
they [I come-NF-1SG]-ACC wait-CONT COP.PST-PL3
Intended: 'They were waiting for me to come.'

(22) *Alar [min ěm kil-gen-ěm]-ně kōt-e idě-ler.* (elicited)
they [I-GEN come-NF-1SG]-ACC wait-CONT COP.PST-PL3
'They were waiting for me to come.'

5. Some observations and preliminary analysis of the data

Similarities between the Udmurt and Tatar non-finite clauses:

- the non-finite predicates in question can licence a subject
- some properties (such as: agreement and the subject's case marking) of non-finite clauses depend on the syntactic position it occupies in the matrix clause

However, these similarities characterize most Finno-Ugric and Turkic languages, so they cannot serve as evidence for language contact between Udmurt and Tatar.

There are numerous **differences** between the Udmurt and Tatar non-finite clauses under investigation:

- There can be no agreement marking indicated in Tatar relative clauses (the only possible variant is given in (7)). On the other hand, in Udmurt relatives the agreement marking can be marked on the modified noun phrase (indicated in bold in ex. (3)).
- In Tatar complement clauses the agreement can be left unmarked, and in this case the subject bears nominative. (Shown in (20)). This is not possible in Udmurt, as shown in (19).
- In Udmurt if the agreement is indicated, the subject has to be genitive-marked, in contrast to Tatar, where the nominative marking is also allowed depending on the non-finite clause type. Thus, in adverbial clauses both in Udmurt and Tatar two patterns are possible: the agreement can be marked or unmarked, however, if the agreement is marked the subject has to bear the genitive case in Udmurt (cf. the grammatical (10) and the ungrammatical (11)), while it has to be in the nominative in Tatar (cf. (15) and the ungrammatical (17)).

There are several factors determining the subject case and agreement in non-finite clauses.

- We propose that the presence of the agreement marking may be determined by a DP projection that merges with the non-finite clause (that we assume to be an AspP) if the clause is in certain syntactic positions, i.e. in argument position or if it is selected by semantic cases/postpositions (note that these positions are typical positions for noun phrases). That is the non-finite clause gets nominalized, and this allows for the agreement marking.

- The same DP projection would be responsible for the genitive case assignment. But note that the case assignment is influenced by other factors as well: e.g. animacy in Udmurt, specificity in Tatar, moreover the syntactic position of the non-finite clause in the superordinate clause.

The Udmurt and Tatar data raise more general questions with regard to the syntactic structure of the non-finite clauses:

- Is there a relation between case and agreement in non-finite clauses? Do we treat them as separate parameters or do we expect them to correlate?
- Concerning the factors determining case and agreement, do these factors have impact on both case and agreement simultaneously and how this affects the crosslinguistic variation?
- How to account for cases in which one non-finite displays different properties even in the same syntactic position - e.g. there are two strategies in complement and adjunct clauses in both Tatar and Udmurt => postulate nominalised and non-nominalised clauses?
- What is the basis for a comparative study? This is particular relevant in the case of the Volga-Kama Sprachbund since our preliminary data on the other languages of the Sprachbund show that there is great amount of variation with respect to agreement and case-marking in the non-finite clauses.

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