

## Multiple postverbal constituents in a non-rigid SOV language: the case of Udmurt

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Traditionally, Udmurt has been claimed to be a non-rigid SOV language (Vilkuna 1998; Tánczos 2010), however, a couple of more recent studies (Asztalos et al. 2017; Asztalos 2018) claim that the language is undergoing an SOV > SVO change. Asztalos et al. (2017) point to the fact that multiple constituents are also allowed to occur postverbally in Udmurt. In my talk, I examine multiple postverbal constituents in folklore texts from the end of the 19th century and in contemporary blogposts, focusing on the main question whether the relative order of postverbal elements is primarily determined by the syntactic function or by the discourse-pragmatic role of the elements. Additionally, I discuss some possible syntactic operations that may contribute to a future syntactic analysis of the derivation of postverbal constituents.

According to my data, multiple postverbal constituents can have identical or differing discourse roles in Udmurt. In other words, the following combinations are attested in the texts: a) all postverbal elements express discourse-old information (this pattern is more typical of the folklore texts) (1), b) all postverbal elements express discourse-new information (2), and c) discourse-old and discourse-new elements co-occur in postverbal position (3).

Postverbal constituents with identical discourse roles typically follow their neutral ordering, i.e., the order that they would show in pragmatically neutral sentences, e.g., a subject typically precedes a direct or indirect object (1) or a comitative phrase (2). In these cases, the relative order of postverbal elements is determined by the syntactic functions of the elements.

However, discourse factors seem to overrule syntactic ones in two cases. First, when all postverbal elements are informationally old but one of them is highly topical (e.g., it is a personal pronoun), the highly topical element may precede other constituents even if this results in a non-neutral relative ordering in the postverbal field, see, e.g., the OS order with a personal pronoun object in (4). Second, when discourse-old and discourse-new constituents co-occur in the postverbal field, informationally old elements typically precede discourse-new ones even when the arising order is not equal to the basic ordering of the constituents (3). Thus, information structure seems to be the decisive factor in determining the relative ordering of postverbal constituents.

The comparison of the old texts with the contemporary ones reveals us the following differences:

- i) The proportion of sentences with multiple postverbal constituents is higher in the old folklore texts (23,5%) than in the blogposts (10,5%).
- ii) *All-new* sentences with multiple postverbal constituents (5) are more typical of new texts than of old ones.
- iii) The contemporary texts, contrary to the old ones, display head-initial postverbal constituents also at the NP level.
- iv) The new texts, contrary to the old ones, display also sentences with more than two (namely, three) postverbal constituents.

While the difference in i) might have reasons connected with the genre of the texts, the points in ii)–iv) may be interpreted as concomitants of the shift toward the (S)VO type of Udmurt.

With the ultimate goal of providing a possible syntactic derivation of postverbal elements of Udmurt, I discuss the following possibilities:

- Neutral ordering in the postverbal field may arise due to leftward movement of the verb (cf. Simpson & Choudhury 2015). In fact, in many of the related examples, the verb is either focused or it is immediately preceded by a focused constituent, thus the verb may move to a dedicated focus position (cf. Tánczos 2010), leaving discourse-old constituents *in situ*.
- Highly topical elements may precede other elements in the postverbal field (3), (4) due to scrambling/topicalization.
- A possible analysis of *all-new* sentences with (multiple) postverbal constituents is that they are base-generated.

- (1) Context: The human and the bear negotiated with each other to sow beets together. (...)  
*Vož-že poty-sa vera-ž gondyr adami-ly: [...]*  
 anger-3SG.ACC go\_out-CVB say-PST.3SG bear human-DAT  
 ‘The bear said angrily to the human: [...]’ (W23)
- (2) (Both the bear and the wolf are new participants in the tale)  
*Lykt-e gondyr kion-en (...).*  
 come-3SG bear wolf-INS  
 ‘A bear and a wolf came around (...).’ (W24)
- (3) Context: “Yesterday I told that the world is in chaos.”  
*Noš tunne mon vera-lo, mar malpa-lo so chaos šarys šor*  
 but today 1SG say-FUT.1SG what think-3PL that chaos about middle  
*jožo pokoleńi-ys adami-os (...).*  
 of\_age generation-ELA man-PL  
 ‘But today I’ll tell what the middle-aged generation thinks about that chaos.’  
 (Marjalen zarezez 30.11.2015)
- (4) Context: A young man is marrying the water spirit’s daughter.  
*Šud-em - šekta-m soos-ty vumurt.*  
 feed-EV.3SG regale-EV.3SG 3PL-ACC water\_spirit  
 ‘The water spirit regaled them.’ (W27)
- (5) Text-initial sentence  
*Mert-i ukno ul-a-m tödŷ šireń.*  
 plant-PST.1SG window under-ILL-1SG white lilac  
 ‘I planted a white lilac under my window.’  
 (Marjalen zarezez 05.06.2016)

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