

## Copular clauses, nominalizations and ellipsis in Meadow Mari and Udmurt

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In this talk I discuss nominalized copular clauses in Meadow Mari and Udmurt, as illustrated for the former language in (1).

- (1) Tâj alakö-lan oksa-m puenat, no...  
2SG someone-DAT money-ACC give.PRF.2SG but
- a. (tudân) kö ul-mâ-žâ-m, om pale.  
3SG.GEN who.NOM be-NMLZ-POSS:3SG-ACC NEG.PRS.1SG know.CN
- b. \*tudâ-n kö-žâ-m om pale.  
3SG.GEN who.NOM-POSS:3SG-ACC NEG.PRS.1SG know.CN
- ‘You gave money to someone but I don’t know to whom (lit. his/her being whom).’ [Mari]

The examples like (1) are interesting because they highlight the intersection of three grammatical phenomena: copular clauses, nominalizations and ellipsis (sluicing). These are precisely the three ingredients of the analysis proposed. Specifically, I put forward an analysis according to which we are dealing with a copular clause that is nominalized and thus functions as an argument of the matrix verb. The (morpho)syntax of nominalizations in Mari and Udmurt is well-studied (Serdobolskaya et al. 2012 on Meadow Mari; Voznesenskaia 2018 on Hill Mari; Dékány & Georgieva 2020 on Udmurt, a.o.). But these studies have focused on nominalizations of verbal predications; examples of nominalized copular clauses are barely presented. Examples like (1) are also informative wrt to the different types of copular clauses, especially the less studied ones, like equatives, as well as wrt to the conditions of copula-drop. Finally, it will be shown that these nominalized copulars serve as sluicing-like constructions in the sense of Paul & Potsdam (2012), and their structure will be examined from the perspective of sluicing derived from copular sources. Sluicing is a type of clausal ellipsis: the silent material is a TP and the sluice consists only of a *wh*-remnant, which corresponds to an implicit or overt indefinite correlate in the antecedent clause, *Someone murdered Joe but we don’t know who* [<sub>TP</sub> *murdered-Joe*] (Ross 1969; Merchant 2001). This ellipsis process is considered to be *isomorphic* since the elided material is structurally identical to the antecedent. However, it is very common that languages utilize *non-isomorphic* sluicing (see Vicente 2018), referred to as ‘sluicing-like construction’ (SLC), Paul & Potsdam (2012). Vicente (2018) outlines a taxonomy of sluicing based on the underlying syntax of the sluice; non-isomorphic sluices may have the following sources: copular clauses (predicational, specificational, equative, cf. Mikkelsen 2005), clefts or pseudoclefts. Uzbek (Turkic) makes extensive use of different types of SLCs (Gribanova 2013). The source of (2) is argued to be a reduced copular clause: its subject can optionally be pronounced and there is always possessive agreement cross-referencing its  $\phi$ -features; the copula is dropped.

- (2) Kim-ni-dir ko’r-di-ngiz, lekin (u-ning) kim-lig-i-ni bil-ma-y-man.  
some-ACC-one see-PST-2SG but (3SG-GEN) who-COMP-3SG.POSS-ACC know-NEG-PRS-1SG  
‘You saw someone, but I don’t know who (it is).’ [Uzbek, Gribanova 2013]

In this talk, I will address the following questions: ❶ what is the precise structure of nominalizations like (1) (cf. the existing studies: Serdobolskaya et al. 2012; Voznesenskaia 2018; Dékány & Georgieva 2020) ❷ what type(s) of copular clause(s) are possible and ❸ what are the conditions on copula-drop. Regarding the latter question, it is important to draw a parallel with Udmurt. Consider the examples in (3) and (4).

- (3) **Soleś kin lu-em-ze** nokin veraś ej val...  
 3SG.ABL who be-NMLZ-POSS.3SG.ACC noone say.PTCP NEG COP  
 ‘No one could tell who he was (lit. his (my father’s) being who).’ [Udmurt Corpus, Udmurt duné 2009.12.25]
- (4) Kinke obkome čagiškem. Todiško **kin-ze=no** –  
 someone regional.committee.ILL complain.EVID.3SG know.PRS.1SG who-POSS.3SG=ADD  
 verame ug potj...  
 say.NMLZ.POSS.1SG NEG want.CN  
 ‘Someone filed a complain to the regional committee. I even know who, but I don’t want to say...’  
 [Udmurt Corpus, Udmurt duné 2009.12.25]

(3) shows exactly the same pattern like (1a). Thus, both languages utilize nominalized non-reduced copular clauses (i.e., without copula-drop). As evidenced by (1b), Meadow Mari does not allow copula-drop; only the non-reduced copular clause is grammatical. The Udmurt example in (4) is more intriguing. Its underlying structure will be discussed in detail in the talk. One possibility is that it is a copular clause, either a finite one (‘who s/he was’) or a non-finite one (‘s/he being who’, =(3)). In both cases, copula-drop must be assumed, as only the *wh*-phrase surfaces in (4). The finite copular analysis is supported by the fact that Udmurt, unlike Mari, employs copula-drop in all person and numbers in the present tense (Winkler 2001; Alatyrev 1970); but to the best of my knowledge, the literature on nominalizations in Udmurt has not discussed nominalizations of finite clauses. Alternatively, one need to assume that copula-drop can also take place in non-finite contexts (like in Uzbek, (2)), which is again an assumption not previously made in the literature.

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