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THE MORPHOSYNTACTIC MANIFESTATIONS OF THE COPULA IN ERZYA

Abstract. Mordvin and several distantly related, prevalently Samoyedic and Ugric, languages can encode nonverbal predication with adnominal phrases supported by the markers of tense, number, and person. In Mordvin, the indicative present and second past tense are formed by using this strategy, e.g. Erzya *od-at/-o-l'-it'* 'young-PRS/PST2.2SG '(you) are/were young'. The agreement markers in the two sets of forms, with the exception of the zero third person markers, are common to the core present and past tense paradigms. According to a point of view, discussed in a series of recent publications, the person markers used with adnominal phrases are suffixes taken over from the verbal paradigms. Overlap between the markers of the adnominal and verbal forms is the general argument in favor of the approach. Defined as "nominal conjugation", the strategy has been viewed as a phenomenon of morphology that functions apart from the copular verb *ul'ems* 'be' and the "zero copula". In the earlier literature, the adnominal phrases supported by the agreement markers have been considered copular constructions. The author of this article finds it consistent to define the markers in question as the enclitic manifestations of the copula, rather than affixes directly taken over from the verbal paradigms. Nonverbal predication in Erzya, on this premise, is analysable as a morphosyntactic system realized through the stand-alone forms of the copula as well as the enclitic, comparatively transparent, forms of the copula *ul'ems*, including the covert counterparts of the third person. The suggested approach allows for greater precision in the description of nonverbal predication in Erzya as well as in a broader context.

Keywords: Erzya, non-verbal predication, copula, clitic, covert markers.

Introduction

In Mordvin and some of the distantly related, prevalently Samoyedic and Ugric, languages, verbal agreement markers adjoining an adnominal phrase encode nonverbal, or stative, predication (Honti 1992 : 266–270; Себеб-ренников 1967 : 163; Wiedemann 1865 : 57). By using this strategy, the indicative present and second past tenses are formed in Mordvin, e.g. Erzya *od-at/-o-l'-it'* 'young-PRS/PST2.2SG '(you) are/were young'. The verbal markers denoting tense, person, and number used in the two sets of forms overlap with the personal endings common to the core indicative present and past tense paradigms: *ud-at/-it'* 'sleep-PRS/PST1.2SG '(you) (are) sleep(ing)/

(have) slept'. In the present tense forms, the person markers directly adjoin the adnominal phrase, e.g. *ser'ej-t'ano* tall-PRS.1PL 'we are tall'; in the forms of the second past tense, an additional component *l'* occurs between the host and the person markers, cf. *ser'ej-e-l'-in'* tall-PST2.1SG 'I was tall'.

In recent research, which has been largely focused on the identification of the strategies used for encoding different types of stative relations, the component *l'* has been defined as the marker of the second past tense (e.g. Kholodilova 2016 : 231; Цыпкайкина 2011 : 45; 2000 : 161–163; Turunen 2010 : 52, 122; Hamari 2007 : 71–72). The component *l'* has been also identified as an original frequentative suffix (cf. Надькин 1980 : 292; Палль 1955 : 10–11; for an account concerning this point of view, see Майтинская 1979 : 50–54).

In the two sets of forms, the adnominal phrase consisting of a noun, pronoun, adjective, adverb, quantifier, particle, postposition as well as participle (Цыпкайкина 2011 : 45–54; Rueter 2010 : 129–131; Цыганкин 1961 : 354–355) may occur with an indefinite or possessive case marker, cf. (1a, b). Definite case phrases co-occurring with the person markers, as shown by Евсеев (1931 : 213–225), have not been attested in the literary language; in postpositional phrases, however, a person marker may adjoin the postposition that follows a definite case word (1c).

- (1) a. *veles-an/-el'-in'*
village-INE-PRS/PST2.1SG
'(I) am/was in the countryside'
- b. *mon l'el'a-z-an*
I-NOM elder brother-POSS.3SG-PRS.1SG
'(I) am his elder brother/uncle'
- c. *od kudo-ñt' ej-s-an/-el'-in'*
new house-DEF.GEN PP-INE-PRS/PST2.1SG
'(I) am (staying) in the new house'

The forms constituted by the person markers adjoining a present/active participle ending in *i(j)*, e.g. *van-i-l'-inek* watch-PTCP.PST2.1PL '(we) were watching, used to watch', have been treated as a verbal, second past tense, paradigm. In some of the recent publications, these forms have been assumed to be the prototype of the adnominal strategy, cf. *vejse-l'-inek* together-INE.PST2.1PL, commonly defined as "nominal conjugation" (e.g. Hamari 2007 : 74–75, 124). The adnominal phrases supported by the agreement markers have been viewed apart from the forms of the copular verb *ul'ems* 'be', e.g. *ul'ñ-it' vijeve* be-PST1.2SG strong (you) were strong', and the "zero copula", e.g. *vijeve* (s/he) strong-PRS.3SG (s/he) is strong'. The feasibility of the verbal strategy takeover in the case of Mordvin (Erzya) has been questioned (for example, by Stassen 1997 : 289–304; for a critical overview of Stassen's approach, see Hamari 2007 : 65–75, Turunen 2010 : 123–124). In the early treatments of Mordvin grammar, the adnominal phrases supported by the person agreement markers have been mentioned as copular forms (cf. Шахматов 1910 : 826, Wiedemann 1865 : 57). Евсеев (1931 : 140, 211–213) and Рябов (1934 : 12) have made no distinction between the forms, in which the verbal endings adjoin the present/active participle ending in *i* and the other adnominal phrases. These authors have defined them as compound tenses formed with the help of the verb *ul'ems*. The idea that the forms may

have developed as morphosyntactic units has recurred in the literature (e.g. Керестеш 2017 : 113–115; Bartens 1999 : 131; Серебренников 1967 : 158–63, 207–208; Бубрих 1947 : 41–43) but it has not been substantiated.

The author of this article finds it consistent to define the predication markers occurring with the aforementioned adnominal phrases as the enclitic manifestations of a concrete verb, the copula *ul'ems*, rather than affixes taken over from the verbal paradigms. The article offers a survey of data that comprise the sets of the aforementioned affirmative and negative counterparts of the NP-person forms, which are used in the indicative mood. In juxtaposition, the paradigms of the copular/existential verb *ul'ems* (*ul'*-/*ul'ń*-person) and action verbs (V-person) are included. The implications of the results mainly bare on the morphosyntactic status of the person markers in the NP-person forms and the place that the sets of the NP-person forms take within the system of stative predication in Erzya.

Survey of data: the tense/time relationship

Erzya is a tense-oriented language, which shows "a binary opposition between simple forms, one of which has past time reference, while the other covers both present and future" (Stassen 1997 : 378; cf. Collinder 1957 : 233). Aspect is primarily encoded by derivational suffixes (for details, see Zaicz 2006 : 203–204; Hallap 2000 : 31–51; Шемерова 1980 : 335-344), e.g. *ram-ašt'/-ś-ešt'* buy-PST1.3SG '(they) bought/were buying/used to buy'. In conjunction with this, the language has means, not characteristic of the aforementioned core system, that encode complementary relations. Table 1 features the present tense forms of the copula *ul'ems*, which have reference to future time, PRS = FUT, and the sets of the adnominal NP-person forms used in the PRS and PST2 tenses, that function alongside the core PRS/FUT and PST1 tense paradigms of the existential and action verbs.

Table 1

The tense/time relation encoded by the indicative NP-person (A), copular *ul'*-/*ul'ń*-person (B), existential *ul'*-/*ul'ń*-person (C), and V-person (D) forms: (1) affirmative, (2) negative counterparts

	PRS = FUT	PRS	PRS/FUT	PST1	PST2
(1)					
A		NP-person/-Ø			NP-person/-Ø
B	<i>ul'</i> -person			<i>ul'ń</i> -person	
C			<i>ul'</i> -person	<i>ul'ń</i> -person	
D			V-person	V-person	(V)-person/-Ø
(2)					
A		<i>a/avol'</i> + NP-person/-Ø <i>apak</i> + NP-person/-Ø <i>apak-/araś-</i> person/-Ø			<i>a/avol'</i> + NP-person/-Ø <i>apak</i> + NP-person/-Ø <i>apak-/araś-</i> person/-Ø
B	<i>a + ul'</i> -person			<i>ež</i> -person+ <i>ul'ńe</i>	
C	<i>a + ul'</i> -person	<i>araś, arašt'</i>		<i>ež</i> -person+ <i>ul'ńe</i>	
D			<i>a + V</i> -person	<i>ež</i> -person+CNG	<i>a + (V)</i> -person/-Ø

nent, assumed to be associated with a frequentative suffix (Bartens 1999 : 108, 129; Серебрянников 1967 : 208; Бубрих 1947 : 41). Interestingly, *ń* as a frequentative suffix (Hallap 2000 : 169–197) occurs in both the finite and non-finite forms of verbs: *t'ej-(ń)-ems/-eź/-iń* do-INF/PTCP/PST1.1SG; as far as *ul'ems* is concerned, it comprises *ń* only in the forms of PST1. In Moksha, this verb has the simple stem *ul'(ə)-* in both the present and past tense forms. The function of *ń* in the Erzyan verb, in the light of these observations, is not explicit.

Except the point concerning *ń*, the copular, existential, and action verbs show uniformity in the encoding of past time. The overlapping third person forms of the copular and existential *ul'ems* – *ul'ń-eś/-eśt'* be-PST1.3SG/PL, e.g. (4a, b), cf. *t'ej(ń-e)ś/-eśt'* do-PST1.3SG/PL, are differentiated by the type of agreement – the use of the nominative versus genitive case argument, respectively.

- (4) a. *son ul'ń-eś šabra-nok*
 s/he be-PST1.3SG neighbour-POSS.1PL>SG
 'S/he was our neighbour'
- b. *sonze ul'ń-eś šabra-zo*
 her/his be-PST1.3PL neighbour-POSS.3SG>SG
 'There was a neighbour (hers/his) = S/he had a neighbour'

Analogous to the markers of PRS, the markers of PST1 constitute the NP-person forms expressing the PST2 tense, cf. (5a, b). In these forms, however, an additional component, *l'*, defined as the marker of PST2 by some authors (see the Introduction), precedes the person markers.

- (5) a. *ul'ń-ińek viř-se*
 be-PST1.1PL forest-INE
 '(we) were in/have been to the forest'
- b. *viřse-l'-ińek*
 forest-INE.PST2.1PL
 '(we/they) were (staying)/used to be in the forest'

The forms of PST2 have been differentiated with respect to the category of the adnominal phrase contained in the host. The forms with a present/active participle ending in *i (j)*, see (V)-person/-Ø in Table 1, e.g. *mori-l'-ińek* singing-PST2.1PL '(we) were singing', have been considered verbal. The forms of PST2 with the other varieties of adnominal phrases in the host have been attributed to the adnominal type. The present/active participle in *i* is morphologically unchangeable and restricted in use, in general (cf. Эрзянь кель. Морфология 2000 : 219); within the NP-person forms, its use is limited by the set of the PST2 forms. A present participle ending in *-(i)ća*, which might have developed as an alternative to the *i*-participle (Markov 1961 : 63), is used in both the PRS and PST2 tenses (6a, b).

- (6) a. *parosto lovn-ića/-t*
 well read-PTCP.PRS/PST2.2SG
 '(s/he) is a person who reads well/(they) are persons who read well'
- b. *parosto lovn-ića-l'/-l-t'*
 well read-PTCP.PST2.3SG/PL
 '(s/he) was/used to be a good reader/(they) were/used to be good readers'

Apart from the restriction in the use of the *i*-participle, the verbal and adnominal forms of PST2 display structural uniformity — they have person markers overlapping with the personal endings of the core past tense paradigm, are preceded by the component *l'*, and have zero third person markers. In the set of the PRS tense forms that lack the component *l'*, an analogous structure is observable — the personal endings of the core present tense paradigm, with zero markers in the 3rd person, occur as the agreement markers.

Uniformity is also observable between the negative PRS and PST2 forms, including the (V)-person type. Irrespective of the tense/time relation, the NP-person forms constitute symmetric structure, with the negative and affirmative counterparts differing only by the presence of a negation (Miestamo 2005 : 39–45, 51–60). They principally combine with the negative particle *a* (alternatively, *avol'/apak/aras'*), e.g. (*a*) *stud'ent-an/-el-in'* '(I) am/was (not) a student', (*a*) *kort-il-in'* '(I) was not speaking/did not speak'. The particle *a* has a wide range of uses, in general (Hamari, Aasmäe 2015 : 318–320). The copular/existential and action verbs differ in this respect — they constitute asymmetric structure in the forms of PST1, with which the negative verb *ež-* is used, cf. *ul'nes' — ež ul'ne* be-PST1.3SG — NEG-PST1.3SG be-CNG 'was — was not', *kort-as' — ež korta* speak-PST1.3SG — NEG-PST1.3SG speak-CNG 'spoke — did not speak'. The forms of PST2, in which the marker of PST1 is contained, do not conform to the formation of asymmetric structure with *ež-*.

The negation *avol'*, a compound variant of *a*, in which the stem of *ul'ems* is contained (*a + ul'-*), is used to express contradiction, e.g. *a/avol' šeset'ano/-l'-in'ek* NEG there-PRS/PST2.1PL '(we) are/were not there (but elsewhere)'. The NP-person forms based on a resultative, past or passive, participle, used with the negation *apak*, also show symmetric structure, e.g. *apak šla-ž-at/-el-it'* NEG wash-PTCP-PRS/PST2.2SG '(you) are/were (un-) washed'. Negative dependent clauses with *apak*, however, have asymmetric structure, in which the negation cancels the marker of the participle, *ž* (Ледяйкина 1980 : 89–91): *šla-ž* 'washed', *apak šla* '(un)washed'.

Of special interest are the PRS = FUT forms shared by the copular and existential verb — in both cases, the negation *a* is used, cf. (7a, b). For encoding present time, a negative existential verb — *aras'*, SG (7a), *aras't'*, PL — is employed, while in the case of the copular verb, a negative NP-person/-Ø form with the negation *a* occurs.

- (7) a. *a ul'-i/ aras' sal-ozo*
 NEG be-FUT.3SG NEG-PRS.3SG salt-POSS.3SG>3SG
 'there will not be/ is not salt-(its)'
- b. *a ul'-i salov/a salov*
 NEG be-FUT.3SG salty/NEG salty-PRS.3SG
 '(it) will not be/is not salty'

The negations *aras'-* and *apak-* can function as adnominal phrases that constitute NP-person forms, e.g. *aras'-an/-el-in'* (*kudo-so*) NEG-PRS/PST2.1SG '(I) am/was missing (from home)', *apak-an/-ol-in'* NEG-PRS.1SG, which is an alternative to, for example, *apak šlaž-an/-el-in'* NEG-PRS/PST2.1SG 'I am/was not washed' (Hamari, Aasmäe 2015 : 304–307; 319–320; Veselinova 2015 : 563–573; Zaicz 2006 : 207–208). The copular/existential verb *ul'ems*, as

the data show, contributes to the complexity of the tense/time relationship as well as the diversity of the means of negation.

In the following section, some of the implications of the data are discussed.

Discussion

The uniformity of characteristics noted between the sets of the affirmative and negative NP-person forms might imply that the forms developed in a more or less regular way. The emergence of the forms may have been possible as the consequence of a shift in the use of the forms of the copula. It emerges from the data that the person markers of the PRS tense encoding present time within the NP-person forms are functionally tantamount to the stand-alone present tense forms of the copular verb having reference to future (cf. Серебрянников 1967 : 162) — both encode stative relations. The forms of PST2, being relatively transparent in structure — they may contain the simple stem of *ul'e-ms*, still observable in the forms of past in contemporary Moksha, as the contracted (*u*)*l'(e)*- with the personal markers of the first past tense — display formal homogeneity with the past tense forms of the copular verb.

Thus, either in form or function, the NP-person construction is likely to have association with the forms of *ul'ems*. What is more, the NP-person forms are not a mere variation of an analytical copular construction; they create distinctive temporal (present versus future) and aspectual (progressive versus indefinite) relations with the stand-alone forms of *ul'ems*, as seen in (8a, b). Although the past tense forms in certain contexts may acquire an iterative and progressive meaning (Цыпкайкакина 2000 : 163), the forms of PST2, including the (V)-person variety, encode the progressive aspect, expressed otherwise by derivational suffixes (see Section 2), e.g. *ul'ne-kšń-it'* be-iterative.PST1.2SG.

- | | | |
|--------|---|--|
| (8) a. | <i>vijev-at</i>
strong-PRS.2SG
'(You) are strong' | <i>vijev ul'-at</i>
strong be-FUT.2SG
'(You) will be strong' |
| b. | <i>vijev-el'-it'</i>
strong-PST2.2SG
'(You) were/used to be strong' | <i>vijev ul'ń-it'</i>
strong be-PST1.2SG
'(You) were strong' |

In the treatment of the historical aspect of the NP-person forms, the variety based on the unchangeable present participle ending in *-i(j)*, e.g. *mori(j)* (*narmuń*) '(a) singing (bird)', has been the point of reference in defining the origin of the PST2 forms. Despite different approaches to the analysis of the NP-person forms over time, historical association between the component *l'* contained in the forms of PST2 and the verb *ul'ems* has been reckoned with (see the Introduction). The assumed overlap between the markers of the present participle and the PST1 tense, *i*, cf. *tej-i-ń* do-PST1.1SG '(I) did', *tej-i-l'-iń* do-PTCP.PST2.1SG '(I) was doing/used to do' (see Серебрянников 1967 : 131, 153–159 for an account to the point), might have been crucial for the identification of the verbal and adnominal categories of the NP-person forms. The variant of the PST2 forms with the present participle in the host — shown as (V)-person in this article — may

be viewed as a case of morphologization, which developed due to the overlap between the markers of the present participle and the past tense, *i*.

The "morphologically unmarked" forms of present, in which "person agreement markers are fused with non-verbal predicates without further derivational measures being taken" (Turunen 2010 : 122), have received less attention than the forms of PST2, as it appears, for the scarcity of historical evidence on morphosyntactic changes, in general. Yet, at least some indirect evidence of association between the person markers occurring in the NP-person forms of PRS and the personal forms of *ul'ems* is attainable.

Congruence observable between the sets of the PRS and PST2 forms, which is an indication of their common origin, is also manifested through phonological interaction between the host and the supporting person markers in both sets. In the forms of PST2, the agreement markers are connected via an epenthetic *e/o*, in accordance with the front/back vowel harmony (9a). In case the host ends in a vowel, including the present participle in *i*-, the person markers with the preceding *l'* attach to the final vowel of the host (9b, c).

- (9) a. *kežej-e-lit' / jožov-o-lit'*
 angry-PST2.2SG smart-PST2.2SG
 '(You) were (being)/used to be angry/smart'
- b. *koža-/ siře-l-iń*
 rich- old-PST2.1SG
 '(I) was rich/old'
- c. *kort-i-l-iń*
 speak-ptcp.pst2.1sg
 '(I) was speaking/used to speak'

The person markers of the PRS forms *-an*, *-at*; *-tano*, *-tado* may attach to the final consonant or vowel of the host, e.g. *od-an/-tano* young-PRS.1SG/PL '(I/we) am/are young'. In dialects and informal speech, they may cause the elision of the final vowel of the host, e.g. *par(o)-an/-tano* good-PRS.1SG/PL '(I/we) am/are good' *siř(e)-an/-e-tano* old-PRS.1SG/PL '(I/we) am/are old'. In some varieties of the Alatiř dialect, an epenthetic *j* instead of vowel elision occurs between the host and a person marker, cf. *paro-(j)-an* good-PRS.1SG '(I) am good', *siře-(j)-an* (Марков 1961 : 50–51; Евсевьев 1931 : 211–215). Generally, epenthetic *j* serves for preventing the occurrence of successive vowels at word boundary, e.g. *a-j-ašt'-an* NEG-*j*-stay-PRS.1SG '(I) do/will not stay' (Эрзянь кель. Морфология 2008 : 200; Евсевьев 1931 : 11–12). This observation supports the idea that the NP-person forms originally may have been analytical constructions, i.e. units of syntax.

For example, the synthetic construction *kudos(o)-an/-l-iń*, may have developed from an analytical one, cf. *kudoso ul'-an/-iń*, as shown schematically in (10a, b).

- (10) a. *kudo-so ul'-an* > *kudo-s(o)-(ul')-an* > *kudos-an*
 home-INE be-PRS.1SG
 'I am at home'
- b. *kudo-so ul'-iń* > *kudo-so-(u)l'-iń* > *kudos-ol'iń*
 home-INE be-PST.1SG
 'I was (staying) at home'

Elision in the stem *ul(e)-* is explicable considering the fact that the copular verb is devoid of lexical meaning and it tends to be unstressed. In the forms of PRS, elision proved to be more radical — no apparent trace of the stem *ul(e)-* is observable. A comparatively recent case of elision in a stem can serve as analogy; it occurs at word boundary even in the stem of a standard verb. The negative construction *azd-an/azd-il'ín* (< *a sod-an/-il'ín*) NEG know-PRS/PST2.1SG '(I) do/did not know', is produced in speech so that the consonant *s* is voiced and the vowel *o* deleted. Elision may, undoubtedly, occur due to certain acoustic characteristics of stress and its position. In Erzya, word stress, which is not contrastive and to a considerable extent governed by sentence stress, as far as its position is concerned (for details on the subject, see Aasmäe 2015), may affect different syllables. In the forms of PRS, the stem of unstressed *ul(e)-* may have been lost also due to the neighborhood of *a* in the person markers — this vowel generally resists elision due to its longer inherent duration than the other vowels have. Apart from this, the frequency of occurrence is a factor that plays a role in conditioning elision. The contracted *azda-* instead of *a soda-* occurs in a range of tense and mood forms; in the infinitive, *a sodams*, which is much less frequent, contraction does not occur.

These may be some of the reasons why *ul(e)-* was (partly) affected in the NP-person forms. The 3rd person markers of the NP-person forms are covert — cf. the personal endings in *ul'ems* — *ul'-i/-it'* for PRS and *ul'ń-eś/-ešt'* for PST1, e.g. *vijev/-el'* strong-PRS/PST2 '(it) is/was strong'. In this case, elision proves to be a device used to avoid further homonymy. As seen from (2a, b), there is overlap between the 3rd person forms of the copular and existential verb, and the verbs are differentiated by the type of agreement. Under this condition, in the NP-person construction, zero 3rd person markers are employed. The forms are, however, identifiable through word order, as well as the definiteness of the argument. For example, a phrase with the zero copula, *t'ejež* (11a), is in postposition to a definite/possessive case noun (or a pronominal subject); in an attributive phrase, *t'ejež* (11b) stands in preposition to an argument used in the indefinite, definite, and possessive case. The covert 3rd person markers are implicit in the information structure and, thus, integral to the sets of the NP-person forms.

- (11) a. *t'ev-eś/-em/(son) t'eje-ž*
work-DEF/POSS.1SG do-PTCP.PASS = Ø
'the/my work is done'
- b. *t'ej-ež t'ev/ t'ev-eś/ t'ev-em*
do-PTCP.PASS work/ work-DEF/ work-POSS.1SG>SG
'a/the/my completed work'

Phonological interaction between the person markers, that are in function (and form) analogous to the copula, and a wide range of changeable adnominal phrases occurring in the NP-person forms shows that the person markers are not selective of the category and the morphological form of the host. They function not as units of a word, i.e. affixes, but as clitics, which are units of syntax (for details on the criteria suggested in typological studies for the differentiation between affixes and clitics, see e.g. Moravcsik 2013 : 144, 174; Siewierska 2011 : 329–32; Spencer, Luís 2012; Zwicky 1985; Zwicky, Pullum 1983). In view of this difference, the person

markers supporting the adnominal phrases can be defined as the cliticized forms of the copula, as well.

The NP-person forms may have been induced by a transformation in the morphosyntax of the copular verb *ul'ems*. The possibility of variation in word order, SOV/SVO, instead of the primarily dominant mode, SOV (Zaicz 2006 : 206; Bartens 1999 : 108–109, 129, 168; Vilkuna 1977; Collinder 1960 : 248–249) may have been pivotal for the development of the forms. The regular occurrence of the copula, which may have had no stress or a weaker stress than the head phrase (see above), in postposition could condition the contraction and cliticization of the forms of *ul'ems*, similar to the case of 'be' – *I'm, we've*. Taking into account the uniformity of the PRS and PST2 forms it can be asserted that the two sets may have developed as parallel. A more radical contraction of *ul'(e)-* in the forms of PRS, compared to PST2, might have been due to the factors of phonology; chronologically, the forms of PRS and PST2, including the (V)-person variety, are comparable.

With the development of the cliticized forms of the copula and the co-occurrence of the stand-alone forms of the copula in preposition to the adnominal phrase, the aforementioned pairs of temporal and aspectual opposition were generated (12a, b), while the stand-alone forms of the copula used in postposition, e.g. *čoviñe ul'-at*, became reserved for the purpose of focusing.

- (12) a. *ul'-at čoviñe/* *čoviñ-at*
 be-FUT.2SG slim/ slim-PRS.2SG
 '(You) will be slim/' '(You) are slim'
- b. *ul'ñ-it' čoviñe/* *čoviñe-l'-it'*
 be-PST1.2SG slim/ slim-PST2.2SG
 '(You) were slim/' '(You) were/used to be slim'

The NP-person forms, which can be regarded as evidence of the SOV tendency characteristic of an older word order, seem to hide solutions to some intriguing questions. It cannot be excluded that the past tense forms of the copula *ul'ems*, being used prepositionally, were in prosodic conditions that differed from those in postposition – owing to this factor, they acquired the stem *ul'ñ(e)-*. The new stem developed only in the forms of the first past tense used in preposition but it was not realized in an infinitive form (as is the case of the aforementioned *a sodams*); neither is it used with the markers of the other non-finite forms, as stated in Section 2. Its development may have been possible due to a factor of phonology, rather than derivation – for example, a positional lengthening of *l'* and a subsequent change of the lengthened *l'* into *l'ñ* for the purposes of syllabification. The treatment of this question warrants a detailed study.

Another question that deserves attention concerns the transformation observable in the negative forms of the existential verb *ul'ems* (see above). The present tense forms of the verb, analogous to those of action verbs, have reference to present and future, PRS/FUT (see Table 1). The negative forms of the verb used with the negation *a* express future time, analogous to the affirmative and negative forms of the copular verb, whereas reference to present is encoded by a negative verb, which has only two forms – *araś* SG and *araśt'* PL (cf. Moksha *aš, ajaš*), cf. (7a, b). The origin of this

negation has been hitherto unknown. The negative forms of the existential verb display a shift towards the strategies used with the copular verb. As the survey of data shows, nonverbal predication acquired new strategies through the development of the forms of the copula. To some extent, the existential and action verbs were involved in the process — the negative forms of the existential verb, apparently, were structured on analogy with the forms of the copular verb. Action verbs received a set of (V)-person forms, which formally belong to the category of NP-person forms. The pattern of temporal and aspectual relations was broadened by the inclusion of independent means expressing future time and progressive aspect.

Conclusion

This article addressed questions pertaining to the role of the copular verb *ul'ems* 'be' in the encoding of nonverbal predication in Erzya. The author suggests that the copular verb manifests itself as sets of stand-alone and cliticized forms constituting person agreement markers, which can support a wide range of adnominal phrases. It is shown that the covert agreement markers of the 3rd person forms, that are implicit in the information structure, are an integral part of the system.

Basing observations on the temporal relations expressed by the forms of the copular, existential, and action verbs (Table 1), the author finds that duality in the forms of the copula is explicable by a transformation in word order, due to which the possibility of the SOV/SVO variation changed the primary SOV dominance. The forms of the copula, devoid of lexical meaning, received a weaker sentence stress or no stress when used in post-position to the NP — they contracted and cliticized, whereas the forms in preposition to the NP were preserved. The resultant sets of stand-alone and cliticized forms of present make distinction between future and present time, respectively. The analogous forms of past, defined as PST 1 and PST2, gave rise to the opposition between the indefinite/frequentative and progressive aspect.

In the article, attention is drawn to some specific moments, which warrant further research, for example the development of the stem *ul'ń(e)*- in the set of stand-alone forms expressing past time, as well as differentiation between the strategies used in the formation of affirmative and negative sentences with the existential verb. The affirmative present tense forms, have reference to PRS/FUT, analogous to those of action verbs; the negative present forms have reference to future, PRS=FUT, analogous to the forms of the copular verb. Reference to present is expressed by the negation *araś*, the origin of which is hitherto unknown.

Supportive of the author's suggestions are some of the points of view expressed earlier on the possible development of the components in question. The findings of the research are expected to contribute to a more precise categorization of the strategies of predication, primarily, in Mordvin; they may also be used for the analysis of analogous strategies of nonverbal predication observable in a broader context.

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Abbreviations

1 – first person, **2** – second person, **3** – third person, **CNG** – connegative, **DAT** – dative, **DEB** – debitive, **DEF** – definite, **FRQ** – frequentative, **FUT** – future, **GEN** – genitive, **INE** – inessive, **INF** – infinitive, **NEG** – negation, **PASS** – passive, **PL** – plural, **POSS** – possessive, **PP** – postposition, **PRS** – present, **PST1** – first past, **PST2** – second past, **PTCP** – participle, **SG** – singular.

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НИИНА ААСМЯЭ (Тарту)

МОРФОСИНТАКСИЧЕСКИЕ ПРОЯВЛЕНИЯ ГЛАГОЛА-СВЯЗКИ В ЭРЗЯНСКОМ ЯЗЫКЕ

В мордовских, а также в некоторых самодийских и угорских языках составное именное сказуемое может быть выражено предикативной конструкцией, в которой личные окончания глаголов присоединяются к склоняемому разрядам слов. В мордовских языках эта конструкция имеет формы настоящего и второго прошедшего времени изъявительного наклонения: эрз. *од-ат* '(ты) молод', *кюдосо-линь* '(я) был дома'. Личные окончания в этой структуре, за исключением нулевых окончаний в формах 3-го лица, тождественны окончаниям глаголов в парадигмах настоящего и первого прошедшего времени.

В литературе формы этой конструкции рассматриваются в основном как «именное спряжение», используемое как средство выражения предикативности, наряду с формами глагола-связки. Данные эрзянского языка, анализируемые в статье, свидетельствуют о том, что глагольные окончания в предикативной кон-

струкции могут быть энклитическими, в том числе нулевыми, формами глагола-связки, которые функционируют наряду с независимыми формами глагола, например, *виев-ан/-елинь* '(я) (был) силен', *ул-ян/ульн-инь виев* '(я/он, она) буду/был, -а сильным, -ой'.

Формирование предикативной конструкции возможно при вариативности места глагола-связки. Действовавшая прежде тенденция постпозитивного расположения глагола нашла выражение в образовании энклитических форм глагола-связки. Самостоятельные формы *улемс*, будучи в препозиции к именной части, претерпели изменения — формы настоящего времени приняли на себя функцию выражения будущего времени, а в формах прошедшего времени основа *уле-* обрела форму *ульне-*. При вариативности места глагола-связки независимые и энклитические формы *улемс* образовали связи, в которых стали различаться темпоральные (будущее — настоящее время) и аспектные (неопределенный — длительный вид) отношения.

Предположения автора, которые подтверждаются некоторыми данными из ранее опубликованных источников, могут быть использованы для более точного описания категории предикативности в мордовских и других уральских языках.