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ON THE URALIC VERBAL PERSONAL (\*)*k*-MARKERS\*

**Abstract.** In case of Uralic verbal personal (\*)*k*-markers we can probably come across very little etymologically common suffix-material inherent to all the Uralic language group and at times they may prove to be of Altaic origin altogether. The occurrence of Uralic verbal personal singular (\*)*k*-markers can be presented in the following Table:

	1P	2P	3P
Saamic		+	
Mordvin		+	
Mari			+
Komi	+		
Udmurt	+		+
Hungarian	+		+
Selkup	+		+

In Saamic there was possibly a genuine \**t* instead of \**k*; in Mari, Komi and Udmurt *k* occurs only in negative auxiliary verbs and these negative auxiliary verbs may descend from Altaic languages; Selkup had possibly a genuine \**ŋ* instead of \**k*.

**Keywords:** Uralic, verb, personal markers.

Since Uralic languages excel by their rather exceptional verbal personal (\*)*k*-markers, specialised literature has paid quite a lot of attention to the latter. This article attempts once again to analyse the problem of the markers. The article is not going to observe the instances in which some Uralic personal verbal forms are supposed to contain a onetime personal \**k*-marker while having not a single consonantal trace about it, e.g., Mari *ù·lâ* 's/he is' (< \**vole-k*), Komi *mung* 's/he goes' and Udmurt *m̄j̄n̄ε* id. (in both cases < \**mene-k*) (see e.g. Майтинская 1974 : 299–302; Korhonen 1981 : 257). Those suppositions are much too speculative. In a number of Uralic languages – both in Finno-Ugric and Samoyedic – the personal markers of verbal forms are represented by a c t u a l l y e x i s t i n g (\*)*k*-material (*k* ~ *g* ~ *γ* ~ *ʔ*) suffixes. Those suffixes usually designate the 1P and/or 3P. Exceptionally only the 2P is designated by the *k*-suffix in Saamic and in a number of forms of definite (objective) conjugations of Mordvin.

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The following development is generally supposed in S a a m i c: thus 2PSg *-k* < Proto-Finnic-Saamic *\*-t* < Proto-Uralic 2PSg verbal inflection *\*-t*, cf. e.g. Saamic *mânâ-k* 'you go' ~ Finnish *mene-t* id. (see first of all Korhonen 1981 : 197, 271). The supposed here change *-t* > *-k* in Saamic is most likely a phonetic-historical nonsense and offers possibly some kind of alien substrate (see also Künnap 2002a : 20). (In Norwegian (Northern) Saamic western dialects, word-finally there is the 2PSg *-t*, e.g. *borrâbētti-t* 'you eat'; hereby I owe thanks to Professor Tiit-Rein Viitso for drawing my attention to the fact. However, the dialectal *-t* has probably been derived from the Saamic original form *-k*, see Korhonen 1981 : 198, cf. also 348–349.)

László Keresztes, having specifically addressed questions of the M o r d v i n languages' conjugation for a longer time, regards earlier researchers' suppositions about the origin of the inflection *-k* of the Mordvin 2P as generally erroneous (Keresztes 1999 : especially 60–66) and explains such an origin of denotation of the Mordvin 2PSg in terms of the fact that the imperative suffix *-k* can be interpreted in a complex way as the marker of imperative as well as 2PSg verbal inflection, e.g., *kundama-k* 'catch me' (imperative) ~ 'you catch me' (present tense). Application of the suffix *-k* spread further from here to the other 2P verbal forms, e.g., 2PSg preterite *kundajma-k* ~ *kundamaj-k* 'you caught me', etc. (see 107–113). Generally, there is good reason to trust L. Keresztes' detailed analysis of the Mordvin verbal forms. We probably have to accept his explanation since no better one has been proposed, yet it does not look very convincing, because of its exceptionality.

There are no other parallels found for the described application in Saamic and Mordvin among Northern-Eurasian languages but the Y u k a g h i r 2PSg inflection in a number of intransitive verbal forms, cf. e.g. aorist 1PSg *ejrəjə* : 2PSg *ejrəjə-k* : 3PSg *ejrəj* ('to go') (Nyikolajeva 2002 : 48; cf. Collinder 1940 : 50, 53). In Yukaghir the imperative suffix is also expressed by *-k*, e.g., 2PSg *ejrə-k* (Nyikolajeva 2002 : 51). Whether in case of Yukaghir we should ingeniously see a similar interrelationship between the imperative marker and 2PSg verbal inflection (cf. also 2PSg interrogative *ejrə-k*) as L. Keresztes sees in Mordvin is hard to tell, however, I would stress my doubts about such an interrelationship also in case of Yukaghir. (Suppositions about a similar interrelationship are not excluded in case of Saamic languages, either, where the 2PSg imperative marker was also *\*-k*, see Korhonen 1981 : 256–257, 271.)

It should also be mentioned that in the T u r k i c languages used in written records of antiquity the preterite has the 2PSg verbal inflection *-η*, *-γ*, *-g* (Тенишев 1968 : 43), e.g., Kazan Tatar *язды-η* 'you wrote' (Закиев 1997 : 368); cf. also Turkic 2PSg possessive suffix *-η*, *-γ* e.g., *ata-η* 'your father' (Гаджиева 1997 : 28). In Yenisey K e t the verbs in the 2PSg forms are marked with the prefix *к-*, *кy-*, e.g., *кy-жум* 'you sneezed' (the 2PSg possessive prefix is also *k*-material, e.g., *ук-ам* 'your mother'; Крейнович 1968 : 464; Вернер 1997 : 183).

1/3P (*\*)k*-marker occurs both in Hungarian and Selkup. In H u n g a r i a n it is used in case of the 1P of indefinite (subjective) conjugation and 3P of reflexive *ik*-conjugation, in S e l k u p in case of 1/3P of indefinite conjugation; e.g., Hungarian *iro-k* 'I write', *kési-k* 's/he is late', Selkup *kaudša-k* 'I am short' : *kaudše-k* 's/he is short'. The Hungarian verbal suffix

1/3PSg *-k* is generally derived more or less plausibly from (reflexive) enclitics. (See e.g. Хелимский 1982 : 74—75, 78—79, Körtvély 2005 : 40). In case of Selkup one should keep in mind the possibility of alternation of the plosive stop *-k* for the homorganic nasal *-ŋ* at the end of a word, whereby it is not self-evident which of the two is primary as far as verbal personal markers are concerned, i.e., whether the change was either *-k* > *-ŋ* or *-ŋ* > *-k* (see Mikola 2004 : 85—86). Common conservativeness of the Selkup southern dialects in preserving word-final *-k* and *-ŋ* (*-k* ~ *-ŋ* alternation being not inherent to them) can hardly be of any help because regrettably the 1/3P verbal personal suffixes occur in those dialects as in the form *-k* as well as *-ŋ*, e.g., *kaudša-k* : *kaudše-k* ~ *įrua-ŋ* 'I got lost' : *įru-ŋ* 's/he got lost' (Хелимский 1982 : 78). Besides, according to M. A. Castrén's writings, a vowel may also occur at the end of the Selkup 1PSg verbal marker: *-k*, *-ge*, *-ŋ*, *-ŋe* (see Künnap 1971 : 167—168; 1978 : 29, 31).

Selkup is a peculiar language also for the 1PSg p o s s e s s i v e (\*)*k*-suffix which occurs in spatial cases of its possessive declension: *-k̄*, *-k*, *-γ*, *-ŋ*, e.g., prosecutive *loga-we-k* ~ *loga-une-ŋ* (prosecutive suffix *-we-* ~ *-une-*, cf. nominative *loga-p* ~ *loga-m* ~ *loga-u* 'my fox') (see Künnap 1971 : 166; Mikola 2004 : 108). It is interesting that it occurs at all but it is even strange that it does so only in spatial cases or, in other words, that it is missing in nominative: in genitive and accusative it could have assimilated according to case endings *n* and *m* that sometimes preserved discoverable traces, e.g., genitive *logann(a)* 'of my fox' < \**loga-n-ŋ(a)* (genitive suffix *-n-* + 1PSg possessive suffix *ŋ(a)*) (Castrén 1854 : 311). I could hardly suppose anything else but the descent of the possessive suffix from the verbal personal suffix (Künnap 1971 : 168; cf. Mikola 2004 : 108). Toivo Lehtisalo supposed that the Selkup 1/3P verbal markers *k* ~ *ŋ* descended from the aorist (indicative, in fact) marker *ŋ* (Lehtisalo 1938 : 22a; see also Künnap 1971 : 167—168; Mikola 1988 : 252; 2004 : 115). Eugene Helimski does indicate that, for instance, the form *tü-ŋa-k* 'I came' would in this case contain both the indicative suffix *-ŋa-* and the personal suffix *-k*, derived from it (Хелимский 1982 : 80). However, T. Lehtisalo himself saw it too (Lehtisalo 1938 : 22a). If T. Lehtisalo's supposition is correct and the *ŋ* is the more primary here, then Selkup may d r o p o u t of our observation altogether, owing to the lack of the primary verbal personal (\*)*k*-suffix.

In other Uralic languages, for denoting the 1P and/or 3P, the (\*)*k*-marker is used in M a r i, K o m i and U d m u r t only in negative auxiliary verbs, e.g., Meadow Mari *o-m луд* 'I don't read' : *o-k луд* 's/he doesn't read', Hill Mari *a-m лыд* 'I don't read' : *a-k лыд* 's/he doesn't read', Komi *o-2 мун* 'I don't go' : *o-3 мун* 's/he doesn't go' : *ə-2 мун* 'I didn't go' (dial. *и-2*) : *ə-3 мун* 's/he didn't go' (dial. *и-2*), Udmurt *у-2 мынійськы* 'I don't go' : *у-2 мыны* 's/he doesn't go' (Коведяева 1976 : 62; Тепляшина, Лыткин 1976 : 173, 175, 178; UEW 68).

Various suppositions have been made about the origin and possible interrelationships of the verbal personal (\*)*k*-markers in all above named Uralic languages, of which a good overview has been given by E. Helimski (Хелимский 1982 : 70—88). He himself supposes that once there was a Proto-Uralic e a s t e r n m o s t a r e a where Hungarian and Samoyedic came from, probably also Ob-Ugric and possibly easternmost Finno-Permic languages. Among other features, the area was characterised by the 1PSg

verbal marker  $*-k(V)$  (?  $*-kkV$ ) in indefinite (subjective) conjugation and 3PSg reflexive verbal marker  $*-jVkk(V)$  (?  $*-jVkkV$ ) or (with a raised initial vowel)  $*-Vk(V)$  (?  $*-VkkV$ ) in reflexive conjugation (86–87).

E. Helimski himself admits a number of drawbacks in his supposition. We would first mention a striking one in which case only Hungarian and Selkup can be considered as the languages with a n y t r a c e s of phonetic evidence of the 1PSg verbal marker and 3PSg reflexive verbal marker, reconstructed by him, cf. Hungarian 1PSg *irok*, *késem* : 3PSg *késik* and Selkup 1PSg *kaudšam* : 3PSg *kaudšek*. Although E. Helimski reconstructs a source form  $*-k$  for some 3P verbal personal markers  $-ʔ$  of Northern-Samoyedic reflexive conjugation, there is not the least phonetic evidence in those languages: the evidence rather shows the source form  $*-t$  — namely, E. Helimski obviously does not reckon with the fact that in Tundra Nenets and Forest Nenets  $-t$  is one of the forms in the 3P verbal marker of reflexive conjugation (Lehtisalo 1938 : 25; Salminen 1997 : 104). Ob-Ugric languages without of the 1/3P verbal  $(*)k$ -marker — Mansi and Hanti — and Finno-Permic easternmost languages with the 1/3P verbal  $(*)k$ -markers that are applied only to the negative auxiliary verb — Mari, Komi and Udmurt — have no relevance here at all. (Yet no-one has offered a better explanation than postulated by E. Helimski about raised vowels in front of the 3PSg verbal  $(*)k$ -suffix in Hungarian, e.g. ( $e >$ ) *i*, and Selkup, e.g. ( $a >$ ) *e*).

There is good reason, though, to analyse both 1P and/or 3P  $(*)k$ -markers in the three Volgaic-Permic languages — Mari, Komi and Udmurt — more closely. The examples given above show that in those languages in negative auxiliary verbs the root vowel that precedes the  $(*)k$ -markers under discussion is usually a back one ( $u \sim o \sim a$ ) and only in case of the Komi preterite it is front ( $i \sim e$ ). On the other hand, it is reasonable to suppose that the primary Uralic negative auxiliary verb was f r o n t - v o c a l (?  $*e-$ ). Namely, its possible equivalents in a number of Altaic and Paleosiberian languages are also front-vocal (see Иллич-Свитыч 1971 : 17, 264–265; Collinder 1977 : 73; Poppe 1977 : 222; Bomhard, Kerns 1994 : 580–581; Greenberg 2000 : 214–217; Marcantonio 2002 : 239; Klesment, Künnap, Soosaar, Taagepera 2003 : 378). The *a* and *э* of the "definite" common-Uralic Proto-Uralic/Proto-Finno-Ugric reconstructions in the two principal Uralic etymological dictionaries — "e ~ ä (? FU) ~ a (? FU) (Verneinungspartikel → Verneinungsverb U)" (UEW 68) and "Sam. [Samoyedic] *i-* ~ *e-* ~ *э-* verbum negativum ~ suom.-perm. [Finno-Permic]  $?*e-$  id. ... < ural. [Uralic]  $?*e$  (~  $*э-$ ) verbum negativum" (Janhunen 1981 : 269) — are a sheer nonsense.

Considering the occurrence of b a c k v o w e l variants in those reconstructions is substantially based on the  $(*)k$ -marked back-vocal forms under observation in Volgaic-Permic languages. Besides, *l*-type forms are used only in the imperative and include the alternation of front and back vowels, e.g., Finnish *älä* 'don't' ~ Veps *ала* id. Researchers share little conviction that the *l*-type forms could be explained as  $*e-$  deverbial derivatives of a negative auxiliary verb or a semantic antonym of the verb  $*elä-$  'to live' ('to live' = 'to be' and 'to be' ~ 'not to be'). (See in more detail UEW 68–70; cf. also Collinder 1940 : 64–66; Honti 1997 : 171–173.) One should not forget that equivalents to those Uralic *l*-type prohibitive forms may be (partly back-vocal) negation words such as in Yukaghir *эл*, *el(e)* (see Nyikolajeva 2000 : 49; Marcantonio 2002 : 239), Mongolic *ülä-*, Caucasian *ar(a)*, Dravidian *al(a)*,

etc. (see Иллич-СВИТЫЧ 1971 : 17; Collinder 1977 : 73; Klesment, Künnap, Soosaar, Taagepera 2003 : 378). Likewise, in connection with the reconstructions under discussion, the Selkup back-vocal negation particle *ašša*, *aša*, *aha* etc., actually borrowed to Selkup from Evenkish (cf. Evenkish negative verb *\*attš(a)* 'not to be/exist') has sometimes mistakenly been related to a successor of the primary Uralic negative auxiliary verb (see about the Evenkish source of Selkup *ašša* etc. Katz 1970 : 149–150).

Thus, it looks as if the occurrence of back-vocal variants of Proto-Uralic/Proto-Finno-Ugric/Proto-Samoyedic reconstructions under observation would only contain back-vocal variants of Volgaic and Permic negative auxiliary verbs. However, there is good reason to query the genuine Uralic origin of the latter. Its background can best be explained by beginning with the Mari negation word *uke* 'there/it is not'. René Hesselbäck writes, "The etymology of *uke* is uncertain. According to Kangasmaa-Minn [---], it is a "negative noun", possibly of Turkic origin. Honti [---] claims that it originates in a verb form *ok* 'es ist nicht'. But he seems to be of the opinion that the vowel *u* in the Mari morpheme *uke* can be the result of influence from Kazan Tatar in which *yuk* 'es gibt nicht' according to him is a negative particle. The Mari morpheme *uke* does have a formal resemblance with morphemes in Tatar and Chuvash, Tat *yuk* 'non-existent; absent; there is not; no' [---] and Chuvash *śuk* 'there is not, there are not; there does not exist'. N. Poppe [---] states that *yuk* is a negative noun in Tatar, the functions of which closely resemble those of the Mari *uke*."

R. Hesselbäck indicates that there are also other similarities between the Mari morpheme *uke* and corresponding morphemes in Tatar and the other Turkic languages. And he continues, "There are thus both formal and functional similarities between Mari *uke* and the Tatar *yuk* and Chuvash *śuk*, similarities that hardly can be accidental. I believe that Kangasmaa-Minn is right assuming a Turkic origin of the Mari morpheme. [---] The form of the Mari morpheme is problematic since the initial *ś* in global copies of Chuvash lexemes normally is kept unchanged [---]. It is, however, worth noting that code-copies can be highly creative formations with respect to their phonological and morphological adaptation to the basic code." (my spacing — A. K). (Hesselbäck 2005 : 159–161; the same in Hesselbäck 2001 : 141–143 already.) A similar Turkic word *šök* etc. 'no, not' is found in Kamass language strongly influenced by Turkic (see in more detail Künnap 2002b : 36).

However, the version offered by Ivan Galkin in 1980 already, regrettably ignored so far (hereby I owe thanks to Professor Tiit-Rein Viitso for drawing my attention to the fact) proposes that the Mari *uke*, *ukej* 'not' descends from Mongolic *uguj* 'absence, non-possession' (Галкин 1980 : 125). I. Galkin writes that he found more than a hundred Mongolic lexemes in Mari whereby most of them have equivalents also in Chuvash and/or Tatar (120). According to I. Galkin there are no equivalents to the Mari word *uke* in Chuvash or Tatar (126). It is hard to say anything more exact about borrowing Mongolic lexemes into Mari but it probably happened during the Tatar-Mongol supremacy in the Volgaic area and could have been both a consequence of direct Mongolic contacts and via Turkic languages (119–120). The supposition about the Mari *uke* descent from Mongolic (not from Turkic!) is quite credible due to obvious

phonetic compatibility (Nicholas Poppe expositis Written Mongolic *ügei*, but cf. also Monguor *uguā*, *uguī*, Kalmuck *ugā* — Poppe 1987 : 289–291).

In accordance with this supposition, László Honti's view about the phonetic development *o* > *u* in Mari forms *ok* > *uke* (Honti 1997 : 162) should rather be reversed as a phonetic development *u* > *o* (*uke* > *ok*), cf. also Udmurt *u*, e.g., *уэ мыны* 's/he doesn't go'. L. Honti derives forms of the Mari negative auxiliary verb that are used in case of a missing negated verb from the form *ok* (Honti 1997 : 91): *оγδ-m* 'I am not' : *оγδ-t* 'you are not' : *оγδ-š* 's/he is not' (see Alhoniemi 1985 : 116). But the latter could have been derived also from the form *uke*. Thus all Volgaic and Permic negation words (incl. negative auxiliary verbs) with a back-vocal stem + *(\*)k* can assumingly be derived from the Altaic (Mongolic and Turkic) negation words. The same Mongolic word may have given rise to front-vocal variants of the auxiliary verb in the Komi preterite *eg* ~ *ig* etc., where in this case frontness of the vowel-material is seen as a trace of the preterite suffix *\*i*. Mongolic-type back-vocality has obviously been generalised also into such forms of negative auxiliary verb where *(\*)k* is lacking, e.g. Komi 1PSg *og mun* : (→) 2PSg *on mun* : 3PSg *oz mun*.

The Moksha Mordvin negative particle *af*, *afi* 'no, not', *af ... af* 'neither ... nor', e.g., *Af šin vajmama, a f veñ udoma a f sodat* '(literally:) "Neither daily rest, nor nightly sleep don't you-know"' (Щемерова 1980 : 398–400), comes assumingly from Turkic, cf. Middle Turkic *aw* 'no', *ab ... ab* 'neither ... nor' (Räsänen 1969 : 1a; see also Künnap 2002b : 36). It may be possible that the latter is related to the Komi *abu*, *abj*, *o-bø* 'it is not, not' (UEW 68), similarly to Kamass Koibal *abj* 'not' (Janhunen 1977 : 26). The incidence of Kamass equivalents *šök* etc. and *abj*, in particular, having no reference to the genuine Kamass origin supports a supposition about the Turkic origin of the Moksha Mordvin *af*, *afi* and Komi *abu* etc. So the derivation of the *(\*)k*-material of Volgaic-Permic negative auxiliary verbs from the suffix *\*k* of the present tense will become nonsensical (as will the derivation of the Moksha Mordvin negative particles *af* and Komi *abu* etc. from a deverbal noun with the suffix *\*p*) (see first of all Щемерова 1972; Майтинская 1974 : 308; UEW 68–69; cf. also Audova 2002 : 11). Similarly, in case of the back-vocal variants of the Ob-Ugric negative particles in Mansi *at*, *āt*, *āt'* etc. and Hanti *ant*, *anty*, *anta* etc. (see e.g. Collinder 1940 : 64) we could principally consider an alien (? Altaic) influence.

Gábor Bereczki, on the contrary, is convinced that Proto-Uralic had a negation verb *\*a-*. He regards the Meadow Mari vowel *o-* and Hill Mari vowel *a-* (< *\*o-*) as continuators to the latter in Mari. He also considers the consonant *-k* at the end of the Mari 3PSg of this negation verb as an earlier present tense suffix. Observing the Mari vowel *u* in the negation word *uke* he does not find it necessary to take into account any influence by the Tatar negation word *juk*, because during Tatar-Mari intensive contacts the Tatar word was believed to pronounce *\*jok* the evidence of which can be found in Mari loan words (Bereczki 2002 : 84–86). However, as mentioned above, the existence of the primary back-vocalic negative auxiliary verb is hard to believe. Likewise, the source for the Mari word *uke* seems rather to be in a Mongolian *u*-initial word.

In the course of his "Eurasianic language family" Joseph H. Greenberg (2000 : 68–70) mentions a parallel incidence of the 1P verbal inflection *K*

in the following languages: in Uralic languages — Hungarian, Selkup, ? Permic (with examples Zyryan Komi *e-g* 'I was not', *o-g* 'I am not', Udmurt *u-g* id.); Paleosiberian languages — Chukotka-Kamchatkan *-k*, e.g., Chukchi *мычейвы-к* 'I shall go' (see Скорик 1968 : 262), Eskimo-Aleutic *-ηa*, *-η* < \**ka* (*-k-i*, in which case *-i* occurs as a plural suffix), e.g., Aleut *хакаку-к* 'I go' (see Меновщиков 1968 : 397; Головкин 1997 : 113). In addition to those H. Greenberg proposes the Tungusic Tungus "destinative", e.g., *æ-γa-ku* 'this for me' (Greenberg 2000 : 68). We should notice that on this list H. Greenberg presents Permic languages as an option. Since the 1PSg verbal inflection *-m* is common in the languages of the area under observation, H. Greenberg contrasts the latter to the inflection *-k* in the following way: "... *m* as ergative versus absolutive *k*, *m* as active versus middle or passive *k*, *m* as active versus stative *k*." (67). Probably such contrasting is possible, although in my opinion it does not actually contribute to the clarification of the origin of the 1P verbal inflection (\*)*k* in Hungarian and — if such an inflection originally occurred in those languages altogether — in Permic and Selkup.

In conclusion, in the case of Uralic verbal personal (\*)*k*-markers we can probably come across very little etymologically common suffix-material inherent to all the Uralic language group and at times they may prove to be of Altaic origin altogether. The occurrence of Uralic verbal personal singular (\*)*k*-markers will be presented in the following Table:

	1P	2P	3P
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In Saamic there was possibly a genuine \**t* instead of \**k*; in Mari, Komi and Udmurt *k* occurs only in negative auxiliary verbs and these negative auxiliary verbs may descend from Altaic languages; in Selkup there was possibly a genuine \**η* instead of \**k*.

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АГО КЮННАП (Тарту)

#### ОБ УРАЛЬСКИХ ГЛАГОЛЬНЫХ ЛИЧНЫХ ПОКАЗАТЕЛЯХ НА (\*)*k*

Уральские глагольные личные показатели на (\*)*k*, вероятно, содержат очень мало суффиксального материала, общего для всей группы уральских языков, а иногда эти показатели имеют алтайское происхождение. Встречаемость уральских глагольных личных показателей единственного числа на (\*)*k* можно представить в виде таблицы:

	1-е лицо	2-е лицо	3-е лицо
саамские		+	
мордовские		+	
марийский			+
коми	+		
удмуртский	+		+
венгерский	+		+
селькупский	+		+

Возможно, в саамских языках первично был *\*t* вместо *\*k*. В марийском, коми и удмуртском языках *k* употребляется только во вспомогательных глаголах отрицания и, предположительно, эти вспомогательные глаголы происходят из алтайских языков. В селькупском языке, вероятно, первичным был *\*ŋ* вместо *\*k*.