

Unaccusativity and its influence  
on the purpose clauses system in Hill Mari

## I. Hill Mari language

- Finno-Ugric branch of the Uralic languages.
- 30 000 speakers, Mari El autonomous republic, Russia.

## I. Purpose clauses

- Purpose clauses (PC) are the adverbial clauses that express the intended situation, desirable for the matrix clause's agentive participant.
- One of the most relevant typological parameters of PC is their arguments' encoding. In this study we focus on the possibility of the PC's subject to be expressed overtly/omitted. The main factors, influencing this possibility are (see Cristofaro 2005, Schmidtke-Bode 2009):
  - The presence of a matrix clause's participant, which is coreferent with the PC's subject and the semantic role of this participant
  - The possibility to recover the subject from a discourse context or its irrelevance
  - The presence of arguments which belong to the PC semantically, but to the matrix clause syntactically (as in raising constructions).

## III. Hill Mari purpose clauses

Infinitive purpose clause:

(1) ər-äš      manên      tädê      plašëm      čï-š  
warm-INF      purp      he      coat-ACC      put.on-AOR[3SG]  
He put on the coat in order to warm up.

Infinitive PC in Hill Mari contains an overt subject (like in (2)), which is marked by dative case and can be omitted under certain conditions (like in (1)).

(2) petä-lan      mägör-äš      manên mën'      tädê-m šel-ën-äm  
P.-DAT      cry-INF      PURP I      he-ACC hit-PRF-1SG  
I hit Petya in order for him to cry

Now let's look at the following examples:

(3a) [(tädê-län<sub>i</sub>) uraş manên]      mën'      püşängö-m<sub>i</sub>      ro-e-m  
[(he-dat<sub>i</sub>) fall-INF PURP] I      tree-ACC<sub>i</sub> cut-NPST-1SG  
I am cutting the tree in order for him to fall.

(3b) [\* (tädê-län<sub>i</sub>)      karang-aš      manên] mën' pi-m<sub>i</sub> šel-ë-m  
[(he-DAT<sub>i</sub>)      go.away-INF      PURP] I dog-ACC<sub>i</sub> hit-AOR-1SG  
I hit the dog in order for him to go away.

The criteria mentioned above lead us to the following conclusions about these examples

- Both dependent clauses' subjects have an antecedent in matrix clause
- These antecedents are both direct objects and their semantic roles are patientive
- The syntactic structure of the examples (3a) and (3b) is more or less the same
- The possibility of (3a)'s and the inability of (3b)'s PC subject to be omitted is thus unexplainable in terms of those criteria.

In fact the relevant factor, influencing the possibility of PC subject to be omitted in case of coreference with matrix object, is the unaccusativity<sup>1</sup> of PC predicate.

Two options:

- The influence of unaccusativity at the Hill Mari PC system is an independent phenomenon and a typological novelty.
- The influence of unaccusativity at the Hill Mari PC system is caused by some other Hill Mari properties.

## IV. Hill Mari Ellipsis

Now let's look at these examples:

(4a) \*(koti) vas'ä      dokê tolên  
\*(cat) V.      at come-PRF[3SG]  
dä      vasä      koti-m      poktâl      kolt-en  
and V.      he-ACC      throw.out      send-prf[3SG]  
The cat came to V. and V. threw him out.

<sup>1</sup> Here we can roughly define unaccusative verb as an intransitive verb whose only argument is patientive. For further analysis see [Levin, Rappaport-Hovav 1995].

(4b) (lem) ükš-en dā vasā lem-əm kačk-ən  
 soup cool.down-prf[3sg] and V. he-acc eat-prf[3sg]  
 The soup became cold and V. ate it

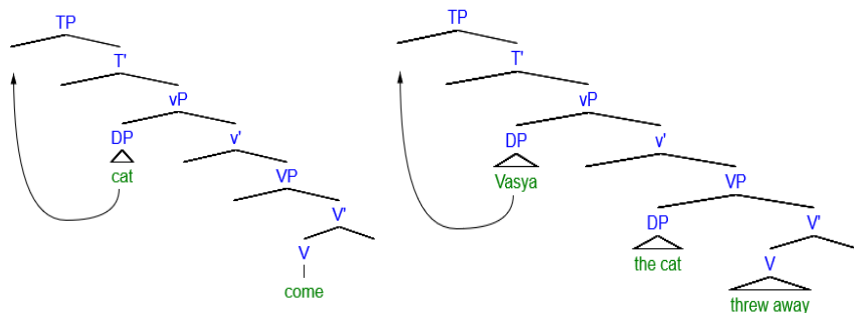
- The first clause's subject omission in (4b) is surely an ellipsis, not a null pronoun, because null pronoun (as any pronoun) must be c-commanded or preceded by its antecedent.
- On the other hand, ellipsis requires completely equal structures to delete one of them, what we do not observe here.
- The argument structure of the examples (4a) and (4b) is roughly the same:  $[S_i V]$  and  $[S O_i V]$

So why the subject omission in (4b) is allowed and in (4a) is not?

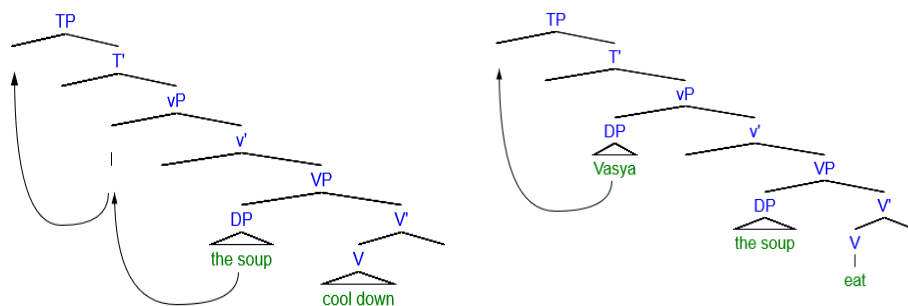
## V. Discussion

Let's look at (4a) and (4b) syntactic structures:

(4a):



(4b):



What we can see from those schemes<sup>2</sup>:

<sup>2</sup> Those trees does not illustrate the whole syntactic structure of the sentences; only the most necessary for our analysis elements have been displayed here.

- The sentences' second clauses have the same structures
- In (4a) the first clause's subject originally appears in SpecvP, the usual subject position.
- In (4b) the first clause's subject originally appears in SpecVP, the usual position of the direct object, due to the unaccusativity of the verb. Then, according to Burzio's Generalization (Burzio 1986), it moves to SpecvP to get a case.
- Thus, in (4a) the 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> clauses' VPs differ completely, while in (4b) they do not differ until the movement happens. This VP equality leads to a possibility of omitting one of the DPs which are located in the same structure positions.

So, we can see that Hill Mari ellipsis somehow happens in sentences like (4b) before the subject movement. A possible explanation could be provided basing on pseudoincorporation phenomenon (see [Serdobolskaya 2014] for Meadow Mari). The subject of the unaccusative verb is pseudoincorporated in sentences like (4b) before the subject movement to SpecvP and then it can be ellipsed.

## VI. Conclusions

Let's go back to infinitive purpose clauses. Sentences like (3a) can be analyzed now as those, whose dependent clause's subject is ellipsed due to its coreference with matrix clause object. And this is not possible in sentences like (3b) because their dependent clause's subject is located too high to be pseudoincorporated.

There is also another argument in favor of the pseudoincorporation account of the phenomena discussed above. The sentence (5) provides a good example of a purpose clause, whose subject seems to bear a nominative case (which is unmarked in Hill Mari).

(5) polotencā košk-aš manên măn' tädäm krüčok-ăš säk-en-äm  
 towel dry.up-INF PURP I he-ACC hook-ILL hang-PRF-1SG  
 I hung the towel on the hook in order for it to become dry

But if we claim it to be a normal nominative subject, we face two problems:

- Nominative subject in the infinitive clause in quite unexpected both within Hill Mari infinitive clauses system and typologically.
- PCs of this type are attested only with an unaccusative verb as their predicate (however, we cannot yet be sure that other verbs make this strategy of subject marking ungrammatical)

On the other hand we can consider a PC subject like in (5) as a caseless pseudoincorporated internal argument of an unaccusative verb. That will not only solve the latter two problems, but also provide an example of such

constructions and therefore make our analysis of the phenomena discussed above more reliable. But nevertheless, the sentences like (5) require further study.

The influence of the PC verb unaccusativity on the PC subject ability to be omitted is thus not an independent phenomenon and a typological novelty, but a result of some unusual ellipsis properties (which are probably caused by pseudoincorporation processes) in Hill Mari.

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