

Morphosyntactic duality of Avar negation

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Overview and aims

- ▶ try and make sense of two seemingly unrelated properties of negation in Avar
 - ▶ sentential negation in Avar displays a tense-based split (Uslar 1889)
 - ▶ no negation marker in Avar may attach to infinitival clauses (Rudnev 2015a)

Claims

- ▶ 2 distinct negation strategies, rather than just 2 distinct markers, operative in Avar (cf. Salish)
 - ▶ negation markers combine with syntactic objects of different size, motivated by the (formal) semantics of events, situations and propositions
- ▶ past tense in negated clauses is realised **indirectly**, viz. via **present tense**

Introducing the two properties

Avar: basic facts

- ▶ Northeast Caucasian
- ▶ ca. 700,000 speakers
- ▶ (morphologically) ergative
- ▶ preference for non-finite forms in dependent clauses

Property 1: Negation split

Non-past tenses (PRS, FUT): -ro

(1) Murad w-ač'-una
M.ABS M-come-PRS
'Murad comes.'

(2) Murad w-ač'-una-ro
M.ABS M-come-PRS-NEG
'Murad doesn't come.'

Past tense: two irregularities

-ro is incompatible with past tense

(3) Murad w-ač'-ana
M.ABS M-come-PST
'Murad came.'

(4) * Murad w-ač'-ana-ro
M.ABS M-come-PST-NEG
'(Murad didn't come.)'

dedicated marker -č'o, also incompatible with past tense

(5) Murad w-ač'-in-č'o
M.ABS M-come-NMLZ-NEG
'Murad didn't come.'

(6) * Murad w-ač'-ana-č'o
M.ABS M-come-PST-NEG
'(Murad didn't come.)'

Property 2: Incompatibility with infinitival clauses (Rudnev 2015a)

Neither *-ro* nor *-čo* can attach to infinitival clauses

- (7) a. * insuca w-ič-ana [dun školalde ine-ro]
father.ERG M-let-PST 1SG.ABS school.LAT go.INF-NEG
- b. * insuca w-ič-ana [dun školalde ine-čo]
father.ERG M-let-PST 1SG.ABS school.LAT go.INF-NEG

The same meaning can be expressed periphrastically

- (8) insuca w-ič-ana dun školal-de inč'ogo w-uk'-ine
father.ERG M-let-PST 1SG.ABS school.LAT go.CVB M-be-INF
'Father allowed me not to go to school.'

Analysing the split (Rudnev 2015b)

Assumptions

- ▶ negation markers are syntactic objects even though morphologically they are parts of morphological words
- ▶ functional categories are hierarchically ordered, the hierarchy being motivated ontologically (Ramchand & Svenonius 2014; Bybee 1985)
- ▶ event nominalisations, infinitival clauses and finite clauses spell out pieces of syntactic structure of different size

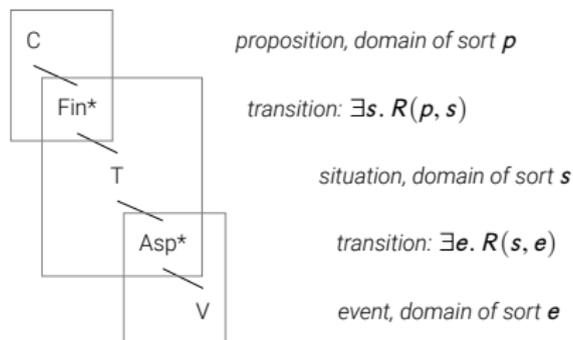


Figure 1: Deriving the functional hierarchy (Ramchand & Svenonius 2014)

Two strategies of expressing negation

Canonical negation

- ▶ finiteness carried by predicate
 - ▶ negation marker adjoins to finite clause

Predicative negation

- ▶ finiteness carried by negation marker
 - ▶ negation marker combines with non-finite, nominalised clause

Attested beyond Avar (Davis 2005)

(9) ʎux^w č̣i ʔi·tə́ḥ

NEG 1SG.SBJ eat

'I'm not eating.'

[Quinault; Davis 2005: 8]

(10) x^wʔaz k^w=ṣ̌=ʔč̣x̣-ən-č̣-haṣ̌

NEG D/C=NMLZ=see-TR-2SG.OBJ-3TR.SBJ

'He didn't see you.'

[Lillooet; Davis 2005: 4]

Why suspect existence of two strategies in Avar?

- ▶ nothing remarkable about **-ro**

Shape of negation marker **-č'o** resembles *heč'o* 'be.NEG.PRS'

- ▶ negative copula in existentials (Rudnev 2015a)
- ▶ negated auxiliary in PRS

(11) rasul šaharalda **heč'o**
R.ABS city.LOC **COP:NEG:PRS**
'Rasul is not in town.' [Loc]

(12) rasulil ħadi **heč'o**
R.GEN wife.ABS **COP:NEG:PRS**
'Rasul hasn't got a wife.' [Poss]

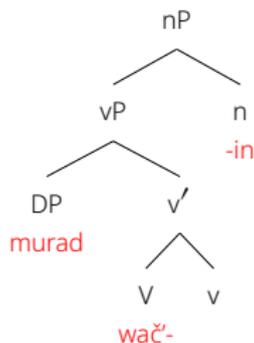
Stem hosting negation marker **-č'o** is a masdar

(13) duca t'ex **c'alič'o**
2SG.ERG book.ABS read.PST:NEG
'You haven't read the book.'

(14) duca t'ex **c'ali** b-ugo ħik'ab iš
2SG.ERG book.ABS read N-is good.N thing
'That you have read the book is a good thing.'

Syntactic and semantic properties of Avar masdars (work in progress)

- ▶ masdars are **event nominalisations**
- ▶ category-wise, they are vP-level nominalisations
 - ▶ smallest, root-based masdars of the Archi type (Polinsky, Radkevich & Chumakina 2017) are not attested



- ▶ all arguments are introduced inside the nominalisation
- ▶ both case assignment and agreement are also licensed internally to it
- ▶ semantically, Avar masdars denote **event** descriptions

Avar negation and clause structure

Non-past (cf. Quinault from earlier)

- ▶ negation marker **-ro** attaches to a finite clause (FinP)

[_{NegP} [_{FinP} [_{TP} [_{VP} Murad wač'-] una-]] ro]

- ▶ FinPs correspond to **situations**

Past (cf. Lillooet from earlier)

- ▶ Structures with **-č'o** involve a nominalisation and a **negative copula/auxiliary**

[_{TP} [_{nP} [_{VP} Murad wač'-] in-] -č'o]

- ▶ Negated past is a negative existential **in the present tense**
→ there should be evidence for this

Infinitives are smaller than FinP but bigger than nP

- ▶ are thus incompatible with either **-ro** or **-č'o**

Participles as evidence for PST:NEG being morphosyntactically PRS

Non-past

- (15) a. w-ač'-un-e-w
M-COME-PRS-PTCP-M
- b. w-ač'-una-r-e-w
M-COME-PRS-NEG-PTCP-M

Past

- (16) a. w-ač'-a-ra-w
M-COME-PST-PTCP-M
- b. * w-ač'-inč'o-ra-w
M-COME-PST:NEG-PTCP-M
- c. * w-ač'-a-č'o-ra-w
M-COME-PST-NEG-PTCP-M
- d. w-ač'-in-č'-e-w
M-COME-NMLZ-NEG-PTCP-M

→ **negated PST is morphosyntactically PRS**

Summary and outlook

The analysis sketched here accounts for

- ▶ incompatibility of **-č'o** with PST, and indeed any tense
- ▶ PRS-like behaviour of negated PST
 - ▶ though the verbal paradigms should be studied more carefully
- ▶ incompatibility of infinitives with negation

The analysis does not explain

- ▶ coexistence of two negation strategies, or their emergence
- ▶ incompatibility of **-ro** with PST

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