Non-standard aspects of Finnic negation based on the Votic and Ingrian languages

The paper addresses a few aspects of the Finnic negation system based on the material of the Votic and Ingrian languages. Negation in Finnic exhibits a number of specific features, and is generally uniform. However, many deviations and contact-induced developments are found in certain Finnic varieties. Naturally, deviations spread at first in languages that do not have a literary standard. Both Votic and Ingrian offer much possibility to study these phenomena: they do not have a written standard, they are not subject to forced normativity, and they quickly reflect both the language-internal and contact-induced changes.

In Votic and Ingrian (same as in most other Finnic languages, see Honti 1997, Miestamo et al. 2015), negation is based on the following principles. (1) Negative constructions are built by means of a predication that consists of a conjugated negative auxiliary verb and a lexical verb. Consequently, the negated constituent is the predication, while the negation of other elements in the sentence might be problematic. (2) The lexical verb has a special form (connegative, participle, etc.) that expresses grammatical characteristics of the negative construction together with the negative auxiliary (asymmetric negation with reduced finiteness of the lexical verb, in terms of Miestamo 2005). (3) There are other linguistic means that express negation either in combination with the negative predication or independently such as negative polarity forms of pronouns and adverbs, the abessive case, the caritive derivational affixes, special negative conjunctions, etc.

In this paper, we will focus on three aspects of negation.

1. The negative pronominal forms.

Votic has negative polarity forms of pronouns and some adverbs (in terms of van Alsenoy and van der Auwera (2015)) that only occur in negative constructions. Ariste (1968: 61) refers to the same forms as “negative pronouns” that are derived by means of the emphatic negative suffix -iD, e.g. eb mitäiD ‘what.PART.NEG’, ep tšenniD ‘who.NOM.NEG’, eb miltineiD ‘which.NOM.NEG’. Similar negative polarity forms are observed in our field-materials recorded from Jõgõperä Votic speakers. However, in the neighbouring Luuditsa Votic the negative forms are very different, cf. mittä ‘what.PART.NEG’, tšettä ‘who.PART.NEG’, tšellä ‘who.ADALL.NEG’, etc. These must have developed under the contact influence of the Ingrian language that has similar forms, cf. mittää ‘what.PART.NEG’, keittää ‘who.PART.NEG’, kellää ‘who.ADE.NEG’. Still, Votic negative polarity forms cannot be treated simply as a copy of the Ingrian negative pronominal system. First, not all the negative forms in Luuditsa Votic are built in the same way as in Ingrian. Second, in the Votic context these forms require a different morphological interpretation. For example, in Ingrian a different length of the consonant in keittää ‘who.PART.NEG’ as compared to kedä ‘who.PART’ is triggered by phonetic reasons, namely the long final vowel. At the same time in Votic, this kind of explanation does not work for tšettä ‘who.PART.NEG’ vs tšettä ‘who.PART’, and so the geminate tt can be treated as a morphological operation of reduplicating the consonant in negative forms.

2. The development of hybrid negative forms in impersonal constructions.

Finnic languages have morphologically marked impersonal verbal forms that are used in constructions without a subject, e.g. Est. pangas hoitakse raha ‘Money is kept in a bank’. In Votic, the impersonal forms demonstrate a non-canonical development. Similarly to some other Finnic varieties, they completely replaced the original 3PL personal forms and occur both in impersonal and personal contexts, cf. impersonal construction tätä tšüzü-tä [3SG.PART ask-IMPERS.PRS] ‘He is being asked’, the original personal construction nämä tšüzü-väd [3PL ask.PRS-3PL] ‘They ask’ and the contemporary nämä tšüzü-tä [3PL ask-PRS.3PL(=IMPERS.PRS)] ‘They ask’.

In the affirmative paradigm, the impersonal forms are simply used instead of personal, but in the
negative paradigm, some non-trivial combinations have emerged. In the present tense, we observe the opposite replacement: personal forms occur in impersonal contexts, cf. gribba tæv̊-x̊p e-vääd kopita [mushroom.PART winter-ADALL NEG-3PL collect.CNG] ‘Mushrooms are not gathered in winter’. In the past tense and in the conditional, we find “mixed” forms where the negative auxiliary has a 3Pl personal form (instead of the expected 3Sg), while the main verb takes an impersonal form. These mixed forms are used in both 3Pl and impersonal sentences: tätä e-vääd tšüzü-tt̊ü [3SG.PART NEG-3PL ask-PRTPASS] ‘He was not asked’, nämä e-vääd tšüzü-tt̊ü [3PL NEG-3PL ask-PRTPASS] ‘They did not ask’.

3. The negative imperative constructions and their status from the theoretical and typological perspective.

In the chapter by van der Auwera and Lejeune (2013) in the World Atlas of Language Structures, two binary features are used to classify the prohibitive constructions: “The prohibitive uses a verbal construction of / other than the second singular imperative” and “a sentential negative strategy found / not found in (indicative) declaratives”.

In this chapter, Votic is classified as type 3, i.e. “special imperative + normal negative”. From our point of view, the classification should be the opposite, since the main verb in the prohibitive is identical with the 2Sg imperative (Vot. pajat̊ [speak.IMP.2SG] ‘speak!’ and elä pajat̊ [NEG.IMP.2SG speak.IMP.2SG] ‘do not speak!’), while the sentential negative strategy in declarative and prohibitive sentences is not the same (a number of irregularities will be discussed in the presentation).

As for the negative imperative constructions in Ingrian, they show the same features as in Votic, if we only consider the 2Sg forms (Ing. läkkää [speak.IMP.2SG] ‘speak!’ and elä läkkää [NEG.IMP.2SG speak.IMP.2SG] ‘do not speak!’). However, the 2Pl forms are radically different both from Votic and from most other Finnic languages. Instead of using the 2Pl imperative or a connegative of the main verb (both strategies are typical in Finnic), Ingrian plural prohibitive takes the infinitive, cf. läätkää [speak.IMP.2PL] ‘speak! (PI)’ and elkkää läädä [NEG.IMP.2PL speak.INF] ‘do not speak! (PI)’.

Therefore, the classification of the Ingrian singular prohibitive in terms of van der Auwera and Lejeune (2013) is the same as for Votic (“normal imperative + special negative”), but it leaves aside a non-canonical deviation in 2Pl forms that is very untypical in the Finnic context.

References


