

Focus particles on Hill Mari converbs license overt subjects

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This paper focuses on the syntax of Hill Mari negative converb in *-de* 'without doing smth., not doing smth.' It is a general negative converb, i. e. it allows for a variety of interpretations, i. e. temporal, causal, conditional, etc. Its use is exemplified in (1):

- (1) škol-əš kaš-de əšan a-t li
school-ILL come-CVB.NEG intelligent NEG.NPST-2 be
'If you don't go to school, you won't be intelligent.'

1. Subject expression. The main topic of the paper will be the **peculiar pattern of expression of subjects** that this converb exhibits. Usually, the converb has a PRO in its subject position, which is controlled by one of the matrix clause's arguments, while overt subjects are ruled out.

- (2) *mən' pəšə-š kaš-de xoza məl'am
I work-LAT come-CVB.NEG boss I.DAT.POSS.1SG
oksa-m a-k pu
money-ACC NEG.NPST-3 give

Int. meaning: "If I don't go to work, the boss won't give me money."

However, there is some case when overt subjects become possible. It happens when the clause has a concessive reading:

- (3) jur-vlä əl-te=ok rok načkə
rain-PL be-CVB.NEG=EMPH ground wet

'Although it has not been raining, the ground is wet.'

The concessive reading does not come for free, though. In the majority of cases, the converbial form is to be marked by the focus particle *=ok* (as it does in (3)) or otherwise receive a huge prosodic emphasis.

We are going to provide an analysis for this phenomenon in lines with the recent generalizations made by L. Haegeman and Y. Endo (2019) about the correlation between external and internal size of adverbial clauses. According to Haegeman and Endo, concessive clauses sit relatively high in the matrix clause; their internal structure, too, has to include higher clausal projections than it is the fact with causal or conditional clauses. So we propose that the converb in *-de* can merge in different places in the verbal spine, and it is the concessive variety which merges the highest of all. Similarly, only the concessive variety has a full-fledged T projection to license an overt subject.

2. Why *-de* + *=ok* = concessive? The semantics of the focus particle *=ok* is discussed in [Gareyshina et al. 2018] and [Kozlov 2018] (the very fact that the presence of the particle unexpectedly allows there to be an overt subject, is pointed out in the former). But it turns out that *=ok* on *-de* means something different than elsewhere. The second topics of our talk is **the unexpected semantic input** *=ok* has on the negative converb.

A focus particle is a legitimate device for getting a concessive clause out of, say, a conditional one; but most typically it is additive or scalar additive particles that do the trick (see e. g. König 2002, Forker 2016). The pattern we see in English (4) is replicated in many languages and has a clearly compositional semantic explanation

(4) a. If the sky falls down, ... (conditional)

b. **Even** if the sky falls down, ... (scalar additive + conditional = concessive)

However, in its basic uses *=ok* is not even remotely additive. Both aforementioned recent studies converge on the conclusion that it is an “emphatic identity” particle, used roughly similar to the English *it*-cleft construction. In all other contexts, it introduces the exhaustivity presupposition: ‘no focus alternatives other than the prejacent are true’ (Atlas, Levinson 1981).

We are going to show that there is no possible compositional account for this behaviour of *=ok*. Instead, we are going to build on Zakirova’s (2019) empirical study of how *=ok* was borrowed throughout the languages of the Volga-Kama Sprachbund. As far as we can see, the whole construction *-de=ok* is a pattern borrowing from Bulgar, where the corresponding combination is compositional.

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