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Data of the published paper (<https://benjamins.com/catalog/impact.50.06asz>):

Asztalos, Erika. 2021. From head-final towards head-initial grammar. Generational and areal differences concerning word order usage and judgement among Udmurt speakers. In Diana Forker and Lenore A. Grenoble (eds.), *Language Contact in the Territory of the former Soviet Union* [IMPACT: Studies in Language, Culture and Society 50], 143–182. Amsterdam/Philadelphia: John Benjamins Publishing Company. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1075/impact.50.06asz>

Book volume: <https://benjamins.com/catalog/impact.50> DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1075/impact.50>

**From head-final towards head-initial grammar: generational and
areal differences concerning word order usage and judgement among
Udmurt speakers¹**

Short title: From OV towards VO grammar: the case of Udmurt

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Contrary to the commonly assumed view that Udmurt is a non-rigid head-final language (Vilkuna, 1998), I argue that Udmurt is undergoing an (S)OV>(S)VO change through the influence of (S)VO Russian, but this change proceeds more slowly in the areas where (S)OV Tatar is also spoken.

¹ I would like to acknowledge the following grants: Erasmus Mundus “Aurora”, ERC_HU OTKA 118079 “Languages under the influence”, NKFI-125282 “Typological Database of the Volga Area Finno-Ugric Languages”, NKFI-125206 “Nominal Structures in Uralic Languages”, NKFI-129921 “Implications of endangered Uralic languages for syntactic theory and the history of Hungarian”. I would also like to thank the reviewers, whose suggestions helped to improve this paper. I am grateful to Marija Zolotarëva, Ljubov' Frolova, Aleksandr Korepanov, Olesja Polatova and Tatjana Jumina for distributing my questionnaires to their acquaintances, and I am also indebted to all of my Udmurt consultants for filling in my questionnaires. Special thanks to András Bárány for correcting the English of this paper.

In my survey, younger speakers of Udmurt produced and accepted head-initial phrases (embedded in discourse-neutral sentences) to a higher degree than older ones. In an *apparent-time hypothesis* approach, this difference may indicate that Udmurt is undergoing a typological change. On the other hand, speakers from Tatarstan had a stronger preference for the head-final variants than the ones from Udmurtia. I suggest that the influence of Tatar “refrains” the typological change of Udmurt in these areas.

Key words: word order, Udmurt, typological change, (S)OV, (S)VO, head-final, head-initial, Russian, Tatar, apparent-time hypothesis

1. Introduction

Udmurt (Uralic; Russia) is traditionally regarded as a non-rigid (S)OV (or head-final) language. Several sources admit the existence of non-verb-final sentences and of head-initial phrases in the language, but they claim such constructions to be pragmatically marked and consider verb-final sentences and head-final constructions as neutral (cf. Žujkov, 1937; Bulyčov, 1947; Gavrilova, 1970; Konjuxova, 1964; Krivoščekova-Gantman, 1967; Šutov, 1988, 1993; Csúcs, 1990; Suihkonen, 1990; Vilkuna, 1998; Tánčzos, 2010; Winkler, 2001; Timerxanova, 2011). However, more recent studies argue

that in contemporary Udmurt, (S)VO order may also appear in discourse-neutral sentences (Ponarjadov, 2010; Asztalos & Tánčzos, 2014; Asztalos, Gugán & Mus 2017), and that Udmurt is rather a typologically mixed, (S)OV-(S)VO language (Ponarjadov, 2010; Asztalos & Tánčzos, 2014). The emergence of the (S)VO properties in Udmurt has been attributed (at least partly) to Russian influence (Ponarjadov, 2010; Asztalos, Gugán & Mus, 2017).

The goal of the present paper is to provide evidence for the claim that the contemporary Udmurt language is undergoing a typological change from (S)OV to (S)VO constituent order, or, in other words, from a head-final to a head-initial language. A similar typological change has already taken place (even if it has not affected all phrase types) in the closest relatives of Udmurt, namely, in Komi-Zyrian and in Komi-Permyak (Ponarjadov, 2010, p. 52).

The study reported here tested, using discourse-neutral sentences, the acceptability and usage of the head-final and head-initial variants of Dryer's correlation pairs (cf. Dryer, 1992) and of some other constituent types. The results indicate that there are both generational and areal differences in speakers' word order preferences.

On the one hand, younger speakers produced head-initial variants more frequently, and they also judged them more acceptable than older respondents. According to the apparent-time hypothesis (cf. Labov, 1963;

Trudgill, 1992), such a generational difference may indicate a linguistic change in progress – in this case, the OV > VO change of Udmurt. The generational difference in speakers' word order preferences is presumably related to differences in their bilingualism: whereas old speakers are typically Udmurt-dominant bilinguals, young Udmurts tend to be Russian-dominant bilinguals, and have lower competence in Udmurt than old speakers (Salánki, 2007, p. 59). Russian features SVO basic word order, and phrases are generally head-initial (cf. Bailyn, 2012, pp. 239–44), thus the major preference of younger Udmurts, compared to older speakers, for head-initial word order variants.

On the other hand, consultants from Tatarstan had a stronger preference for head-final orders than those from Udmurtia. This was especially striking in the case of the older consultants: they consistently used head-final constructions and hardly judged head-initial variants acceptable. The preference for head-final structures in this area is probably due to contact with Tatar, a head-final language (cf. Ponarjadov, 2010, pp. 16, 91, 93).

The paper is structured as follows: In Section 2 I present the background of the study. After providing some general information on Udmurt, I discuss in detail the sociolinguistic context of language contact in Udmurtia and Tatarstan. Afterwards, I introduce the basic notions of word order typology, focusing mainly on Dryer's *Branching Direction Theory*

(Dryer, 1992), and I describe the main typological word order properties of Russian and Tatar, the two contact languages of Udmurt relevant for this study. In the last subsection of the chapter I give a short overview of the previous literature on Udmurt word order, emphasizing that Udmurt has been described as a (non-rigid) SOV language in the vast majority of the studies. In Section 3 I present the questionnaire used for carrying out the research and I give some general information on the respondents who filled it in. In Section 4 I introduce the results of the survey first by giving an overall summary of it, and then by providing the results of some concrete test sentences construction by construction. In Section 5 I discuss which constructions proved to be more prone in Udmurt to undergo word order change, and which types of phrases had a more rigid head-final order. Finally, in Section 6 I draw the conclusions of the study.

2. Background

2.1 The Udmurt language

Udmurt belongs to the Permian subgroup of the Finno-Ugric branch of the Uralic language family. Its closest relatives are Komi-Zyrian and Komi-Permyak. Udmurt is an agglutinative language. According to the 2010

census, it is spoken by 324,000 native speakers in the territory of Russia. The total number of the language users is 340,530, while the number of the ethnic population is 554,000.² Udmurt is mainly spoken in the Udmurt Republic (Udmurtia), where it is a minority language, and in the neighboring administrative units of the Russian Federation (Tatarstan, Bashkortostan, Mari El, Perm Krai, Kirov Oblast, Sverdlovsk Oblast etc.). Udmurt, besides Russian, is the official language of the Udmurt Republic, although this does not imply that it is used to the same extent as Russian (cf. Section 2.2.1). Not surprisingly, Udmurt is subject to strong Russian influence.

Geographically, Udmurt forms part of the Volga-Kama Sprachbund together with Chuvash, Tatar, Bashkir (Turkic languages) and Mari, Mordvin and Komi (Finno-Ugric languages) (Helimski, 2003, p. 159).

2.2 Sociolinguistic background

According to Salánki's (2007) sociolinguistic survey (carried out among speakers of Udmurt living in the Udmurt Republic), 98% of the Udmurt speakers are bilingual, and speak both Udmurt and Russian (2007, p. 81). Besides, a part of Udmurt speakers – mainly those who live in Tatarstan and

² Source of the data: Ethnologue (<https://www.ethnologue.com/language/udm>. Accessed on 22.04.2018).

in the southern parts of Udmurtia – speak Tatar, as well (Salánki, 2007, p. 26). However, generations differ concerning their competence in Udmurt and Russian (Salánki, 2007, p. 89, 205): older Udmurts are usually Udmurt-dominant speakers; middle-aged speakers typically have an equal command of Udmurt and Russian (Salánki, 2007, p. 82), whereas the young generation frequently has higher proficiency in Russian than of Udmurt (in other words, they are either balanced or Russian-dominant bilinguals) (Salánki, 2007, pp. 82, 85).³ In what follows, I provide a more detailed overview of the sociolinguistic background of the study and the nature of language contact in Udmurtia and in Tatarstan. I discuss language acquisition, language competence and language of instruction of speakers belonging to different generations, as well as in the domains of use of Udmurt, Russian and Tatar.

2.2.1 Udmurtia

Salánki (2007) points out that the differing linguistic competence of old, middle-aged and young generations of Udmurt speakers is related to their different sociolinguistic background. Whereas old speakers have typically

³ When referring to Salánki (2007), by old/middle-aged/young speakers I mean those speakers who were, respectively, older than 60 years old/between 31 and 60 years/between 17 and 30 years at the time Salánki's sociolinguistic survey was carried out. (Salánki (2007) does not provide neither the birth years related to her age groups nor the exact year(s) when she collected her data.)

acquired Udmurt at home, and Russian only subsequently at school, a considerable part of the middle-aged and young speakers have also acquired Russian at home, often simultaneously with Udmurt (Salánki, 2007, pp. 85–86, 88).

Generations also differ with regard to the language in which they were instructed at school. Among Salánki's older respondents, around 35% received their entire education in Udmurt (Salánki, 2007, p. 86). They are presumably speakers who attended primary school in the 1920s and 1930s, when so-called “national primary schools” offered education to non-Russian schoolchildren in their native language in rural areas (Salánki, 2007, p. 36). The proportion of speakers who either studied in both languages (Udmurt and Russian) or were entirely educated in Russian is higher among the middle-aged and the young speakers than among the old ones (Salánki, 2007, p. 87). Evidently, the reasons of this reside in the history of education in (and of) Udmurt. From the 1930s on, instruction in Udmurt was being gradually abolished. By the 1970s, Russian became the primary language of education (Salánki, 2007, pp. 36–37), and at best, Udmurt language was taught as a subject. The number of schools and kindergartens where Udmurt language and literature were taught, as well as the proportion of schoolchildren studying Udmurt has continued decreasing also in the post-Soviet period (Salánki, 2007, pp. 37–38; Zamyatin, 2012b, p. 18), especially in urban environment (Zamyatin, 2012b, p.18). E.g., by

the academic year 2009–10, Udmurt as a subject was taught to only 15% of all schoolchildren in Udmurtia (ibid.). Nowadays, Udmurt language and literature are only taught in (primary and secondary) “national schools”, in a couple of hours per week. Even in these institutions, they are taught as optional subjects (Shirobokova, 2011, p. 54).

To sum up, the younger the speakers are, the less they had access to formal education in (and of) Udmurt. Apart from generational differences in linguistic competence, this may also entail that older speakers of Udmurt have a more normative approach to the language than younger ones. The proportion of speakers who use only or mainly Udmurt in their everyday communication is higher among the older than the middle-aged and younger generations, while the percentage of those using only or mainly Russian is the highest among the young generation (Salánki, 2007, pp. 91–92). Some young speakers use exclusively Russian in their everyday communication (Salánki, 2007, pp. 92, 119). Code-switching is also becoming more frequent among the young generation (Salánki, 2007, p. 11).

Nowadays, the use of Udmurt shows a decreasing tendency both in public and private spheres. The middle-aged generation has also started to communicate in Russian (besides Udmurt) with their family members, and young speakers continue their practice (Salánki, 2007, p. 96). Today, mainly Russian is used by each generation in some public places such as hospitals, shops, or at doctor’s offices (Salánki, 2007, p. 110). The language of

administration is almost exclusively Russian, and Russian is also used more frequently in written communication (Salánki, 2007, p. 114). Russian has a wider (though, not exclusive) use in the sphere of education, at workplaces, in the service industry and in the media as well (Xakimov and Trusova, 2010, p. 138). According to Xakimov and Trusova (2010, p. 138), usage of Udmurt is mostly restricted to the private sphere and leisure activities. As for public places, according to Salánki (2007, p. 110), Udmurt is mainly used at post offices and in workplace canteens.

Some recent tendencies, however, give evidence of the spread and the active use of the Udmurt language in one domain, namely, the Internet. In the last few years, several blogs and other social network sites have been created in Udmurt. The authors and readers of these sites are mainly young intellectuals living in an urban environment, thus, they “represent and reach out to groups usually considered to be most threatened by Russification” (Pischlöger, 2014, p. 145). The language used on these sites usually represents a variety of Udmurt close to the informal spoken language, it is characterized, e.g., by code-switching and the mixing of different styles and dialects (Pischlöger, 2014, p. 144).

Language usage is also correlated with place of residence (cf. Salánki 2007: 92–93, 103–104) and level of education (cf. Salánki, 2007, pp. 93, 206) of the speakers. From an areal point of view, Udmurt is used most frequently by speakers living in the southern and central parts of

Udmurtia, whereas it is used least frequently by urban Udmurts, especially those living in Izhevsk (Salánki, 2007, pp. 93, 103–104). As for education, a higher education level involves a decreasing use of Udmurt (Salánki, 2007, pp. 93, 206; Xakimov and Trusova, 2010, p. 138).

2.2.2 Tatarstan

As mentioned in 2.1, Udmurt is also spoken outside the borders of the Udmurt Republic, in the neighboring administrative units of the Russian Federation, among which the Republic of Tatarstan. Udmurts have been living in these areas for centuries (Csúcs, 1998, p. 276). According to the 2010 census, the number of Udmurts living in Tatarstan is 23,454, and more than one third (35%, or 8,215) of them speak Tatar in addition to Udmurt and Russian (Census 2010). However, the degree of competence in Tatar of these Udmurts varies considerably, depending on factors such as place of residence, education, age etc. (Csúcs, 1998, p. 276). A part of the Tatar-speaking Udmurts can be considered trilingual (Csúcs, 1998, p. 276; Salánki, 2015, p. 243).

The literature on Tatar language competence and the multilingual practices of the Udmurts living in Tatarstan is rather scarce. Thus, in what follows, I am going to give a brief overview of the sociolinguistic status of the Tatar language in Tatarstan in general.

Tatar, beside Russian, is the official language of the Republic of

Tatarstan. However, this does not imply that it is used to the same extent as Russian. The Soviet period brought a decline in the use of the Tatar language, as it “had been virtually excluded from the public sphere in Tatarstan,” and primary and secondary education in Tatar was mainly limited to rural areas in this period (Gorenburg, 2005, p. 3). Between 1970 and 1990, the proportion of Tatar children being educated in their native language dropped from 70 to 24 percent (Gorenburg, 2005, p. 8). Sociolinguistic surveys indicate that although by the end of the Soviet period “the Tatar language remained dominant in Tatar-populated rural districts, a large number of urban Tatars had switched to Russian as their primary language of communication” (Gorenburg, 2005, p. 4), and younger Tatars became less likely to use Tatar even in private spheres than older ones (Gorenburg, 2005, p. 6).

After the collapse of the Soviet Union, a government-sponsored language revival program was launched in Tatarstan (Gorenburg, 2005, pp. 8–17). This included, besides the expansion of the use of the Tatar language in the public sphere (Gorenburg, 2005, pp. 12–15), an educational reform aimed at increasing the proportion of Tatar children receiving primary and secondary education in their native language (Gorenburg, 2005, pp. 8–9). At the end of the 1990s, Tatar was introduced as a mandatory subject for all schoolchildren (independent of their ethnicity) in all schools of the republic (Gorenburg, 2005, p. 11). Gorenburg (2005, p. 15) points out that by the

middle of the 2000s, the status of the Tatar language became higher and its range of functions became much broader than 15 years earlier. Despite this, the percentage of Tatars using their native language, as well as the level of competence in Tatar of the speakers continued to decline even after the implementation of the language reform (Gorenburg, 2005, pp. 17–18), and Russian still continued to be more widely used and perceived as more prestigious than Tatar by a large part of the population of the Republic (Gorenburg, 2005, p. 2).

Mandatory teaching of Tatar was abolished in 2017. Since then, Tatar can only be taught with parental consent on an optional basis for a maximum of two hours a week.

Based on the above picture, we can make the rough assumptions that the middle-aged and the older generation (i.e., those who received their primary and secondary education before the 1970s) on the one hand, and the population living in rural areas on the other hand have better competence in Tatar than both the younger generation and urban speakers.

Paradoxically, Udmurt language teaching is in a better situation in Tatarstan than in Udmurtia. According to Zamyatin, between the years 1995 and 2008, native language teaching was provided to 62.3–71% of the Udmurt students in Tatarstan (2012b, p. 27), while to only 13–14.5% in Udmurtia (2012b, pp. 25–26). This may imply that young Udmurts from Tatarstan have a better competence in Udmurt than young Udmurts from

Udmurtia, and also that the Udmurt language skills of the former group are more influenced by the literary norm.

2.3 Theoretical background

Studies in word order typology (Greenberg, 1963; Lehmann, 1973, 1978a, 1978b; Vennemann, 1974; Dryer, 1992) demonstrate that cross-linguistically, basic word order at the sentence level correlates with the (neutral) internal order of certain constituents. Basic word order at the sentence level, according to Siewierska (1988), is present in “stylistically neutral, independent, indicative clauses with full nouns phrase (NP) participants, where the subject is definite, agentive and human, the object is a definite semantic patient, and the verb represents an action, not a state or an event” (Siewierska, 1988, p. 8). A further characteristic of basic word order is pragmatic neutrality (cf. Song, 2001, p. 49), which means that sentences with basic word order appear in so-called “neutral contexts” and are associated with a neutral information structure. What is a pragmatically neutral context is the subject of some debate (cf., e.g., Pullum, 1977 vs. Mithun, 1992 and Dryer, 1995). The present study follows an approach according to which neutral sentences are identified with discourse-initial sentences (cf. Pullum, 1977, p. 266), or, more precisely, with so-called *all-new* or *out-of-the-blue* (also called *thetic*) sentences (cf. Bailyn, 2012, p.

252). Such sentences can be elicited, e.g., by means of the question meaning ‘What happened?’, ‘What is happening?’, or ‘What’s new?’ (cf. Bailyn, 2012, p. 263).⁴

Many theories of word order typology (cf. Lehmann, 1973, 1978a, 1978b; Vennemann, 1974; Dryer, 1992), however, do not take into consideration the position of the subject while referring to basic word order, and only make a distinction between OV and VO languages. The investigation introduced in this paper was carried out in one type of OV/VO typology, namely, Dryer’s (1992) *Branching Direction Theory*. Dryer (1992) used a statistically representative sample of 625 languages for exactly determining those pairs of elements (so-called “*correlation pairs*”) that correlate in order with the verb and object. The *Branching Direction Theory* states that *object patterner* elements are phrasal (or branching) categories, whereas verb patterners (which are syntactically heads) are non-phrasal (or non-branching) categories (Dryer, 1992, p. 89). The complete list of correlation pairs is given in Table 1.

Table 1. Correlation pairs (Dryer, 1992, p. 108)

verb patterner	object patterner
verb	object
verb	subject
adposition	noun phrase

⁴ In many languages, alternative (i.e., non-neutral, or marked) orders are also grammatical besides basic word order (both at the sentence and at the phrasal level). However, typological correlations exist between *basic* sentence and phrasal orders, thus, languages are classified in linguistic typology on the basis of basic word order.

copula verb	predicate
'want' modal auxiliary	verbal phrase
tense/aspect auxiliary verb	verbal phrase
negative auxiliary	verbal phrase
complementizer	sentence
question particle	sentence
adverbial subordinator	sentence
article	noun (N')
plural word	noun (N')
noun	genitive
noun	relative clause
adjective	standard of comparison
verb	adpositional phrase
verb	manner adverb

2.3.1 Word order in Russian

As noted in 2.1 and 2.2, Udmurt is subject to strong Russian influence. Typologically, Standard Russian has been classified as an (S)VO language (Bailyn, 2012, pp. 238–57). In neutral contexts (e.g., as an answer to the question meaning ‘What’s happening?’), the only felicitous order of the main constituents of transitive sentences is SVO (Bailyn, 2012, pp. 249–54, 262–64), cf. (1). Phrases are mostly head-initial (Bailyn, 2012, pp., 239–40): adpositions precede the noun (2), nominal possessors follow the head noun (3), the neutral position of auxiliaries is preverbal (4), etc.

(1) Context: ‘What’s happening?’

Mal'čik čitaet gazetu.

boy read:3SG newspaper.ACC

‘A boy is reading a newspaper.’ (Bailyn, 2012, p. 263)

(2) *posle zaščity*
after defense.GEN
‘after the defense’

(3) *dissertacija Ivana*
dissertation Ivan:GEN
‘Ivan’s dissertation’

(4) *Ivan budet tancevat’.*
Ivan AUX.FUT:3SG danse:INF
‘Ivan will dance.’

In Standard Russian, word orders deviating from the above illustrated patterns can appear in non-neutral contexts, that is, when they are associated with a non-neutral information structure (Zemskaja, 1979, pp. 143–44; Bailyn, 2012, pp. 257–64). E.g., OVS order can arise when the subject is focused, i.e., as an answer to the question ‘Who bought a/the book?’ (5). Thus, in Standard Russian, word order is the primary means for marking information structure (Zemskaja, 1979, p. 153).

(5) Context: ‘Who bought a/the book?’

Kn'igu kupil brat.

book.ACC buy:PST.M brother

‘(It was) my brother (who) bought a/the book.’ (Bailyn, 2012, p. 258)

In colloquial Russian, however, word order is much more flexible than in Standard Russian (Zemskaja, 1979, pp. 158–59).⁵ Contrary to Standard Russian, information structure in spoken Russian is mainly (though, not exclusively) indicated by intonation, meaning that sentences with the same word order can be associated with different information structures (Zemskaja, 1979, p. 158), and the same information structure can be expressed by means of different word orders (Zemskaja, 1979, pp. 153–54). Thus, colloquial Russian also allows for word orders that would not be allowed in Standard Russian in the same context; consider, e.g., OV order in (6) (which would be VO in Standard Russian) and GenN order in (7) (NGen in the standard variety). While in Standard Russian the rhematic part of the sentence is placed sentence-finally (Zemskaja, 1979, p. 153), in spoken Russian the rheme often appears sentence-initially (Zemskaja, 1979, pp. 146–59), but, provided that it is marked by intonation (Zemskaja, 1979,

⁵ I thank the anonymous reviewer for drawing this to my attention.

pp. 153–54), it can be placed in other positions, as well (according to Zemskaja (ibid.), basically “anywhere” in the sentence).

(6) Context: ‘I have to hurry.’

Podругu vstrečaju.

girlfriend.ACC meet:1SG

‘I (am going to) meet my girlfriend.’ (Zemskaja, 1979, p. 148)

(7) *Igor’a mama skoro priezžat.*

Igor:GEN mum soon arrive:3SG

‘Igor’s mum will soon arrive.’ (Zemskaja, 1979, p. 147)

To sum up, while Standard Russian can be classified as a VO language, colloquial Russian is characterized by a much larger degree of word order flexibility. In spoken Russian, word order is not the primary means for indicating information structure (which might ultimately lead to the conclusion that basic word order is hard to identify in colloquial Russian).

2.3.2 *Word order in Tatar*

As mentioned in Section 2.2, southern dialects of Udmurt are also in contact with Tatar, a Turkic language. Tatar is a non-rigid (S)OV language (Kashaeva, 2012, pp. 77–78) with head-final phrases, as illustrated by the

examples in (8)–(10).

(8) *bala almany ashyi.*

child apple eats

‘The child eats the apple.’ (Kashaeva, 2012, p. 77)

(9) *alsu marat jazgan xatny uqyj.*

Alsu Marat written letter reads

‘Alsu reads the letter that was written by Marat.’ (Greed, 2014, p. 70)

(10) *bala inde uqyj belä.*

child already reading knows

‘The child can already read.’ (ibid.)

2.4 Comparative-historical background

Whereas Proto-Uralic is assumed to have been a consistent SOV language (Collinder 1960, pp. 248, 250; Hajdú, 1981, p. 167; Bereczki, 2003, pp. 59, 96), and Proto-Permic a “non-entirely consistent” SOV language (Ponarjadov, 2010, pp. 88, 91–92), contemporary Komi-Zyrian and Komi-Permyak are classified as non-consistent *SVO* languages (Vilkuna, 1998, p.

178; Ponarjadov, 2010, pp. 16, 52, 54). According to Ponarjadov, the first signs of an SOV > SVO change appeared already in Proto-Permic, but the typological change of the Komi languages took place (under Russian influence) around the 16th-17th centuries, that is, after the divergence of Proto-Permic into Komi and Udmurt (Ponarjadov, 2010, pp. 87, 95). In other words, Proto-Udmurt was presumably a (non-entirely) consistent SOV language.

2.5 Previous analyses on Udmurt word order

In the first studies concerned with Udmurt word order (Glezdenev, 1921; Baušev, 1929), Udmurt is claimed to have strictly verb-final sentences, and a general rule that modifiers always precede the modified element (i.e., the head). Sentences with a different word order pattern are considered to be incorrect and to be avoided. These studies, however, presumably rather reflect a normative approach than the real linguistic situation of the time: the advice to avoid non-verb-final sentences and non-head-final structures in general (cf. Glezdenev, 1921, pp. 50–53) is actually a piece of evidence that non-verb-final sentences and head-initial constructions *did exist* in Udmurt already at the beginning of the 20th century. This assumption is also confirmed by Bulyčov, who states that word order already seems to be

relatively free in the folklore texts collected by Wichmann at the end of the 19th century (Bulyčov, 1947, p. 82).

Later descriptive work on Udmurt word order admits that non-verb-final sentences and head-initial phrases exist in Udmurt, but consider such sentences and constructions as stylistically/pragmatically marked, performing a special discourse function (cf. Žujkov, 1937; Bulyčov, 1947; Gavrilova, 1970; Konjuxova, 1964; Krivoščekova-Gantman, 1967; Šutov, 1988, 1993; Csúcs, 1990). This view is also shared by more recent studies written in a typological or transformational-generativist framework (cf. Suihkonen, 1990; Vilkuna, 1998; Winkler, 2001; Tánčzos, 2010; Timerxanova, 2011). Some of these studies are based on literary texts from different periods of the 20th century (Gavrilova, 1970; partly Suihkonen, 1990; Vilkuna, 1998; Timerxanova, 2011), others on folklore texts from the end of the 19th century (Bulyčov, 1947 and partly Suihkonen, 1990), while Tánčzos's (2010) paper presents contemporary data collected by means of a questionnaire. According to these authors, the predicate can appear sentence-initially in Udmurt e.g., in interrogative sentences (Žujkov, 1937, pp. 18–19) and when it bears “logical stress” (Bulyčov, 1947, p. 35) (that is, when it has a focus-like function). Tánčzos (2010) and Timerxanova (2011) suggest that any permutation of S, O and V different from SOV contain a focused element. Noun phrases in which the modifier follows the noun (i.e., *noun–genitive* and *noun–numeral* orders) are considered to be

rare and/or associated with a special meaning (e.g., numerals following the noun express an approximate quantity, cf. Krivoščekova-Gantman, 1967, p. 271).

To sum up, the majority of the studies on Udmurt word order consider Udmurt to be a non-rigid SOV language.

Glezdenev (1921, p. 52), Bulyčov (1947, pp. 79, 82) and Gavrilova (1970: 118) attribute the emergence and the spread of non-verb-final sentences and of head-initial phrases to the influence of Russian. Bulyčov actually claims that there is an ongoing word order change in Udmurt (1947, pp. 4, 59, 79), by which he means that sentence word order is becoming less rigid in Udmurt.

The third group of studies concerned with Udmurt word order claim that (S)VX ordered sentences are not as marginal in Udmurt as one could think on the basis of the previous literature (Salánki, 2007), and/or that non-verb-final sentences can also be neutral in Udmurt (Asztalos & Tánzos, 2014; Ponarjadov, 2010; Asztalos, Gugán & Mus, 2017).

Salánki (2007), although she does not analyze word order from a pragmatic point of view, points out in her questionnaire-based sociolinguistic study that in contemporary Udmurt, SVX sentences are widely accepted among speakers: the majority of her respondents judged SVX ordered sentences as grammatical independently of their age (Salánki, 2007, p. 175).

Ponarjadov examines word order in the Permic languages (Udmurt,

Komi-Zyrian and Komi-Permyak) on the basis of folklore texts from a typological point of view. Besides sentence word order, he is also concerned with noun phrases and claims that Permian languages are typologically mixed – they represent characteristics of both SOV and SVO languages (2010, pp. 45–54, 93), since neutral and “emphatic” (non-neutral) word orders typical both for SOV and for SVO languages are present in them. However, the “SOV component” and the “SVO component” are present to different degrees in Udmurt and in Komi: while Udmurt is “a non-consistent SOV language with a considerable presence of SVO component” (2010, p. 47), Komi-Zyrian and Komi-Permyak are “non-consistent SVO languages, with a considerable presence of SOV component” (2010, p. 54). Ponarjadov states that the emergence of non-verb-final sentences and of the SVO component in the Permian languages is motivated both by language-internal factors (2010, pp. 37, 94) and by the influence of Russian (2010, pp. 16, 95). The “SVO component” is present to a greater degree in Komi than in Udmurt because Russian exercised a stronger influence on Komi than on Udmurt (2010, pp. 92–93). Furthermore, the Turkic SOV languages spoken in the neighborhood of the Udmurt speech area also promoted the preservation of the SOV properties of Udmurt (2010, pp. 16, 91, 93).

3 Methods

The main goal of the study presented in this paper was to empirically test whether Udmurt is undergoing a word order type change. The research was carried out by means of questionnaires during a fieldwork in the winter of 2014–15.

In the questionnaire, word order of different constructions (cf. 4.1–4.4) was tested using discourse-neutral sentences. As pragmatic neutrality is considered to be one of the main characteristics of basic word order (Song 2001, p. 49), I assumed that the emergence of head-initial constructions in pragmatically unmarked, discourse-neutral sentences would be one of the characteristic features of a typological shift in basic word order. Discourse-neutral sentences were defined as a) all-new sentences lacking topical and focal *constituents* (elicited using the questions ‘What’s happening?’/‘What happened?’/‘What’s new?’, cf. 2.3),⁶ or b) all-new sentences with a topical subject.

As we have seen in 2.2 and 2.2.1, while old speakers of Udmurt are typically Udmurt-dominant bilinguals (and the variety of Udmurt spoken by them may be more influenced by the Udmurt literary norm), young speakers are often Russian-dominant bilinguals (cf. Salánki, 2007, p. 59). Since Standard Russian is a VO language, and colloquial Russian is

⁶ Such sentences are instances of *sentence focus* (cf. Lambrecht, 1994, pp. 233–35).

characterized by a large degree of word order flexibility (cf. 2.3.1), it can be assumed that young speakers use and accept head-initial constructions to a greater extent than old speakers. Thus, the study aimed also at comparing word order preferences of different generations of Udmurt speakers. According to the *apparent-time hypothesis*, age-graded variation in speakers' speech may indicate a linguistic change in progress (Labov, 1963; Trudgill, 1992).⁷ Thus, if young speakers use head-initial constructions more frequently than old speakers and judge such constructions to be more acceptable, this could be a sign of an ongoing (S)OV > (S)VO change.

Finally, the research also aimed to test whether there are areal differences concerning word order. Ponarjadov states that the Turkic languages surrounding the Udmurt language area supported the preservation of the SOV properties in Udmurt (2010, pp. 16, 91, 93). In 2.2.2 we have seen that about one third of the Udmurts living in Tatarstan speak also Tatar (especially the old and the middle-aged generations, and those living in rural areas). We have also seen that young Udmurts from

⁷ An anonymous reviewer called my attention to the fact that Nahkola & Saanilahti (2004) have shown that an age-stratified variation does not in every case predict a linguistic change (Nahkola & Saanilahti, 2004, p. 86). The authors present examples in which, across generations, middle-aged speakers and young ones seem to take a change in opposite directions, and point out that such instances, in reality, give evidence of a relatively stable variation pattern where the use of certain variants "could be some kind of an age-related feature" (Nahkola & Saanilahti, 2004, p. 86). The available literature on Udmurt word order (cf. 2.5), however, suggests that the expansion of non-verb-final sentences and of head-initial structures is rather a gradual linear process than an age-related phenomenon in Udmurt. Thus, in this study, I do rely on the apparent-time hypothesis.

Tatarstan, because of the relatively more favorable educational situation of Udmurt in Tatarstan, arguably have better Udmurt language skills (and, at the same time, a more normative approach to the language) than young Udmurts from Udmurtia. All in all, we can assume that head-initial phrases are less frequently used and less accepted in Tatarstan than in Udmurtia.

3.1 *The constructions*

In the questionnaire, I tested the word order of those correlation pairs (cf. Dryer, 1992) which are grammatical in Udmurt both in head-final and in head-initial order.⁸ (The order of verb + subject was examined only in existential and in predicative possessive sentences.) Additionally, the following constituent types (which are analogous to certain correlation pairs

⁸ The order of certain correlation pairs is rigid in Udmurt. Udmurt has postpositions (i) (a couple of sources (Bulyčov, 1947; Timerxanova, 2011) claim that Udmurt has three prepositions: *og* 'approximately', *kotyr* 'id.' and *byden* 'per head', but since these elements do not mark any syntactic function, categorizing them as adpositions is arguable). Temporal auxiliaries follow the lexical verb (ii), giving rise to head-final phrases, whereas negative auxiliaries always precede the lexical verb (iii), resulting in head-initial constructions.

- (i) *konferencija bere*
conference after
'after the conference'
- (ii) *uja-z val*
swim-PST.3SG AUX.PST
'(s)he had swum'
- (i) *ug uja*
NEG.PRS.3SG swim.CNG.3SG
'(s)he does not swim'

and are grammatical in either order) were also included in the investigations:

- modal auxiliaries + VP (analogous to ‘want’ + VP);
- verb + case-suffixed noun/pronoun with adverbial function (analogous to verb + adpositional phrase);
- adjective + complement (analogous to adjective + standard of comparison);
- noun + complement/adjunct (analogous to noun + genitive).

3.2 Task types

The survey aimed at eliciting both production data and grammaticality judgements on the head-initial and head-final variants of the constructions, which were embedded in sentences. As mentioned at the beginning of Section 3, the discourse-neutrality of the test sentences was provided by the linguistic context, as the majority of the sentences were given as answers to the question ‘What happened?’/‘What’s new?’ (which elicits a discourse-neutral answer). Three types of closed-ended questions (1–3.) and one open-ended question (4.) were applied:

(1) Sentence complementation: the consultants had to complete sentences by inflecting and ordering the words that were given in their uninflected form in brackets.

(2) Grammaticality judgements: the respondents had to evaluate the grammaticality of head-initial constructions embedded in sentences using a scale of 3 values; the values were given an explicit description ('good'/'not too good'/'bad').⁹ Additionally, they also had to correct those sentences that they judged as odd or ungrammatical. This was necessary for making clear whether the reason for the oddity/ungrammaticality was related to word order issues, or to other (e.g., lexical) reasons. Whenever a correction did not affect the word order of the original test sentence, the sentence was considered to be grammatical with respect to word order, i.e. it was counted as if a consultant would have judged it as grammatical.

(3) Simultaneous evaluation of the head-initial and head-final variants: the participants had to evaluate both the head-initial and the head-final variants of given syntactic structures using a scale of 3 values; again, the values were given an explicit description. This task allowed for the comparison of the head-initial and head-final versions of the same construction.

For the construction adjective + standard of comparison, the following open-ended question was applied:

⁹ The labels ('good'/'not too good'/'bad') did not turn out to be very felicitous, as some of the speakers misinterpreted the task and consequently evaluated the test sentences on the basis of their content (i.e., whether the sentence informed about good or bad news). Such answers were considered as invalid answers when evaluating the questionnaires.

(4) Picture description: the respondents had to compare two markedly different people (i.e., a tall and thin girl with a small and corpulent girl) on the basis of a schematic cartoon.

The questionnaire contained several test sentences for each syntactic construction in order to see whether grammatical or semantic factors may influence the choice between head-initial and head-final patterns. The investigated independent variables were, among others, definite vs. indefinite nominal complements; grammatically heavy vs. light complements; in the case of genitive (possessor) and nominal possessee constructions, alienable and inalienable possession, etc. However, this approach resulted in such a proliferation of test sentences that it would have been impossible to test them during one session with each of the three types of closed-ended questions. For this reason, I devised three variants of the questionnaire, and a given sentence was tested only with one question type in a given questionnaire variant.

3.3 The consultants

The three types of questionnaires were filled in by altogether 90 (= 29 + 29 + 32) native speakers of Udmurt. However, the number of valid answers in many cases was lower than the number of the respondents of the related question.

Consultants were invited to participate in the study partly by the author, partly by other Udmurt speakers, who were asked to distribute the (paper-based) questionnaires among their acquaintances in their native villages and/or in the villages nearby. Data were collected from speakers of each main dialect groups (northern, central, southern), and also from urban speakers (those living in Izhevsk), but the number of the participants was not balanced with respect to the dialects investigated.

When evaluating the questionnaires, respondents were divided into two larger groups according to their place of residence:

(1) Udmurts living in Udmurtia (67 participants). (Data collected from different dialectal areas in Udmurtia were merged into one group during the evaluation, because there were no relevant differences concerning word order preferences in the results.)¹⁰

(2) Udmurts living in Tatarstan (23 participants).¹¹

¹⁰ More precisely, the respondents came from the following districts and villages:

- Balezinskij district (13 consultants): Ušur village, Ker-Njura village (northern dialect group);
- Šarkanskij district (6 consultants): Sosnovka village, Ljal'šur village, Kulak-Kučes village, Bisul-Kučes village, Pašur-Višur village (northern and central dialects),
- Zav'jalovskij district (1 consultant): Varaksino village (northern dialect group);
- Malopurginskij district (28 consultants): Malaja Purga locality, Kečëvo village, Sundukovo village, Valion village, Alganča-Igra village, Uča village, Minderevo village, Kečežyl village, Puro village (central and southern dialects);
- Kiznerskij district (9 consultants): Sarkuz village, Novaja Panderka village (central and southern dialects);
- Alnaškij district (1 consultant): Tujmyjyl village (southern dialect group);
- Izhevsk city (9 consultants).

¹¹ All of the respondents came from the Kukmorskij district of the Republic of Tatarstan (southern dialect group, peripheral subgroup), but from different villages: Verxnij Šun' village, Počinok Suter village, Važašur village, Novyj Kaensar village.

Two larger groups were formed also on the basis of the birth year of the consultants:¹²

1. Respondents born between 1933 and 1965 (= “young(er) speakers”, 32 participants);

2. Respondents born between 1970 and 2002 (= “old(er) speakers”, 56 participants).¹³

Consultants were asked to provide also their level of education and profession in the questionnaire, and to specify whether they speak Udmurt or Russian better, or if they have an equal competence in the two languages. What was striking in this respect is that the respondents who declared to speak Russian better than Udmurt were all from Udmurtia, and they belonged almost exclusively to the young generation. More precisely, 24,5% of the younger respondents from Udmurtia claimed to have a stronger competence in Russian than in Udmurt, while none of the consultants from Tatarstan, and only 4,5% of the older speakers from Udmurtia did so. This suggests that the presence of Russian-dominant bilingualism is correlated not only with the age of the speakers (as shown by Salánki, 2007, pp. 82, 85), but also with their place of residence.

¹² Dividing the participants into more than two age groups would have resulted in too small subgroups at the evaluation of the single tasks (especially if we take into consideration that there were three variants of the questionnaire, and the number of valid answers in many cases was lower than the number of the respondents, as mentioned above). Thus, I preferred to form two age groups only.

¹³ Two respondents did not provide their year of birth.

4 Results

The results show that the majority of the constructions examined can appear in head-initial order in discourse-neutral sentences. Almost all head-initial variants were produced and judged as acceptable by a part of the participants. However, head-final variants were more frequent and more generally judged as grammatical. Still, in most of the cases more than 50% of the participants considered head-initial variants as grammatical. Besides, in the simultaneous evaluation task, most frequently at least 25% of the participants (in some cases, more than 40% of them) either judged head-final and head-initial variants to be equally acceptable, or preferred the head-initial construction.

There were both generational and areal differences in the answers. Compared to older participants, younger respondents produced head-initial variants more frequently, and judged them to be more acceptable in the case of most test sentences. Also, the speakers who preferred the head-initial constructions, or judged the head-initial and the head-final variants as equally acceptable, mostly belonged to the younger generation. Following the apparent-time hypothesis (Labov, 1983; Trudgill, 1992), such a generational difference can be interpreted as the sign of a linguistic change

in progress, namely, of the typological change of Udmurt from the head-final to the head-initial language type.

Respondents living in Tatarstan, especially those belonging to the older generation, stuck to the head-final versions more than those from Udmurtia: they produced head-final constituents more frequently, and evaluated head-initial variants lower on the acceptability scale than the latter group. Thus, out of the four groups established according to age and place of residence (i.e., younger speakers from Udmurtia; older speakers from Udmurtia; younger speakers from Tatarstan; older speakers from Tatarstan), older speakers from Tatarstan proved to be the most “conservative”, while younger speakers from Udmurtia turned out to be the most progressive concerning their word order preferences. Younger speakers living in Udmurtia produced head-initial variants, and judged them as acceptable most frequently, while this was the least frequent among the older speakers from Tatarstan. Members of the latter group consistently used head-final structures: they produced almost exclusively head-final constructions; they hardly judged head-initial variants as grammatical, and they almost always preferred head-final variants to head-initial ones. The answers of younger speakers living in Tatarstan were similar to younger speakers living in Udmurtia in some of the test sentences, whereas in some other cases their answers were analogous to those of older speakers from Tatarstan.

To sum up, the results indicate that word order have changed more in the dialects spoken in Udmurtia. The more conservative word order characteristics of the Udmurt dialects spoken in Tatarstan are presumably due to contact with (S)OV Tatar on the one hand, and to the peripheral position of these dialects in the Udmurt speech area on the other hand.

Out of the grammatical and semantic independent variables that were investigated, it was only grammatical weight that seemed to influence the choice of the speakers, as heavier constituents were more likely to follow the head than grammatically light dependent elements.

In what follows, I will illustrate the results summarized above with some concrete examples. The length of the questionnaires does not allow to illustrate in detail in this paper the results of all applied test sentences. Thus, in Section 4, for each construction type examined only one test sentence will be presented, and the results of only one task type per test sentence. The context of the test sentences will be given only when it was different from the question ‘What happened?’/‘What’s new?’. The results will be broken down into generational and areal groups. In Section 6, a schematic summary of the overall average results of *all* test sentences will be given.

4.1 Verbal phrases

4.1.1 Verb (V) + object (O)

In the grammaticality judgement task, a much greater proportion of young respondents judged the sentence in (11) to be acceptable than of older participants, as illustrated in Figure 1.¹⁴ All of the old speakers from Tatarstan judged the sentence as ungrammatical.

- (11) *Nast'a šukk-i-z Kol'a-jez.*
 {Nastja} hit-PST-3SG {Kolja}-ACC
 'Nastja hit Kolja.'

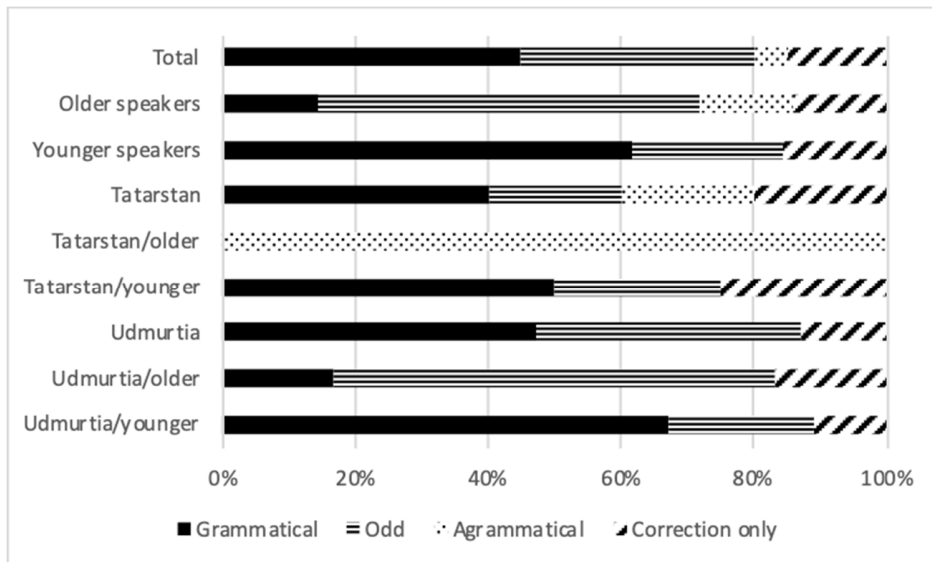


Figure 1. Acceptability of VO order (grammaticality judgement)

4.1.2 Verb (V) + subject (S)

¹⁴ In the grammaticality judgement task, a part of the respondents did not give any grammatical judgement for certain test sentences, only proposed a correction for them. These answers are indicated in the diagrams by the label “Correction only”.

4.1.2.1 *Verb + subject in existential sentences.* In the simultaneous evaluation task, all of the older consultants (independently of whether they were from Udmurtia or Tatarstan) preferred the head-final variant of (12), as illustrated in Figure 2. On the other hand, the majority of the younger respondents from Udmurtia, and one third of the younger participants from Tatarstan judged the head-initial order at least as good as the head-final variant.

(12) Context: ‘Our village is big and nice.’

Otyn (kinoʹeatr no klub) vań (kinoʹeatr

there {cinema} and {clubhouse} be.PRS {cinema}

*no klub).*¹⁵

and {clubhouse}

‘There is a cinema and a clubhouse there.’

¹⁵ Here and throughout, examples in which the same element occurs in brackets in different positions illustrate the distribution of a *single* occurrence of that element.

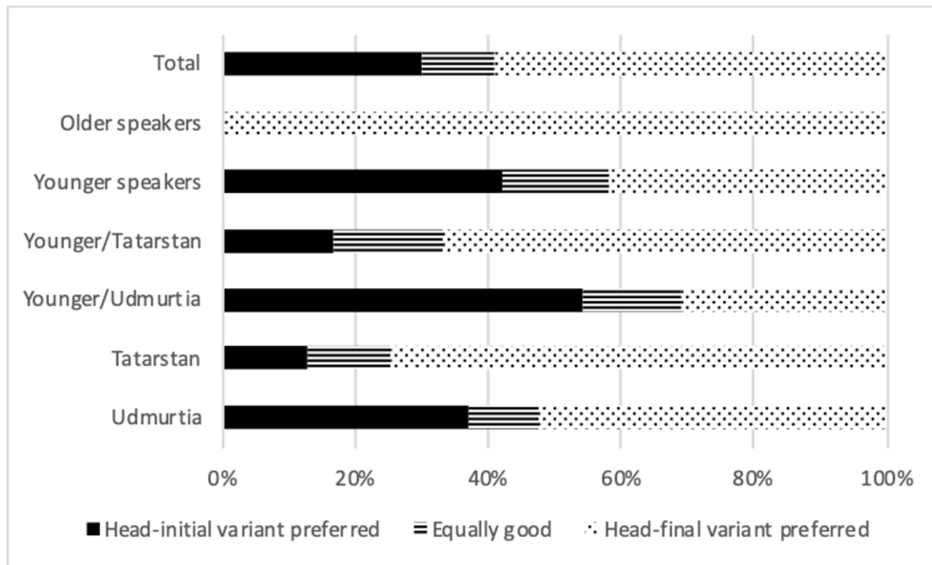


Figure 2. Order of existential verb + subject in existential sentences (simultaneous evaluation)

4.1.2.2 *Verb + subject in predicative possessive sentences.* The sentence in (13) tested the relative order of existential verb and subject in predicative possessive sentences. As illustrated in Figure 3, both areal and generational differences have shown up in the results: participants from Tatarstan used head-final order independently of their age. Older speakers from Udmurtia also produced the head-final variant without exception, whereas more than half of the younger speakers from Udmurtia completed the sentence using verb–subject order.

(13) Context: ‘The lynx lives in the forest. It is bigger than a cat.’

Peľ jil-jos-az so-len (kuź gon-jos-iz) vań
 ear tip-PL-3SG.INE 3SG-GEN long hair-PL-3SG be.PRS
(kuź gon-jos-iz).
 long hair-PL-3SG
 ‘It has long tufts on the tips of its ears.’

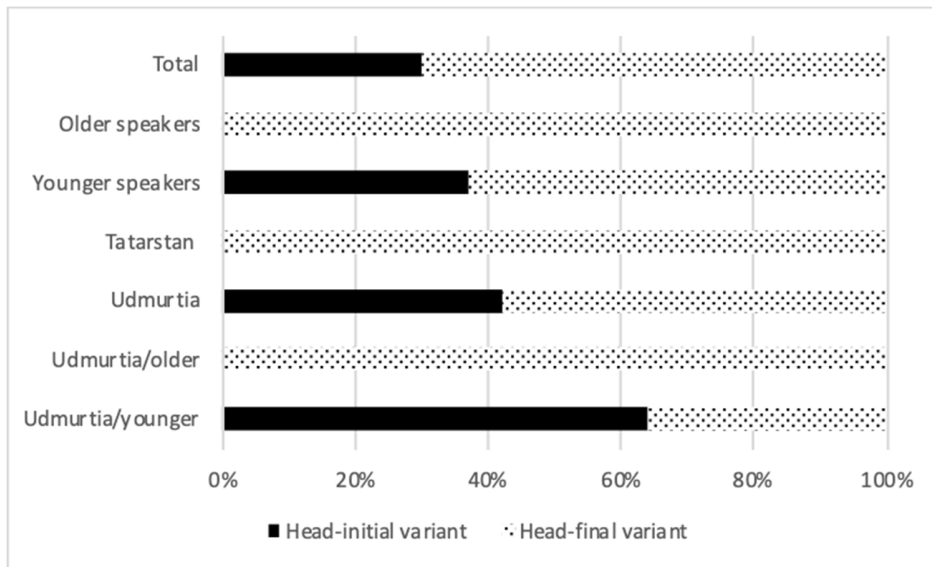


Figure 3. Order of existential verb and subject in predicative possessive sentences (sentence complementation)

4.1.3 Copula¹⁶ (Cop) + predicate (Pred)

Copula–predicate order (14) was considered as grammatical by a higher proportion of young respondents than of old ones, as shown in Figure 4.

¹⁶ In Udmurt, the *be*-verb is used both as a copula and as an existential verb (cf. 4.1.2).

From an areal point of view, consultants from Udmurtia judged the sentence in (14) to be better than those from Tatarstan. None of the old respondents from Tatarstan judged the sentence as grammatical.

(14) Context: ‘My grandmother used to work in school nr. 44.’

So val dyšetis.

3SG be.PST teacher

‘She was a teacher.’

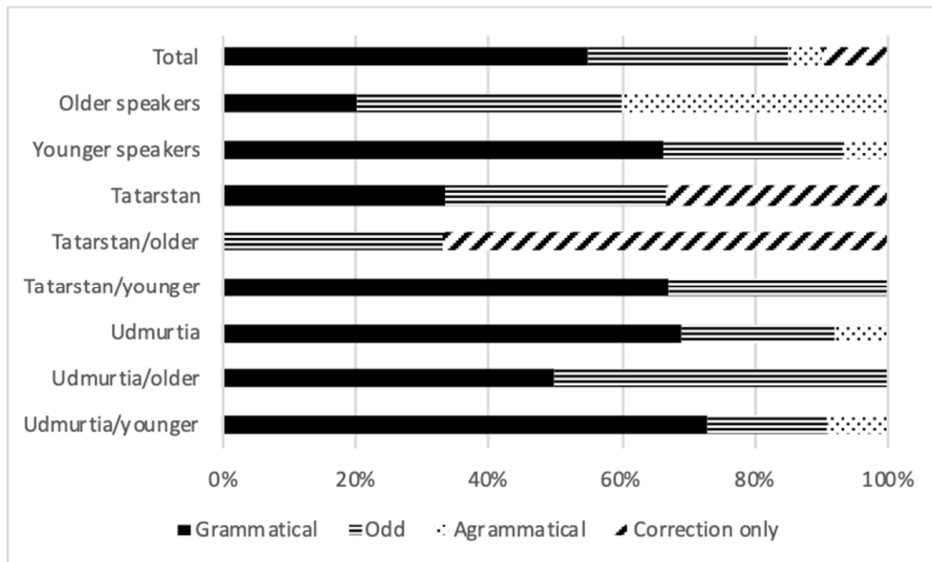


Figure 4. Acceptability of copula–predicate order (grammaticality judgement)

4.1.4 Modal auxiliaries (*Aux_{Mod}*) + VP

4.1.4.1 'want' + VP. In the grammaticality judgement task, the sentence in (15) was judged as grammatical only by consultants from Udmurtia, as illustrated in Figure 5. Younger speakers accepted the sentence to a much higher degree than older respondents.

- (15) *Jegit-jos-len pot-i-z šuldyrjašk-em-zy, no*
 young-PL-GEN want-PST-3SG have_fun-PTCP.PRF-3PL and
košk-i-zy ekt-yny kyče=ke klub-e.
 go-PST-3PL dance-INF what_kind_of=PTCL {clubhouse}-ILL
 'Young people wanted to have fun, and they went to some
 clubhouse.'

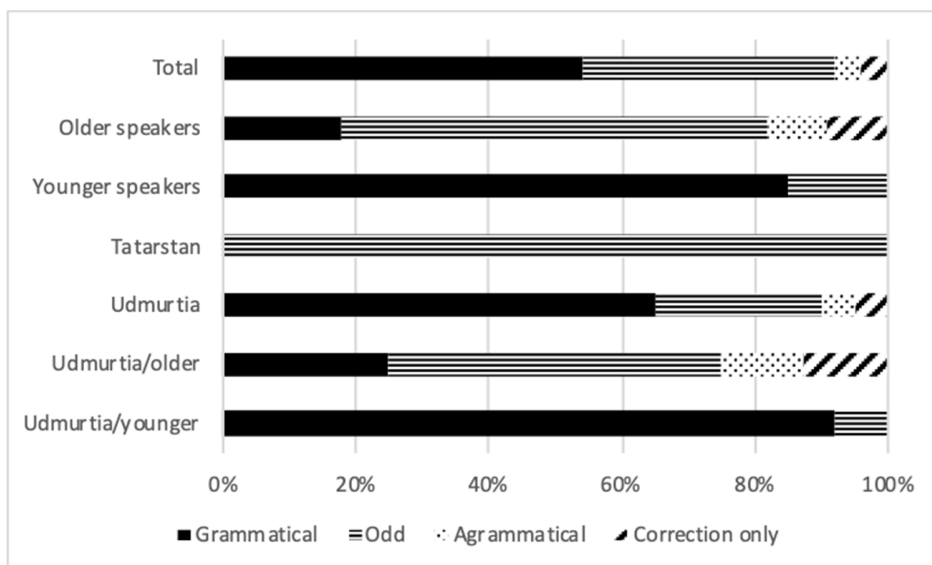


Figure 5. Acceptability of 'want'-VP order (grammaticality judgement)

4.1.4.2 *Other modal auxiliaries + VP*. In the sentence complementation task, only respondents from Udmurtia produced the head-initial variant of the construction. Younger speakers from Udmurtia produced modal auxiliary–VP order to a higher degree than older ones, as illustrated in Figure 6.

- (16) *Mynym (dyšetsk-yny) kule (dyšetsk-yny).*
 1SG.DAT study-INF must.3SG study-INF
 ‘I must study.’

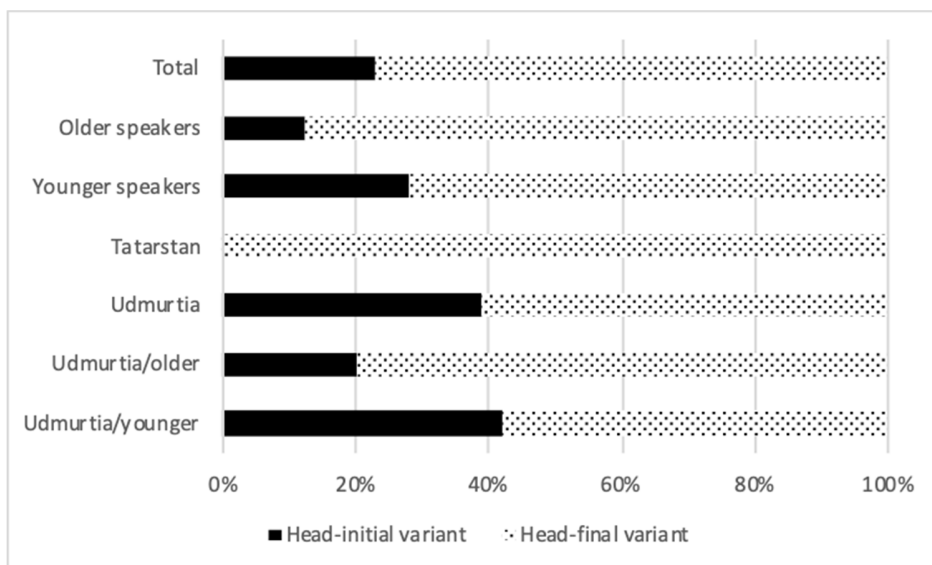


Figure 6. Order of modal auxiliary + VP (sentence complementation)

4.1.5 Verb (V) + adpositional phrase (AdpP)

As illustrated in Figure 7, all of the younger participants judged the sentence in (17) (with verb–adpositional phrase order) as grammatical, while only less than half of the older speakers made the same judgement. Older respondents from Tatarstan unanimously considered the sentence as odd.

- (17) *Mon śulmašk-iško D'ima śaryś.*
 1SG worry-PRS.1SG {Dima} about
 ‘I am worried about Dima.’

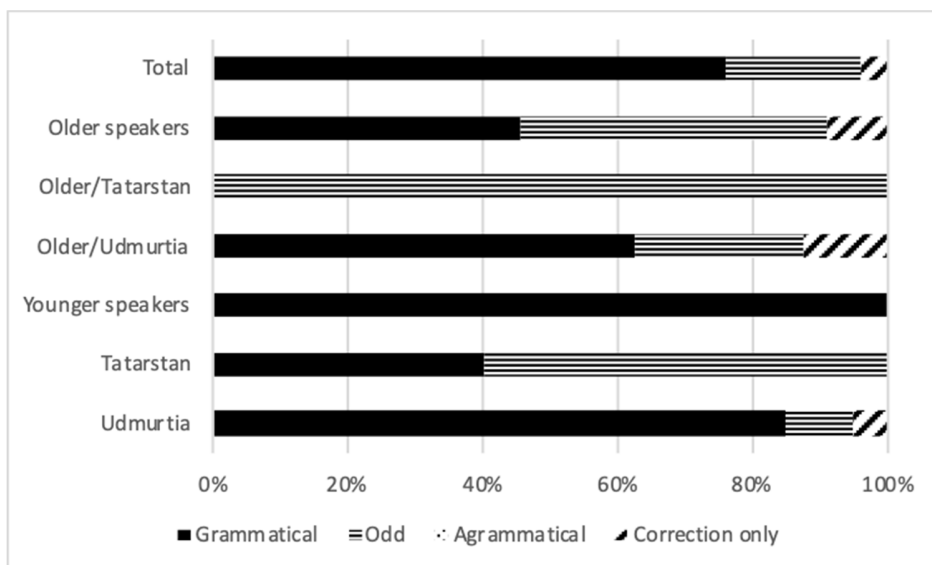


Figure 7. Acceptability of verb–adpositional phrase order (grammaticality)

judgement)

4.1.6 Verb (*V*) + case-suffixed (*pro*)noun with adverbial function (*NCx*)

As Figure (8) illustrates, in the simultaneous evaluation task, all of the older participants (independently of their origin), as well as younger speakers from Tatarstan, preferred the head-final variant of the sentence in (18). However, almost two thirds of the younger consultants from Udmurtia considered the head-initial variant to be better than the head-final one.

(18) Context: ‘I am worried about Dima.’

So (Sibir-e) košk-i-z (Sibir-e).

1SG {Siberia}-ILL leave-PST-3SG {Siberia}-ILL

‘He left for Siberia.’

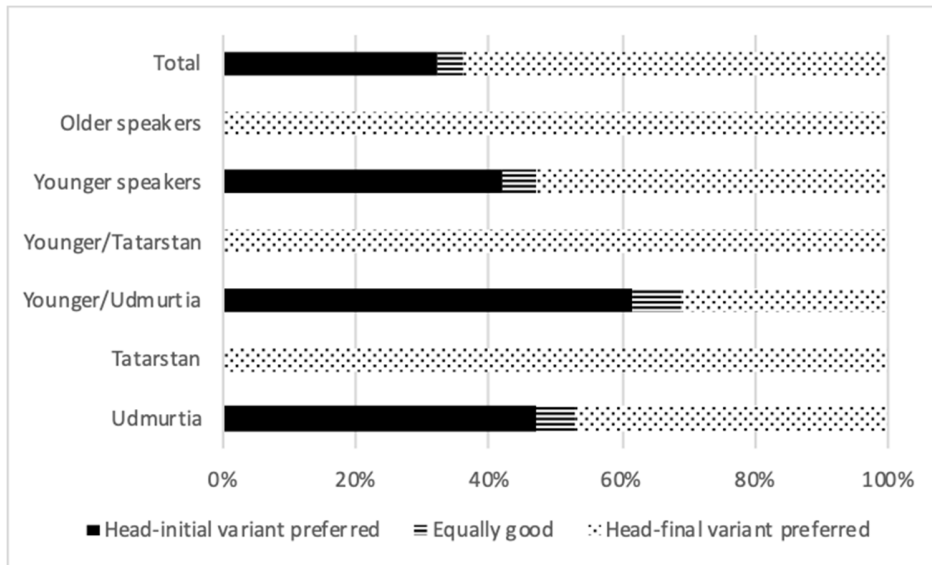


Figure 8. Order of verb + case-suffixed noun (simultaneous evaluation)

4.1.7 Verb (*V*) + manner adverb (*Adv_{Man}*)

In the sentence complementation task, only a tiny proportion of the respondents (who all belonged to the younger generation) used verb–manner adverb order in sentence (19), as illustrated in Figure (9).

(19) Context: lit. ‘The rabbit lives in the field. It eats grass (...)’

no (džog) byžyl-e (džog).

and quickly run-3SG quickly

‘(...) and runs quickly.’

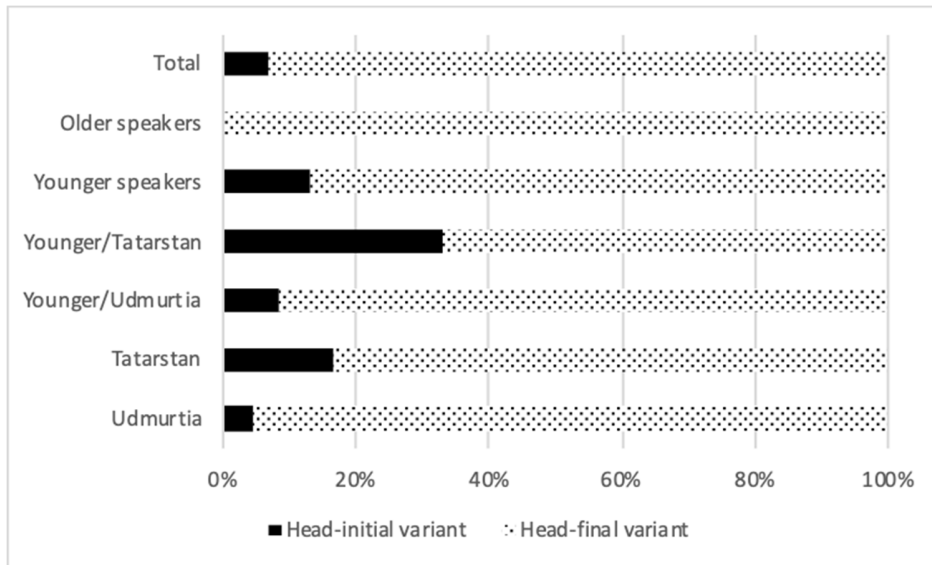


Figure 9. Order of verb + manner adverb (sentence complementation)

4.2 Phrases with a functional head

4.2.1 Complementizer (Comp) + subordinated sentence (Sent)

Udmurt has both clause-final and clause-initial complementizers. In the questionnaire, only complementizers with the meaning of ‘that’ were investigated, i.e., the clause-final *šuyša* and the clause-initial *što* (the latter is borrowed from Russian). In contemporary Udmurt, *šuyša* and *što* can also appear simultaneously in the same clause (cf. Šutov, 1999; Tánčzos, 2013). In the sentence complementation task, only young speakers (independently of whether they were from Udmurtia or from Tatarstan) used the clause-initial *što* (20b), as illustrated in Figure 10. Simultaneous use of *šuyša* and

što (20c) was attested mainly among young respondents from Tatarstan.

(20) a. *Treñer-jos vera-lo, sport tuž pajdajo šuysa.*

{coach}-PL say-3PL {sport} very useful that

b. *Treñer-jos vera-lo, što sport tuž pajdajo.*

{coach}-PL say-3PL {that} {sport} very useful

c. *Treñerjos veralo, što sport tuž pajdajo šuysa.*

‘Coaches say exercise is very healthy.’

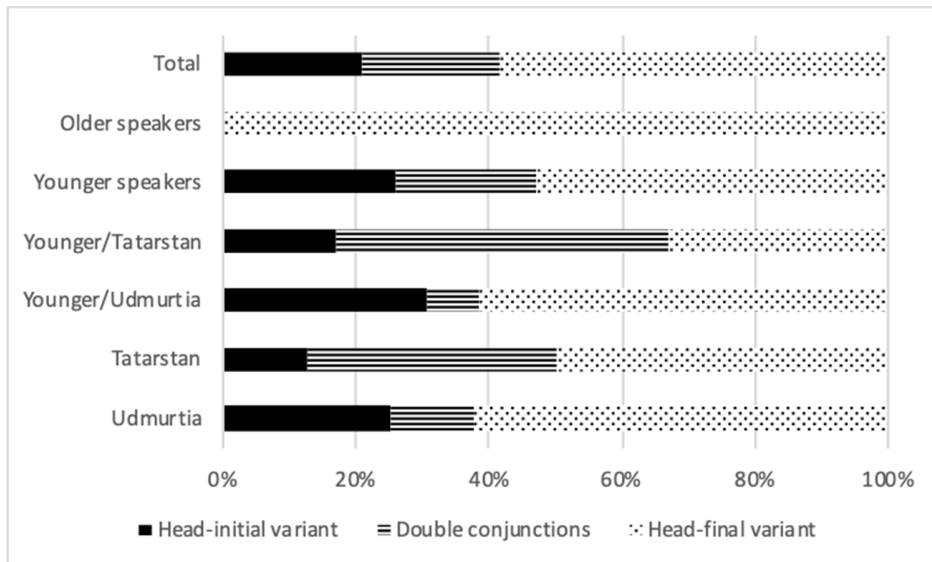


Figure 10. Order of complementizer and subordinated clause (sentence complementation)

4.2.2 Adverbial subordinator (*AdvSub*) + subordinated clause (*Sent*)

The order of this correlation pair was tested using conditional clauses. Udmurt has two adverbial subordinators meaning ‘if’: *ke* is located either clause-finally or in the middle of the subordinated clause, whereas *jesli*, which is borrowed from Russian, is clause-initial. In modern Udmurt, the two conjunctions can also appear simultaneously in the same subordinated sentence. The test sentence in (21) illustrates an (otherwise relatively infrequent) instance of the simultaneous usage of the two conjunctions, namely, when both of them are located clause-initially (and thus, form a head-initial construction together with the subordinated clause). As Figure 11 shows, only respondents belonging to the younger generation judged the sentence as grammatical.

- (21) *Jesli ke araky-my kelš-i-z tynyd, ojdo*
 {if} if spirit-1PL like-PST-3SG SG2.DAT come_on
kut ta butylka-jez s’ör-ad.
 take.IMP.2SG this {bottle}-ACC behind-2SG.ILL
 ‘If you liked our spirit, come on, take this bottle along.’

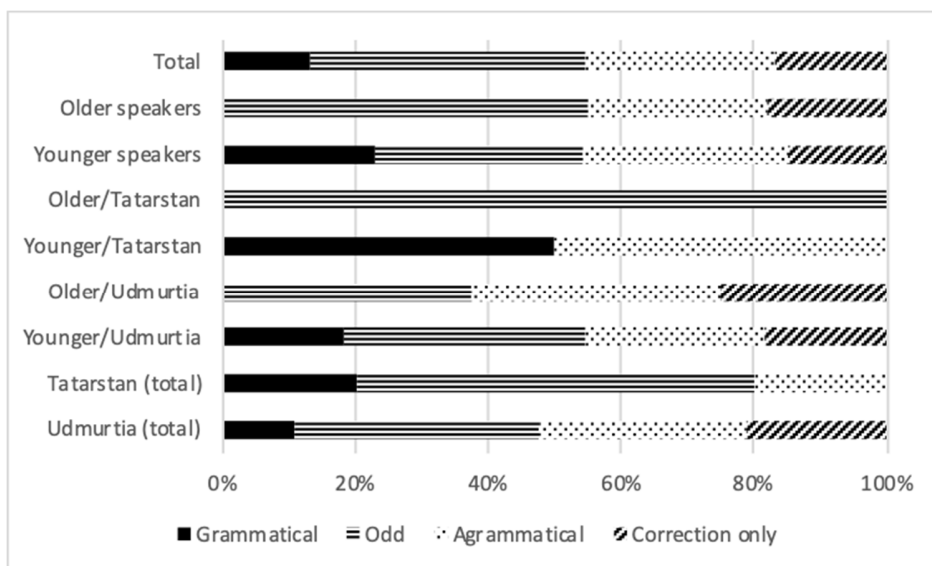


Figure 11. Clause-initial double conjunctions meaning ‘if’ (grammaticality judgement)

4.3 Noun phrases

4.3.1 Noun (possessee) + genitive (possessor) (N + Gen)

In the simultaneous evaluation task, older consultants (independently from their place of residence) and younger respondents from Tatarstan preferred nominal possessee–possessor order for the sentence in (22), as illustrated in Figure 12. However, a small portion (12.5%) of the young speakers from Udmurtia rated the two-word order variants as equally good.

(22) *Kyšno-jez Miša-len džyny čas-ly bere*

wife-3SG {Miša}-GEN half {hour}-DAT after

kyl'-o-z.

stay-FUT-3SG

'Miša's wife will be a half hour late.'

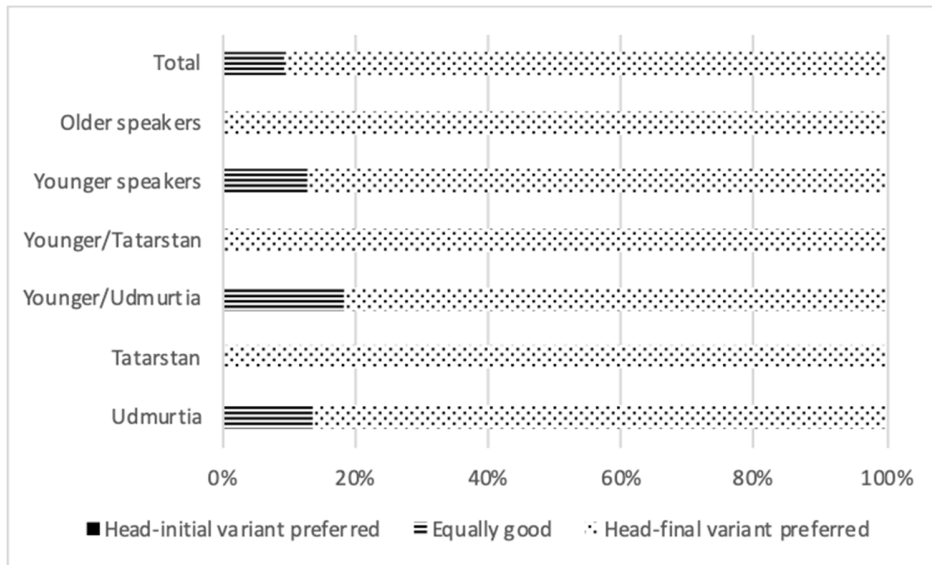


Figure 12. Order of possessor and possessee (simultaneous evaluation)

4.3.2 Noun (N) + relative clause (Rel)

Udmurt has both participial (23a) and finite (23b) relative clauses. The former ones precede the noun they modify, giving rise to head-final constructions (23a), whereas the latter ones (which are introduced by a relative pronoun, as in (23b)) follow the noun they refer to, resulting in head-initial structures (23b).

In the simultaneous judgement task, all of the older consultants from Tatarstan had a clear preference for the head-final variant of the sentence, as illustrated in Figure 13. A small part of the older respondents from Udmurtia rated the two construction types as equally good, while a part of the young participants (both from Udmurtia and from Tatarstan) preferred the head-initial version to the head-final one.

- (23) a. *Vań uś-em lymy šuna-z.*
 all fall-PTCP.PRF snow melt-PST.3SG
- b. *Vań lymy, kudiz uś-i-z, šuna-z.*
 all snow which fall-PST-3SG melt-PST.3SG
- ‘All the snow that had fallen has melted away.’

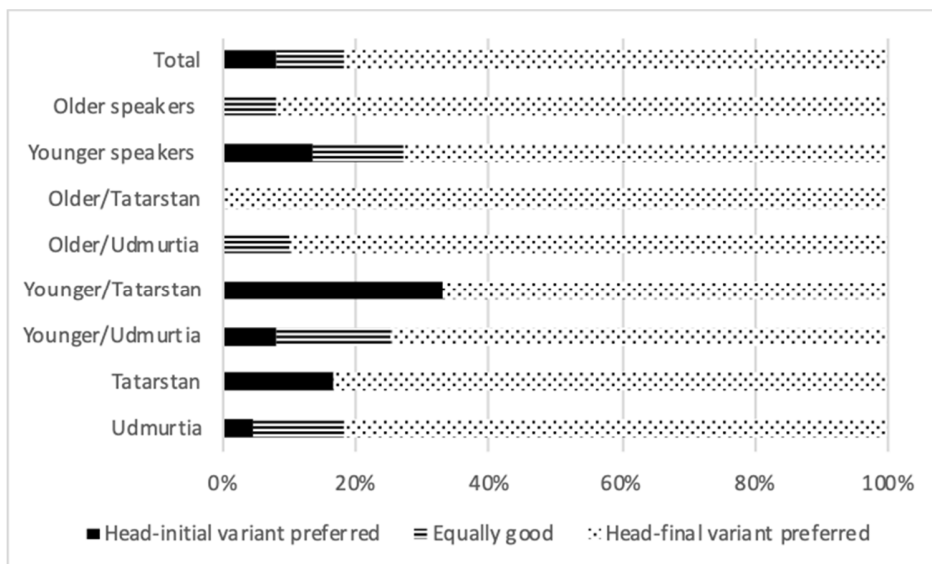


Figure 13. Order of noun + relative clause (simultaneous evaluation)

4.3.3 Noun (N) + complement/adjunct (X)

In the simultaneous evaluation task, younger speakers from Tatarstan and older respondents (independently from their region) preferred the head-final variant of the construction in (24), as illustrated in Figure 14. Half of the younger participants from Udmurtia, however, preferred the head-initial variant, and 8% of them evaluated the two versions as equally good.

- (24) *(Kitaj śaryś) doklad-e* *(Kitaj śaryś) umoj*
 {China} about {presentation}-1SG {China} about well
pörm-i-z.
succeed-PST-3SG
‘My presentation about China went well.’

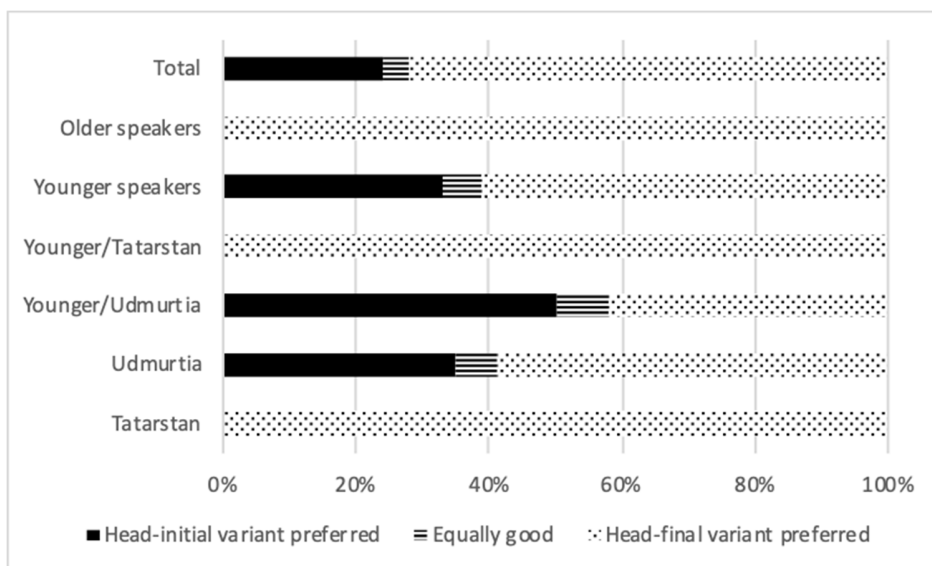


Figure 14. Order of noun + nominal complement (simultaneous evaluation)

4.4 Adjectival phrases

4.4.1 Adjective (*Adj*) + standard of comparison (*Stand*)

As illustrated in Figure 15, almost half of the respondents (who were all from Udmurtia) completed the sentence in (25) with adjective–standard of comparison order.

(25) Context: ‘I have two children, Zhenja and Lera.

Žeňa (Lera-leś) badžym-ges (Lera-leś), so-ly 21 ar
 {Zhenja} Lera-ABL big-CMPR Lera-ABL 3SG-DAT 21 year
iñi.

already

‘Zhenja is older than Lera, (s)he is already 21 years old.’

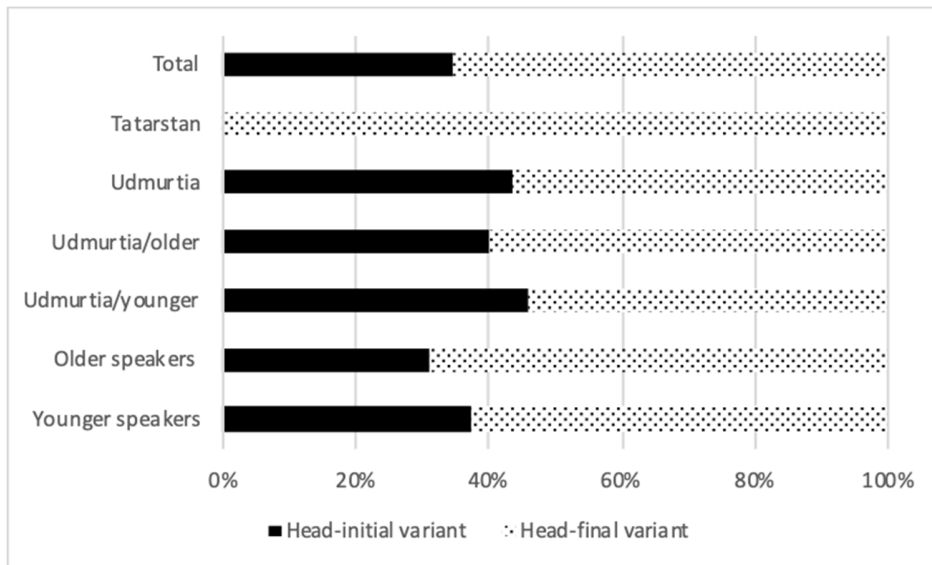


Figure 15. Order of adjective and standard of comparison (sentence complementation)

4.4.2 Adjective (*Adj*) + complement (*X*)

The questionnaire tested adjectival phrases in predicative function, cf. (26). The differences were of an areal nature: in the simultaneous evaluation task, all of the participants from Tatarstan (independently of their age) preferred the head-final variant over the head-initial one, as illustrated in Figure 16. In contrast, almost half of the respondents from Udmurtia judged the head-initial version to be at least as good as the head-final one.

(26) Context: ‘About Udmurtia’

Udmurtija (ošmes-jos-yn) uzyr (ošmes-jos-yn).

{Udmurtia} spring-PL-INS rich spring-PL-INS

‘Udmurtia is rich in springs.’

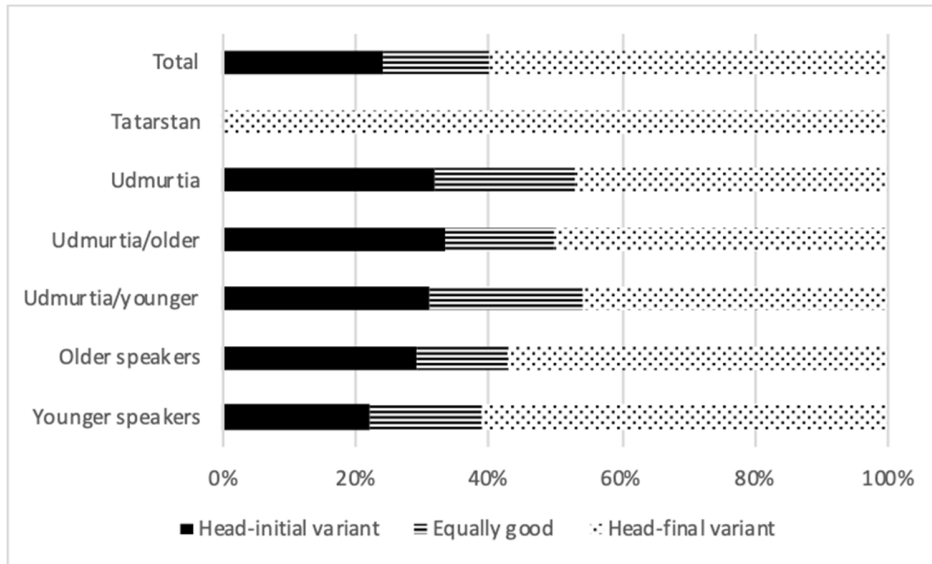


Figure 16. Order of (predicative) adjective + its complement (simultaneous evaluation)

5. Word order flexibility

As mentioned in 3.3, the questionnaire contained several test sentences for each syntactic construction examined in addition to those presented in Section 4. Table 2 presents the average results of *all* test sentences related to one construction (without any generational or areal breakdown) by task

type. Column SC (sentence complementation) summarizes the average percentage of the respondents who produced head-initial constructions in the sentence complementation task. Column GJ (grammaticality judgement) shows the average proportion of the consultants who, in the grammaticality judgement task, judged head-initial orders to be grammatical. Column SE (simultaneous evaluation) sums up the percentages of the respondents who, in the simultaneous evaluation tasks, considered the head-initial variant of a given construction to be as good as, or better, than the head-final one (that is, both judgments “head-initial version preferred” and “the two options are equally good” were summed up).

Table 2. Average results of the test sentences by construction type and task type (production and acceptability of the head-initial word order variants)

	phrase type	SC	GJ	SE	
verbal phrases	V-O	6%	48%	29%	
	V-AdpP	17%	59%	32%	
	V-NCx	31%	70%	41%	
	Cop-Pred	11%	33%	20%	
	‘want’-V	4%	44%	12%	
	Aux_{Mod}-V	21%	58%	22%	
	V-S (poss.)	42%	71,5%	39%	
	V-S (ex.)	71%	78%	41%	
	V-Adv_{Man}	7,5%	48%	23%	
functional phrases	Comp-Sent	22,5%	41,5%	27%	
	AdvSub-Sent	10%	12,5%	28%	
adjectival	Adj-Stand	pred. attr.	31%	57%	25%
			16%	47%	16%

phrases	Adj-X	pred.	48%	86%	40%
		attr.	39%	57%	20%
noun	N-Gen		4%	41%	19%
phrases	N-Rel		--	74%	33%
	N-X		14%	60%	10%

The above data indicate that the constructions examined here differ with regard to their word order flexibility, or inclination to word order change. The results of the sentence complementation task suggest that some constituent types are more frequent, while others are less frequent in head-initial order; this is summarized in Table 3:

Table 3. Frequency of the examined head-initial constructions on the basis of the sentence complementation task (SC)

high frequency (> 50%)	average frequency (21-48%)	low frequency (7-17%)
V-S (ex.)	Adj-X (pred.)	V-AdpP
	V-S (poss.)	Adj-Stand (attr.)
	Adj-X (attr.)	N-X
	V-NCx	Cop-Pred
	Adj-Stand (pred.)	AdvSub-Sent
	Comp-Sent	V-Adv _{Man}
	Aux _{Mod} -V	V-O
		'want'-V
		N-Gen

The grammaticality judgement task indicates that there are differences also concerning the acceptability of the different head-initial constructions, as illustrated by Table 4:

Table 4. Acceptability of the examined head-initial phrases on the basis of the grammaticality judgement task (GJ)

high acceptability (70–95%)	average acceptability (41–60%)	low acceptability (12.5–33%)
Adj–X (pred.)	N–X	Cop–Pred
V–S (ex.)	V–AdpP	AdvSub–Sent
N–Rel	Aux _{Mod} –V	
V–S (poss.)	Adj–Stand (pred.)	
V–NCx	Adj–X (attr.)	
	V–O	
	V–Adv _{Man}	
	Adj–Stand (attr.)	
	‘want’–V	
	Comp–Sent	
	N–Gen	

The simultaneous evaluation task also points to the fact that some constructions are judged more favorably in head-initial order than others, cf. Table 5.

Table 5. Percentage of the head-initial variants judged at least as good as the head-final ones (simultaneous evaluation task SE)

(39–41%)	(19–33%)	(10–16%)
V–NCx	N–Rel	Adj–Stand (attr.)
V–S (ex.)	V–AdpP	‘want’–V
Adj–X (pred.)	V–O	N–X
V–S (poss.)	AdvSub–Sent	
	Comp–Sent	
	Adj–Stand (pred.)	
	V–Adv _{Man}	

Aux_{Mod}-V
Cop-Pred
Adj-X (attr.)
N-Gen

On the basis of the three task types, the phrases that show the highest word order flexibility (or, in other words, seem to be most prone to word order change) are *verb + subject* in existential and predicative possessive sentences (V + S (ex.) and V + S (poss.)),¹⁷ *noun + relative clause* (N + Rel), predicative *adjective + complement* (Adj + X (pred.)) and *verb + case-*

¹⁷ A reviewer raised the question whether VS order in existential and predicative possessive sentences may represent an older construction in Udmurt, the emergence of which may not be related to the ongoing OV > VO change of Udmurt but to the fact that these sentence types typically introduce new referents into the discourse, and the postverbal position would be more available for discourse-new elements. However, I argue that VS order in existential and predicative possessive sentences is indeed a concomitant of the ongoing typological change of Udmurt. First of all, Dryer (1992) does not exclude subjects of existential sentences from the correlation existing between the relative order of V + O and V + S. Second, as far as Udmurt is concerned, existential sentences and predicative possessive sentences show SV order in the earliest available folklore texts (cf. Munkácsi, 1887):

- (i) *Vačkala dyr-ja odig lud-keć ul-em.*
ancient time-ADV one rabbit live-EVID.3SG
'In ancient times there was a rabbit.' (Munkácsi 1887: 118)
- (ii) *Odig ad'ami-len kwiń pi-jez vyl-em.*
one man-GEN three son-3SG be-EVID.3SG
'A man had three sons.' (Munkácsi 1887: 77, 108, 138)

Furthermore, although rhematic elements (cf. Ponarjadov, 2010) and information foci (cf. Tánczos, 2010) may occur postverbally in contemporary Udmurt, the development of the postverbal information focus position itself is claimed to be a recent phenomenon in Udmurt, presumably induced by the influence of Russian (cf. Ponarjadov, 2010; Tánczos, 2010). Strict SOV languages do not allow information foci to be placed after the verb. On the basis of this, in my opinion, there is good reason to consider VS order in Udmurt existential and predicative possessive sentences as a phenomenon related to the ongoing typological change of the language.

suffixed (pro)noun (V + NCx). As opposed to this, *noun + complement/adjunct* (N + X), *'want' + verb* ('want' + V), (attributive) *adjective + standard of comparison* (Adj + Stand (attr.)), *adverbial subordinator + sentence* (AdvSub + Sent), *copula + predicate* (Cop + Pred), and *possessor + possessee* (N + Gen) seem to be relatively resistant to change, and (attributive) *adjective + complement* (Adj + X (attr.)) and *verb + manner adverb* (V + Adv_{Man}) also display a relatively low inclination to appear in head-initial order.

The difference in the flexibility of word orders seems to result from the interplay of several factors. One of these factors is the position of the phrase in the hierarchical sentence structure: phrases lower in the sentence hierarchy, i.e., nominal and attributive adjectival phrases (N + Gen, N + X, Adj + Stand (attr.), Adj + X (attr.)), turned out to be relatively resistant to change their original head-final pattern. This result matches Vilkuna's observation that nominal and adjectival phrases are quite consistently head-final within the entire Uralic language family (1998: 219–22).¹⁸ Another factor is the syntactic function of the head: constituents that are in the

¹⁸ This finding is also in line with a prediction of the so-called Final-over-Final Constraint (cf. Biberauer, Holmberg & Roberts, 2014) or Final-over-Final Condition (cf. Biberauer, Holmberg, Sheenan & Roberts, 2017). The Final-over-Final Constraint (Condition) is a syntactic generalization that states that (roughly speaking) a head-final phrase cannot dominate (contain) a head-initial phrase if they belong to the same extended projection. A prediction of this generalization is that cross-linguistically, "there will be more instances of head-final orders in structurally lower parts of the clause and more head-initial orders in the higher parts" (Biberauer, Holmberg & Roberts, 2014, p. 195).

middle of the “word order flexibility scale” are verbal phrases (more precisely, a part of them) and predicative adjectival phrases, i.e., phrases with a predicative head. Furthermore, the case of *noun + relative clause* suggests that the grammatical weight of the dependent element may also play a role, as NRel order turned out to be widely accepted despite its nominal head. Further influencing factors may be the lexical features of the head, more precisely, whether or not the head is a lexical element borrowed from Russian. This can be seen from the example of *adverbial subordinators* and *complementizers + sentences*: despite the fact that sentences are typically grammatically heavy (and thus, expected to be prone to appear after the subordinator or complementizer), sentence-initial complementizers and adverbial subordinators turned out to be neither frequent nor highly acceptable in my survey. This may be explained by the fact that the tested sentence-initial adverbial subordinator (*jes’li* ‘if’) and complementizer (*što* ‘that’) are Russian lexical elements, and speakers may have disfavored their usage because the violation of the literary norm is quite striking in these cases.

6. Conclusion

The results of the survey contradict the long-established view according to which head-initial constructions in Udmurt only occur in pragmatically marked sentences, and confirm the observation made by Ponarjadov (2010) and Asztalos & Tánzos (2014) and Asztalos, Gugán & Mus (2017) that head-initial phrases occur also in neutral sentences in contemporary Udmurt.

Although the survey was not representative, the results of the majority of the tasks indicate that there are generational differences among Udmurt speakers concerning how frequently they use head-initial phrases and how they judge them. Younger speakers produce head-initial constructions more frequently and judge them to be more acceptable than older speakers of Udmurt do. This generational difference is presumably related to the strengthening influence of Russian on Udmurt, which manifests itself also in the tendency that the bilingualism of the Udmurt speakers is transforming, across generations, from an Udmurt-dominant bilingualism into a Russian-dominant one (cf. Salánki, 2007, p. 59). By virtue of the apparent-time hypothesis (cf. Labov, 1963), the generational difference in speakers' word order preferences may be interpreted as the sign of an ongoing linguistic change, namely, the OV > VO typological change of Udmurt.

Speakers' word order preferences differ areally, as well. Consultants living in Tatarstan, especially the older generation, have shown a greater

preference for the head-final word order variants than speakers from Udmurtia. This difference is presumably also due to contact effects: the influence of OV Tatar promotes the preservation of the head-final properties in the trilingual areas (cf. Ponarjadov, 2010, pp. 16, 91, 93).

The examined phrase types differ with regard to their word order flexibility. Possible factors influencing how likely a phrase type is to undergo word order change include the position of the phrase in the hierarchical sentence structure, syntactic function and lexical features of the head, and grammatical weight of the dependent element.

List of abbreviations

1	first person
2	second person
3	third person
ABL	ablative case
ACC	accusative case
Adj	adjective
AdpP	adpositional phrase
ADV	adverbial case
Adv _{Man}	manner adverbial

AdvSub	adverbial subordinator
attr.	attributive
AUX	auxiliary
Aux _{Mod}	modal auxiliary
CNG	connegative form
Comp	complementizer
Cop	copula
DAT	dative case
EVID	evidential
ex.	existential sentence
FUT	future tense
Gen	possessor
GEN	genitive case
GJ	grammaticality judgement task
ILL	illative case
IMP	imperative
INE	inessive case
INF	infinitive
INS	instrumental-comitative case
M	masculine
N	noun
NCx	case-suffixed noun

NEG	negative verb
O	object
PL	plural
poss.	possessive predication
pred.	predicative
Pred	predicate
PRF	perfect
PRS	present tense
PST	past tense
PST2	second past (= evidential)
PTCP	participle
Rel	relative clause
S	subject
SC	sentence complementation task
SE	simultaneous evaluation task
Sent	sentence
SG	singular
Stand	standard of comparison
V	verb
VP	verbal phrase
'want'	auxiliary meaning 'want'
X	complement or adjunct of an adjective or a noun

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