

# The expression of constituent negation in Udmurt: From scope-ambiguous to scope-transparent constructions

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Received: January 18, 2023 • Revised manuscript received: April 5, 2023 • Accepted: April 5, 2023

Published online: June 6, 2023

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## ABSTRACT

The study claims that contemporary Udmurt has two main strategies for expressing a ‘constituent negation reading’. Standard Udmurt makes use of inverse-scope constructions involving sentential negation, i.e. a morphosyntactically negated predicate and a pragmatic focus in the scope of negation. The other strategy involves the negator *ńe* borrowed from Russian, which immediately precedes the negated constituent and combines with a predicate in the affirmative form. *ńe*-constructions are analysed as instances of focus negation, with a FocP dominated by a right-branching NegP. The evolution of transparent-scope constructions and of a head-initial NegP are analysed as concomitants of the SOV-to-SVO change of Udmurt.

## KEYWORDS

constituent negation, focus, inverse scope, negation, SOV-to-SVO change, transparent scope, Udmurt

## 1. INTRODUCTION: AIMS AND CLAIMS

The present study deals with constructions having a constituent negation reading in contemporary Udmurt (Uralic; Russia), and claims that the native (or standard) strategy for negating constituents involves scope-ambiguous constructions with sentential negation, pragmatic focusing of the negated constituent, and inverse-scope reading. Beside the native strategy, transparent-scope constructions with the negative particle *ńe* have also evolved in Udmurt under the

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influence of Russian. *Ńe*-constructions are analysed in this study as right-branching NegP projections dominating a FocP projection, and their evolution is seen as a concomitant of the presumed ongoing SOV-to-SVO change (cf. Asztalos, Gugán & Mus 2017; Asztalos 2018, 2021) of the language.

Previous literature (Winkler 2001, 54; Winkler 2011, 109–10; Edygarova 2015, 284–5; Kozmács 2017) treats constructions with a constituent negation reading in Udmurt as instances of constituent negation – although, as I will point to it in the study, the two phenomena are not necessarily the same. Winkler (2001, 2011) and Edygarova (2015) only mention the “standard” strategy, which involves the negation of the main clausal predicate and a biclausal structure featuring the alternative of the constituent that negation refers to (1)–(2). Negation typically takes place by means of an inflected negative verb and the so-called connegative stem of the lexical verb. According to the examples reported in the literature, the constituent that negation refers to precedes the predicate – either immediately (1), or non-immediately (2):

- (1) *Škola-je mon u-g ton m̃n-o-d.*  
 school-ILL 1SG NEG.FUT-1 2SG go-FUT-2SG<sup>1</sup>  
 ‘I will not, you will go to school.’ (Edygarova 2015, 285)
- (2) *Mon tolon kino-je e-j vetli – val’lan.*  
 1SG yesterday cinema-ILL NEG.PST-1SG go.CNG.SG the\_day\_before\_yesterday  
 ‘I did not go to the cinema yesterday but the day before.’ (Winkler 2011, 110)

The other way for expressing constituent negation involves the negative particle *ńe* borrowed from Russian (cf. Kozmács 2017). The particle *ńe* always immediately precedes the constituent that negation refers to, and combines with a verb in the affirmative form (3):

- (3) *Šulm-in-iz, a ńe ki-in-iz kart’ina-os-se sureda-z so.*  
 heart-INS-3SG but NEG hand-INS-3SG painting-PL-3SG.ACC draw-PST.3SG 3SG  
 ‘S/he painted his/her paintings with his/her heart and not with his/her hands.’  
 (Kozmács 2017, 279)

The research presented in this study was concerned both with theoretical and typological questions. From a theoretical point of view, the research aimed at determining the scope of negation and the syntactic structure that can be associated with the “standard” way of constituent negation and with *ńe* particle constructions. Special attention was dedicated to the question whether the native way for expressing constituent negation is syntactically different from sentential negation. The information structural role and the position of the negated constituent have been of particular interest in this respect. Thus, the aim was, on the one hand, to test whether the negated constituent bears the role of focus, and, in case it does, whether it is a syntactically marked focus or rather a pragmatic focus, potentially marked by prosody. Related to this, a further question was whether

<sup>1</sup>Transcription, glosses and translations of cited examples are mine throughout the whole study.



the negated constituent is accepted to the same degree in the immediately and non-immediately preverbal positions, and whether it can also appear postverbally.

The data reported in this paper (examples taken from the literature, corpus data and test sentences evaluated by, or elicited from native speakers of Udmurt) indicate that “standard” constructions with a constituent negation reading are syntactically to be analysed as sentential negation constructions. The constituent that negation refers to fulfils the role of pragmatic focus, and negation scopes over the complex made by the focus and the main clausal predicate. In verb-final structures, the interaction of focus with negation gives rise to inverse-scope ( $\neg > \text{Foc}$ ) structures. Sentences with a pragmatic focus, however, may have another reading (distinct from the constituent negation reading), with focus taking scope over negation ( $\text{Foc} > \neg$ ). Thus, the exact scope of negation is underspecified (or vague): focus can fall under the scope of negation, or stand outside of it.

As for constituents negated by *ñe*, I argue that they are to be analysed as syntactically marked foci, appearing in the functional projection FocP and dominated by a right-branching NegP projection, and their negation is to be analysed as focus negation (in the sense defined in Section 2). In *ñe* particle constructions, the interaction of negation with focus always gives rise to transparent- (or linear-) scope constructions.

From a typological point of view, the research was concerned with the structural changes that the borrowing of *ñe* may cause in the system of Udmurt, and aimed to explore the possible relationship between the development of *ñe* particle constructions and the presumed ongoing SOV-to-SVO change of Udmurt (on the latter, see Asztalos, Gugán & Mus 2017; Asztalos 2018, 2021). Whether scope relations are expressed with transparent or inverse-scope constructions has, in fact, typological correlates: Amiraz (2021, 14), in his typological study on the scopal interaction between negators and quantifiers, observes that while inverse-scope constructions are common in verb-final languages, linear-scope constructions are uncommon in them. É. Kiss (2014) claims that SOV-to-SVO change led to the evolution of a functional left periphery in the sentence in Old Hungarian, including NegP and FocP projections. In the present study, I will argue that developments in Udmurt provide evidence for both of these correlations – indeed, the data suggest that the two claims are two sides of the same coin: transparent-scope constructions with the particle *ñe* are analysed here as head-initial NegP projections containing a subordinated FocP projection, and their evolution is seen as a concomitant of the ongoing SOV-to-SVO change of Udmurt.

The paper is structured as follows. Section 2 briefly overviews the subtypes of negation relevant for the purposes of this study. Section 3 provides background information about the Udmurt language, including information structure and sentential negation, and summarizes the main claims of the previous literature about constructions with a constituent negation reading. The Section concludes by pointing out to some pressing questions that arise on the basis of the previous literature and some preliminary data. Section 4 presents the linguistic data the research was carried out on. The results of the research are discussed in Section 5, while their analysis is presented in Section 6. Section 7 discusses the typological implications of the results, and Section 8 summarizes the main findings.

## 2. SUBTYPES OF NEGATION

In logic, negation has been defined as an operator that reverses the truth-value of a proposition (Penka 2015, 303). Negation takes a scope, that is, it is to be interpreted within a specific domain



of the sentence. If negation scopes over the whole sentence, sentential (or clausal) negation takes place (Penka 2015, 303), but sentential negation has also been defined as negation scoping over (at least) the main predicate of the sentence (Gianollo 2020), see, e.g., (4b):

- (4) a. *I went to Siberia.*  
 b. *I didn't go to Siberia.* (= It is not true that I went to Siberia.)

Constituent negation, at the very first attempt, can be defined as a negation referring to a particular part of the clause (Penka 2015, 303.), with the exclusion of the (main) predicate (5):

- (5) *I went not to Siberia but to the Urals.*

The above criteria, however, are not in every case sufficient for defining constituent negation. A further requirement might be that the negator and the part of the clause which negation scopes over form one constituent. This, however, is not always the case with negation below the clausal level. Furthermore, in many cases, instances of constituent negation can be paraphrased by a relative clause involving sentential negation, cf. (6a–b), thus, some authors have questioned the usefulness of the notion of ‘constituent negation’ (Penka 2015, 303).

- (6) a. *John found a job not far away.*  
 b. *John found a job at a place that is not located far away.* (Penka 2015, 303)

Furthermore, not all languages have specific means (e.g., a dedicated marker) for the expression constituent negation: Georgian, for example, resorts to the means of sentential negation for expressing negation scoping below the clause level (Lena Borise, p.c.). In such cases, the exact scope of negation is presumably determined by the context, that is, it is pragmatic factors that make possible a constituent negation reading.

A part of the cases that have been classified as constituent negation in the literature can be ranged among instances of so-called *focus negation* (cf., e.g., É. Kiss 2015), which – as its name suggests – involves the negation of the element bearing the focus role in the sentence, as in the Hungarian example in (7). However, since focusing encodes a predicative relationship (cf. É. Kiss 2006), sentences with a focus (8) can be paraphrased by complex sentences with a relative clause as their subject (corresponding to the presupposed part of the sentence) and a nominal predicate (corresponding to the focus) (9), and parallelly, sentences with focus negation (7) can be paraphrased by sentences containing a negated nominal predicate (10). That is, focus negation can be paraphrased as predicate negation, as in (10).

- (7) *Nem SZIBÉRIÁ-BA<sup>2</sup> men-t-em el.*  
 NEG Siberia-ILL go-PST-1SG PV  
 ‘It is not Siberia that I went to.’

<sup>2</sup>Focused constituent are marked by small capitals throughout the study.



- (8) SZIBÉRIÁ-BA    *men-t-em*    *el.*  
 Siberia-ILL    go-PST-1SG    PV  
 ‘It is Siberia that I went to.’
- (9) [<sub>subj</sub>    *Ahová*    *el-men-t-em,*]    [<sub>pred</sub>    *az*    *Szibéria*].  
           where            PV-go-PST-1SG            that            Siberia  
 ‘Where I went is Siberia.’ ([<sub>presupp</sub> Where I went] [<sub>pred</sub> is Siberia].)
- (10) [<sub>subj</sub>    *Ahová*    *el-men-t-em,*]    [<sub>pred</sub>    *az*    *nem*    *Szibéria*].  
           where            PV-go-PST-1SG            that            NEG            Siberia  
 ‘Where I went is not Siberia.’ ([<sub>presupp</sub> Where I went] [<sub>pred</sub> is not Siberia].)

What I take to be relevant while distinguishing focus negation from sentential negation is that in the simple sentence counterparts (as in (7)) negation does not scope over the main predicate of the clause, that is, the presupposed part (i.e., that *I went to some place*) still remains true. I will thus define focus negation for the purposes of this study as a type of negation taking scope over the focused, but not the presupposed part of the sentence, cf. also Szabolcsi (1980).

A further type of negation is what has been called lexical, affixal or morphological negation in the literature (cf. De Clercq 2020). This type of negation is to be interpreted at the level of lexemes (Penka 2015, 306; De Clercq 2020), and is derivational in nature: lexical/affixal negation creates a lexeme with the contrary meaning compared to its non-negated counterpart, cf., e.g., the pair *happy* – *unhappy* (Joshi 2020; Penka: *ibid.*). In my view, however, the terms “affixal negation” and “morphological negation” might be misleading for describing the phenomenon, since affixes, in some languages, may also be used for purposes of sentential negation. This is also the case for Udmurt, as will be illustrated in Section 3.3. In any case, the discussion of lexical negation is beyond the aims of this paper.

The above definitions of sentential negation, constituent negation, and focus negation are morphosyntactic in nature: whether the main predicate of the clause is negated or not is to be meant in a morphosyntactic sense. This study focuses on those instances of negation in Udmurt which, from a *pragmatic* point of view, are to be interpreted below sentence level, that is, in which negation pragmatically applies to a constituent other than the main predicate of the clause: this is what I call “constructions with a constituent negation reading” throughout this paper (while I will tentatively refer to the constituent that negation refers to as “negated constituent”). The study will then be concerned with the syntactic structure that can be attributed to these constructions. As I will show in Section 6, there are two constructions that have a constituent negation reading in Udmurt: the native expression involves *sentential negation* and *focusing*, whereas the contact-induced strategy resorts to *focus negation* by means of the negative particle *né* borrowed from Russian.

### 3. BACKGROUND ON UDMURT

#### 3.1. Genetic affiliation and sociolinguistic background

Udmurt belongs to the Permic subgroup of the Finno-Ugric branch of the Uralic language family. Its closest relatives are Komi-Zyrian and Komi-Permyak. Udmurt is mainly spoken in the Udmurt



Republic of Russia as a minority language, and in the neighbouring administrative areas of the Russian Federation (Republic of Tatarstan, Republic of Bashkortostan, Mari El Republic, Perm Krai, Kirov Oblast, Sverdlovsk Oblast etc.). According to the Russian Census of 2020–21,<sup>3</sup> Udmurt is spoken by 255 877 speakers in the territory of Russia, while the number of the ethnic population is 386 465. Although Udmurt, besides Russian, has the status of official language in the Udmurt Republic, its usage is limited in public spheres. Russian has had a strong influence on Udmurt, which manifests itself at all linguistic levels. Nowadays, practically all native speakers of Udmurt are bilingual, as they also speak Russian at a native or near-native level. Udmurt is part of the Volga-Kama Sprachbund, and has also been in contact with Turkic languages.

### 3.2. Main typological features and information structure

Udmurt is an agglutinative, *pro*-drop language with nominative-accusative alignment, differential object marking and SOV basic word order (although, according to Asztalos, Gugán & Mus 2017 and Asztalos (2018, 2021), contemporary Udmurt is undergoing a change towards the SVO type).

The placement of contrastive topics and of focused items is of relevance for the purposes of this study. Surányi et al. (to appear) claim that contrastive topics appear preverbally, on the left periphery of the clause, and they may be either preceded or followed by an aboutness topic as illustrated in (11):

- (11) Context: ‘When did Dostoevskij write these of his books?’  
 (Dostojevskij)<sup>4</sup> *Id’iot-ez* (Dostojevskij) 1868-eti ar-in gožt-i-z,  
 Dostoevskij The\_Idiot-ACC Dostoevskij 1868-ORD year-INE write-PST-3SG  
*noš Podrostok-ez – 1875-eti ar-i-n.*  
 but The\_Raw\_Youth-ACC 1875-ORD year-INE  
 ‘The Idiot, Dostoevskij wrote it in 1868, and The Raw Youth, in 1875.’  
 (Adapted from Surányi et al. to appear)

With respect to focused constituents in Udmurt, Asztalos (2020) argues that they do not have a fixed position in the sentence. The results of her questionnaires indicate that the most accepted position for foci is the immediately preverbal one, however, sentence-final and preverbal but not verb-adjacent<sup>5</sup> focusing is also grammatical for a part of speakers as the example in (12) illustrates (for sentence-final foci, see also Tánčzos 2010).<sup>6</sup>

<sup>3</sup>In examples (11) and (12), the same element occurring in brackets in different positions illustrates the distribution of a *single* occurrence of that element.

<sup>4</sup>Preverbal but not verb-adjacent appearance of foci is subject, though, to some limitations, cf. Asztalos (2020).

<sup>5</sup>Beside these options, constituents can also be focused *in situ*, cf. Bulyčov (1947, 77).

<sup>6</sup>Most commonly, the negative verb is described in the literature as an auxiliary (see, e.g., Vilkuňa 1998 or Mitchell 2006), but as Georgieva, Salzmann & Weissner (2021) point out, it differs in some respects from typical auxiliaries. Therefore, I will refer to inflectable negators as negative verbs throughout this study.



- (12) Context: ‘Yesterday a beauty contest was organized at the Philharmonia Concert Hall.’  
 (VIKTORIJA PUŠINA-Lİ) žuri (VIKTORIJA PUŠINA-Lİ) tuž-ges no  
 Victoria Pushina-DAT jury V. P.-DAT very-CMPR PTCL  
 tros ball šot-i-z (VIKTORIJA PUŠINA-Lİ).  
 many point give-PST-2SG V. P.-DAT  
 ‘The jury gave the highest point TO VICTORIA PUSHINA.’ (Asztalos 2020, 30)

Asztalos (2020, 41–46) finds that focus is interpreted in the same way in all of these (linear) positions, that is, none of the above positions is associated with an obligatory exhaustive or contrastive reading. In a later study (Asztalos 2022), she argues that none of these positions is a syntactically marked (i.e., structural) focus position.

### 3.3. Sentential negation

The present subsection reviews the morphosyntactic means of sentential negation in Udmurt.

Clausal negation is expressed by the negation of the predicate of the sentence. Depending on the nominal or verbal nature and on the tense and mood of the predicate, the negator may be a negative verb,<sup>7</sup> a negative form of the copula, a negative affix, or a negative particle.

As in many other Uralic languages, sentences with a verbal predicate are negated in Udmurt in most tenses by means of the complex unit of an inflected negative verb and the so-called connegative stem of the lexical verb (13)–(15). The negative verb always precedes the connegative stem. Person is marked on the negative verb, cf. the pairs in (13a) vs. (13b), and number is expressed on the connegative form, cf. the pairs in (13b) vs. (13c). Past tense is expressed on the negative verb (13). In the present (14) and future (15) tenses, the stem of the negative verb is the same (*u-*); present tense forms are differentiated from future tense forms by a present tense marker appearing on the connegative stem (14).

- (13) a. Šibiř-e e-d mini.  
 Siberia-ILL NEG.PST-2 go.CNG.SG  
 ‘You did not go to Siberia.’  
 b. Šibiř-e e-z mini.  
 Siberia-ILL NEG.PST-3 go.CNG.SG  
 ‘S/he did not go to Siberia.’  
 c. Šibiř-e e-z mine.  
 Siberia-ILL NEG.PST-3 go.CNG.PL  
 ‘They did not go to Siberia.’  
 (14) Šibiř-e u-d min-iški.  
 Siberia-ILL NEG-2 go-CNG.PRS.SG  
 ‘You do not go to Siberia.’

<sup>7</sup>Analytical negative forms come from the Northern while synthetic forms from the Southern dialects (Edygarova 2015, 269–70).



- (15) *Śibiř-e u-d mini.*  
Siberia-ILL NEG-2 go.CNG.SG  
'You will not go to Siberia.'

For the negation of a nominal predicate or an existential clause, the negator *ewel* is used in the present tense (16)–(17). I take *ewel* to be the present tense negative form of the defective verb *vilini* 'to be' (see also Winkler 2011, 108 and Asztalos 2018, 95), but it can also be analysed as a negative particle (cf. Edygarova 2015, 275, 277).

- (16) *Mon udmurt ewel.*  
1SG Udmurt be.NEG  
'I am not Udmurt.'
- (17) *Tatin gondır-jos ewel.*  
here bear-PL be.NEG  
'In here, there are no bears.'

The form *ewel* is also used in the negation of certain tenses, e.g., the evidential past, as in (18). The evidential past, however, has a synthetic negative paradigm as well. In those forms, negation is expressed by a bound negative morpheme, as illustrated in (19):<sup>8</sup>

- (18) *Śibiř-e ewel min-il'l'amdı.*  
Siberia-ILL be.NEG go-EV.2PL  
'You did not go to Siberia.'
- (19) *Śibiř-e mini-m-te-dı.*  
Siberia-ILL go-EV-NEG-2PL  
'id.'

Contemporary Udmurt in some (non-literary) registers also allows for the use of the negative particle *ne* (borrowed from Russian) for the purposes of sentential negation. In these cases, *ne* is followed by the affirmative form of the verb (20):

- (20) *Pešanaj-zi-len ugoś korka-jez tuž źoskit, ne šud-o-d*  
grandmother-3PL-GEN after\_all house-3SG very narrow NEG play-FUT-2SG  
*otın, ne bįži-lo-d.*  
there NEG run-FUT-2SG  
'After all, the house of their grandmother is very confined, you will not play and run about there.' (Udmurt corpus, Udmurt dunne 15.11.2011)

<sup>8</sup>Mitchell (2006) postulates head-initial structures (including VP-s) for Udmurt, without taking into consideration the basic SOV character of the language.





In Udmurt, negation does not have an impact on the morphology of sentence constituents, that is, it does not alter the case of the direct object (whether a direct object stands in the nominative or in the accusative is determined by its specificity and definiteness, cf. [Ē. Kiss & Tánzos 2018](#)).

### 3.4. Previous analyses on negative verbs

A structural analysis of negative verbs in a generative framework has been offered by [Mitchell \(2006\)](#) and [Georgieva, Salzmänn & Weisser \(2021\)](#). [Mitchell \(2006\)](#) proposes that negative verbs (described by her as auxiliaries) are heads projecting NegP-s, which are generated immediately below TP.<sup>9</sup> [Georgieva, Salzmänn & Weisser \(2021\)](#) propose that NegP-s are generated below TP and above vP, and they derive the preverbal surface position of negative verbs by means of a post-syntactic operation called Lowering. They show that negation forms a complex unit with the highest verb in the clause and takes high scope in the sentence, i.e., over the highest verb in the clause, as shown by the example in (21):

- (21) *Maša-jen veraški-ni e-z dišti.*  
Masha-INS talk-INF NEG.PST-3 dare.CNG.SG  
‘S/he did not dare to talk to Masha.’ (NEG > dare)  
*not:* ‘S/he dared not to talk to Masha.’ (\*dare > NEG) ([Georgieva, Salzmänn & Weisser 2021](#), 462)

The authors, on the basis of examples provided by [Edygarova \(2015, 282\)](#), claim that subjects can optionally move out from the vP to Spec,TP. Constituents moved to Spec,TP take scope over negation (22), while elements that stay in the vP, like the quantifier in (23), fall under the scope of negation:

- (22) *Tros-ez dišetskiš-jos e-z vue.* Q > ¬  
many-DET student-PL NEG.PST-3 arrive.CNG.PL  
‘Many students did not arrive.’  
([Edygarova 2015, 282](#), cited by [Georgieva, Salzmänn & Weisser 2021](#), 471)
- (23) *Dišetskiš-jos tros e-z vue.* ¬ > Q  
student-PL many NEG.PST-3 arrive.CNG.PL  
‘Not many students arrived.’ ([Edygarova 2015, 282](#), cited by [Georgieva Salzmänn & Weisser 2021](#), 471)

<sup>9</sup>Possibly, contrastive topics, though the authors do not use this term.



Georgieva, Salzmann & Weisser (2021, 498) mention another case when elements move out of the vP/VP to a higher position (and thus, negation does not scope over them), i.e., that of contrastive elements<sup>10</sup> in polar answers, as illustrated by the answer sentence in (24):

- (24) - *Maša kńiga-jez lĩđž-i-z=a?*  
 Masha book-ACC read-PST-3SG=Q  
 ‘Did Masha read the book?’  
 - *Maša e-z.*  
 Masha NEG.PST-3  
 ‘No, Masha didn’t (someone else did).’ (Adapted from Georgieva, Salzmann & Weisser 2021, 498)

### 3.5. Previous literature on constructions with a constituent negation reading

Constructions with a constituent negation reading in Udmurt have been discussed so far by Winkler (2001, 54; 2011, 109–10), Edygarova (2015, 285), and Kozmács (2017). The authors treat the constructions under discussion as instances of constituent negation. Edygarova claims that constituents can be negated in a biclausal contrastive structure in which the negated constituent is (immediately) followed by “a negative verb or particle without a lexical verb”, and the second clause contains the affirmative form of the verb (25) (ibid.) and the alternative of the negated constituent:

- (25) *Škola-je mon u-g ton mĩn-o-d.*  
 school-ILL 1SG NEG.FUT-1 2SG go-FUT-2SG  
 ‘It is not me but you who will go to school.’ (Edygarova 2015, 285)

Thus, according to the data presented in Edygarova (2015),

1. Udmurt uses the same negators for constituent negation as for sentential negation (i.e., negative verbs, negative particles etc.);
2. constituent negation involves a biclausal structure;
3. the negated constituent is followed by the negative morpheme in the first clause;
4. the second clause contains the alternative of the negated constituent.

The same strategy is also exemplified by Winkler (2011, 110):

<sup>10</sup>As delineated in Sections 3.3, negation, depending on the nominal or verbal nature as well as on the tense and mood of the predicate, can also involve other morphosyntactic means such as a negative particle, a negative suffix or the negative form of the existential verb. Since I do not suppose the latter negative predicates to behave syntactically differently from *negative verb + connegative stem* constructions, I will use, in this study, the terms “standard way of constituent negation” and “negative verb constructions with a constituent negation reading” as synonymous expressions.



- (26) *Mon e-j, so ta-je lešt-i-z.*  
 1SG NEG.PST-1SG 3SG this-ACC do-PST-3SG  
 ‘Not me but s/he did this.’ (ibid.)
- (27) *Tolon e-j, a val'l'an vetl-i mon*  
 yesterday NEG.PST-1SG but the\_day\_before\_yesterday go-PST.1SG 1SG  
*kino-je.*  
 cinema-ILL  
 ‘I did not go to the cinema yesterday but the day before.’ (ibid.)
- (28) *Mon tolon kino-je e-j vetli – val'l'an.*  
 1SG yesterday cinema-ILL NEG.PST-1SG go.CNG.SG the\_day\_before\_yesterday  
 ‘I did not go to the cinema yesterday but the day before.’ (ibid.)

Winkler (2001, 54, 2011, 109) notes that constituent negation is expressed by the same means as sentential negation, but it can be made “more clear by word order or morphological means” (2001, 54) (he, however, does not make more clear what he means by the above observation). In any case, while the negated constituent immediately precedes the negative verb in Edygarova’s (2015, 285) example in (25), in (28) it is not directly preverbal. A further difference compared to what Edygarova (2015) claims is that the example in (28) suggests that the alternative of the negated constituent does not necessarily have to make part of a full clause.

According to Kozmács (2017), contemporary Udmurt applies two strategies for negating constituents. The standard way involves the use of the negative verb and the connegative stem of the lexical verb. Clausal negation and constituent negation, according to Kozmács (2017, 277–278), are differentiated by word order, as illustrated in the examples in (29)–(30): if a given constituent follows the *negative verb + verbal stem* complex, we face sentential negation (29), whereas if the same constituent (immediately) precedes the verbal complex, constituent negation takes place (30). Kozmács (2017) Kozmács implicitly claims that a negated constituent always immediately precedes the negative verb (cf. 2017, 277–278).

- (29) *Mon u-g miniški kino-je.*  
 1SG NEG-1 go.CNG.PRS.SG cinema-ILL  
 ‘I do not go to the cinema.’ (Kozmács 2017, 277)
- (30) *Mon kino-je u-g miniški.*  
 1SG cinema-ILL NEG-1 go.CNG.PRS.SG  
 ‘It is not to the cinema that I go.’ (ibid.)

The other strategy (which can be detected, according to Kozmács, 2017, in the Udmurt blogosphere and in texts of contemporary press), involves the negative particle *ñe*, borrowed from Russian (31):

- (31) *Šulm-in-iz, a ñe ki-in-iz kart'ina-os-se sureda-z so.*  
 heart-INS-3SG but NEG hand-INS-3SG painting-PL-3SG.ACC draw-PST.3SG 3SG  
 ‘S/he painted his/her paintings with his/her heart and not with his/her hands.’ (, 279)



*Ńe* precedes the constituent to be negated and is always combined with a verb in the affirmative form, as (31) illustrates.

To sum up, the observations of previous works on constituent negation raise some questions, yet some of the observations lead to contradiction. The literature suggests that

1. The native expression of constituent negation involves in Udmurt the same means as sentential negation (negative verb + connegative stem, or negative particles). According to [Edygarova \(2015\)](#), a native speaker, constituent negation involves biclausal constructions that mention the alternative of the negated constituent in the second clause (25), and [Winkler's \(2001, 2011\)](#) examples suggest the same (26)–(28). [Kozmács \(2017\)](#), however, reports a monoclausal example (30), claiming that word order alone is apt for differentiating between constituent negation and sentential negation (which would imply that there is no need for specifying the alternative(s) in order to get a constituent negation reading), and suggesting that a negated constituent always immediately precedes the negative verb (cf. 2017, 277–278). However, when taking into consideration [Edygarova's \(2015\)](#) and [Winkler's \(2011\)](#) examples, it is not obvious whether the constituent that the negation refers to has indeed a fixed position: in (25), it directly precedes the verb, thus not appearing in its base position (which would be the position preceding *školaže* ‘to school’), while in (28), it appears in its base position but not immediately before the verb. Furthermore, the examples in (25)–(28) suggest that in biclausal structures, the lexical verb may be absent either from the first (25)–(27) or from the second clause (28); however, these phenomena are not discussed by the authors themselves.
2. The contact-induced way of expression of constituent negation involves the negative particle *ńe*, borrowed from Russian. *Ńe* immediately precedes the constituent to be negated and is combined with a verb in the affirmative form (31), but it is not clear whether the alternative of a constituent negated by *ńe* has to be necessarily present in the sentence.

Finally, none of the above mentioned authors provides a syntactic analysis of the examples presented above, nor do they deal with the information structural role of the constituent that negation refers to. Thus, the syntactic structure of the constructions under discussion remains unclear, as well as the question whether they are to be analysed as instances of constituent negation in a syntactic sense.

### 3.6. Further considerations about the constructions under discussion

The picture that arises from the literature is further complicated by some observations I made on the basis of some preliminary data collected through consultations with a native speaker of Udmurt. As presented in the previous subsection, [Kozmács \(2017, 277–278\)](#) proposes that there is a one-to-one relationship between word order and sentential vs. constituent negation: when a constituent follows a negated predicate, clausal negation takes place, while when it precedes it, we face constituent negation. The data in (32), however, indicate that this is not necessarily the case: a negated constituent may also follow the *negative verb + connegative stem* complex, and there is no one-to-one relationship between the scope of negation and the position of a constituent in a negative sentence. Depending on the context, both (32a) and (32b) can get either a sentential negation or a constituent negation interpretation, and it is exactly the presence of the



alternative(s) that ensures a constituent negation reading to the sentence. This implies that if the context is not specified (e.g., no alternative is given for the constituent *kinoje* ‘to the cinema’ in (29)–(30)), the same ambiguity should also hold for Kozmács’s examples above.

- (32) a. *Šibír-e* *e-j* *mini* (...).  
 Siberia-ILL NEG.PST-1 go.CNG.SG  
 ‘I did not go to Siberia.’/‘It is not Siberia that I went to.’
- b. *E-j* *mini* *Šibír-e* (...).  
 NEG.PST-1 go.CNG.SG Siberia-ILL  
 ‘I did not go to Siberia.’/‘It is not Siberia that I went to.’

It thus seems that the position of the negated constituent is not fixed, and a research on constructions with a constituent negation reading cannot be confined to sentences with the negated constituent in the immediately preverbal position.

Another question that arises on the basis of the previous literature and the preliminary data concerns the information structural role of the constituent that negation refers to. In fact, a linear sequence of elements of the type *XP NegAux V*<sup>11</sup> (where *XP*, in a first approach, is taken to be a constituent with an undefined role), can be associated with multiple readings, and may only be disambiguated by the context. Thus, a sequence like *Šibír-e e-j mini* (Siberia-ILL NEG.PST-1SG go.CNG.SG), depending on the context, may have the interpretation of constituent negation (33a), sentential negation (33b); furthermore, it may also be interpreted as a sentence with a contrastive topic (33c), or as a sentence with a focus taking scope over negation (33d) (the question whether the different readings are associated with different prosodic properties has not been studied yet). The main point to be clarified is whether the constituent that negation refers to is information structurally neutral, or bears the role of contrastive topic, or that of focus.

- (33) a. *Šibír-e* *e-j* *mini*, *Ural-e* *min-i*.  
 Siberia-ILL NEG.PST-1 go.CNG.SG Ural-ILL go-PST.1SG  
 ‘It is not Siberia that I went to but the Urals.’
- b. *Šibír-e* *e-j* *mini*.  
 Siberia-ILL NEG.PST-1 go.CNG.SG  
 ‘I did not go to Siberia.’
- c. *Šibír-e* *e-j* *mini*, *noš Ural-e – min-i*.  
 Siberia-ILL NEG.PST-1 go.CNG.SG but Ural-ILL go-PST.1SG  
 ‘Siberia, I did not go to, but the Urals, I did.’

<sup>11</sup> A reviewer raised the point that (33d) entails that X went the Urals, and in this respect it is similar to (33a). Entailment relations will be discussed in Section 6.



- d. Context: ‘Which one did not you go to in the end, Siberia or the Urals?’

<i>ŠIBÍR-E</i>	<i>e-j</i>	<i>mini.</i>
Siberia-ILL	NEG.PST-1	go.CNG.SG
‘It is Siberia that I did not go to.’ <sup>12</sup>		

The example in (28) suggests that ellipsis in the second clause is possible, which would be evidence for the focus status of the negated constituent (this will be discussed in Section 4.1 in more detail). If indeed this is the case, the negated constituent should be able to stand in any of the positions that foci in contemporary Udmurt can stand (i.e., immediately and not immediately preverbal and sentence-final, as outlined in Section 3.2).

As presented in Section 3.5 and also mentioned at the beginning of this section, neither the linear nor the structural position of the negated constituent is made clear in the literature: in Edygarova’s (2015, 285) example in (25), the negated constituent has the syntactic function of subject and it stands in a non-base position, immediately preceding the verb (in a neutral sentence, the subject would precede the goal argument of the verb, cf. Glezdenev 1921, 45–47; Asztalos, Gugán & Mus 2017, 51). This suggests either that the negated constituent is focused, or that the goal argument is topicalized. However, in Winkler’s (2011, 110) example in (28) the negated constituent does not stand in the immediately preverbal position, yet in (32b), it follows the verb.

Constituents with the role of focus, negators and quantifiers are regarded in theories of formal syntax and semantics as operators (see, e.g., Horvath 2013). Operators are scope-taking categories, i.e., the operation they encode is to be interpreted within a certain sentence domain. Two (or more) operators in a sentence enter into a scopal interaction, i.e., one of the operators takes scope over the other one. When the scope relations between two operators are reflected by the linear ordering of the operators (i.e., the operator with wide scope precedes the one with narrow scope), transparent (or linear) scope reading takes place, while the opposite case gives rise to an inverse scope reading.<sup>13</sup> Scopal ambiguity arises when a sequence allows both readings. Thus, if it turns out that (33a) has the same structure as (33d), that is, both sentences contain a focused element which linearly precedes negation, the question arises how the same sequence of focus and negation may give rise both to a transparent (Foc > ¬, cf. (33d)) and to an inverse (¬ > Foc, cf. (33a)) scope reading.

A sequence of the type *NegAux V XP* like *E-j myny Šibir-e* (NEG.PST-1SG go.CNG.SG Siberia-ILL) (cf. 34a) can also be associated with more than one reading depending on the context: besides the constituent negation reading (34a), it can also express sentential negation (34b), or the

<sup>12</sup>Scopal interaction, however, has also a definition based on a structural (i.e., not linear) interpretation of the position of scope-taking elements, linked to the notion of *c-command* (see, e.g., Amiraz 2021, 8–9). In generative grammar, operators *c-command* their scope – either in overt syntax or at LF. The present approach only focuses on their linear scope order, as is common in typology.

<sup>13</sup>The possibility of the reading with *Šibir-e* (Siberia-ILL) as a contrastive topic does not arise in this case, since contrastive topics, as presented in Section 3.2, are preverbal in Udmurt.



argument of the verb, similarly to what we face in (33d), can be interpreted as a focus taking wide scope over negation (34c).<sup>14</sup> In this latter case, inverse scope reading is taking place, as the negative verb precedes the focused element (Foc > ¬), whereas with the constituent negation reading (34a) (if the negated constituent bears the role of focus in the sentence) scope relations are expressed transparently (¬ > Foc). Scope relations in (34a) and (34c) would thus show the mirror image of what we face in the case of (33a) and (33d), respectively.

- (34) a. *E-j            mini            Šibiř-e,            Ural-e            min-i.*  
           NEG.PST-1    go.CNG.SG    Siberia-ILL    Ural-ILL    go-PST.1SG  
           ‘It is not Siberia that I went to but the Urals.’
- b. *E-j            mini            Šibiř-e.*  
           NEG.PST-1    go.CNG.SG    Siberia-ILL  
           ‘I did not go to Siberia.’
- c. Context: ‘Which one did you not go to in the end, Siberia or the Urals?’  
       *E-j            mini            ŠIBIŘ-E.*  
           NEG.PST-1    go.CNG.SG    Siberia-ILL  
           ‘It is Siberia that I did not go to.’

Constructions with the negative particle *ñe*, however, can only have one interpretation, since *ñe* always scopes over the constituent immediately following it. Thus, sentential negation reading could only arise if *ñe* were followed by the predicate (cf. the sentence in (20)). A wide scope focus reading (with focus taking scope over negation) would also involve a negated predicate. It also remains a question whether constructions with *ñe*, similarly to “standard” constructions, necessarily require the presence of the alternative(s) of the negated constituent. All in all, the question whether a constituent negated by *ñe* fulfils the role of focus, and, if so, whether it is a syntactically marked focus, is worth being investigated.

Summing up, the main questions that arise on the basis of previous work and preliminary data concern the information structural role of the negated constituent and its scopal interaction with negation (in case it is a focus). These are also the main questions that the present study aims at investigating. Syntactic “variables” that have to be taken into account while studying the constructions include the type of negator, the position of the negated constituent, the possibility of elliptical second clauses and, in case of negative verb constructions, the ellipsis of the lexical verb in the first clause.

## 4. METHODOLOGY

The research was carried out on two types of language data: test sentences evaluated by or elicited from native speakers of Udmurt (cf. Sections 4.1 & 4.3), and, in the case of *ñe*-constructions, corpus data (cf. Section 4.2).

<sup>14</sup>The original versions of the test sentences had *noš* ‘and; but’ as a conjunction, but one of the informants consequently changed it to its alternative borrowed from Russian, *a*, while the other consequently deleted it from the sentences. The examples given later, in (48)–(53) reflect these modifications.



#### 4.1. Grammaticality judgements on constructed test sentences

As anticipated above, a part of the data came from the results of a grammaticality judgement test. The informants were two native speakers of Udmurt, both women, aged between 30 and 40, holding a university degree and residing in Hungary. The consultants had to evaluate the grammaticality of 20 test sentences using a 5-point Likert-scale, and they had to correct each sentence that they rated below 5. The test sentences were constructed by the author of the present paper and they were embedded in short dialogues. The sentences were given in a written form and the informants had to fulfil the task individually. The list of test sentences did not contain any filler items.

As anticipated in Section 3.6, in order to find out whether the negated constituent fulfils the role of focus, the syntactic test illustrated in (35) was applied. If the clause containing negation can be followed by a coordinated elliptical clause containing the alternative(s) of the negated constituent, the negated constituent bears the focus role.

(35) *I did not go to Siberia but to the Urals.*

If, however, such sentences turn out to be ungrammatical and only VP-coordination structures like the ones in (25)–(27) are grammatical, there are good reasons to assume that clausal negation is taking place: more precisely, the negation either of a neutral sentence (cf. 36b vs. 36a), or of a sentence with a contrastive topic (37).

(36) a. *I did not go to Siberia, I went to the Urals.*

b. *I went to Siberia.*

(37) */Siberia, I did not go to, /the Urals, I went to.*

In order to decide between the two latter options (more precisely, in order to check whether the possibility of a contrastive topic reading can be rejected), I used in half of the test sentences (that is, in 10 sentences in total), a verb that requires an adjunct with an exhaustive reading, i.e., *vordskĭni* ‘to be born’. The meaning of *vordskĭni* ‘to be born’ can only hold true for one locative phrase (38), thus, the locative phrase cannot be interpreted as a contrastive topic, as illustrated by the ungrammatical Hungarian example with contrastive topics in (39). In other words, if the constituent that negation seems to refer to bears the role of contrastive topic, sentences with *vordskĭni* ‘to be born’ should give ungrammatical results in biclausal constructions with VP-coordination. If they give grammatical results, a contrastive topic analysis should be excluded. Grammatical sentences with an exhaustive complement thus support the focus analysis.

(38) *Budapešt-in vordsk-i.*  
 Budapest-INE be\_born-PST.1SG  
 ‘I was born in Budapest.’

(39) *\*/Róma-ban nem szület-t-em, /Párizs-ban viszont születtem.*  
 Rome-INE NEG be\_born-PST-1SG Paris-INE while be\_born-PST-1SG  
 Intended meaning: ‘In Rome I was not born, while in Paris I was.’





Test sentences were constructed along the following parameters:

1. Type of negator: negative verb or particle *né*;
2. Position of the constituent that negation refers to (or seems to refer to): immediately preverbal/not immediately preverbal/postverbal;
3. In case of negative verb + preverbal constituent: only negative verb/negative verb + connegative stem in the first clause;
4. The presence of the verb in the second clause: elliptical second clause/VP-coordination.

Test sentences were embedded in question-answer contexts of the type illustrated in (40). Half of the test sentences, as mentioned above, contained the verb *vordskini* ‘to be born’, a subject and a locative adjunct that was intended to be negated. In order to make the test dialogues less repetitive and combat speaker fatigue, the subject and the locative adjunct were expressed by a different proper name or lexical item in each dialogue. The intended meaning of the dialogues/possible answer sentences is rendered by (40a–b), while two concrete test items are given in (41)–(42).

(40) Context: ‘Where was your child born? In Budapest?’

- a. - *S/he was not born IN BUDAPEST, she was born in Bucharest.*  
[focus; non-elliptical 2<sup>nd</sup> clause]
- b. - *S/he was not born IN BUDAPEST but in Bucharest.*  
[focus; elliptical 2<sup>nd</sup> clause]

(41) - *Kiṭin pinal-ed vordsk-i-z? Budapest-ṭin=a?*  
where child-2SG be\_born-PST-3SG Budapest-INE=Q  
‘Where was your child born? In Budapest?’  
- *So Budapest-ṭin e-z vordskṭi, Buḡarest-ṭin vordsk-i-z.*  
3SG Budapest-INE NEG.PST-3 be\_born.CNG.SG Bucharest-INE be\_born-PST-3SG  
Intended meaning: ‘She was not born in Budapest but in Bucharest.’

(42) - *Kiṭin niṭpi-jed vordsk-i-z? Moḡgala-n=a?*  
where child-2SG be\_born-PST-3SG Mozhga-INE=Q  
‘Where was your child born? In Mozhga?’  
- *So Moḡgala-n e-z vordskṭi, noš<sup>15</sup> Kukmor-ṭin.*  
3SG Mozhga-INE NEG.PST-3 be\_born.CNG.SG but Kukmor-INE  
Intended meaning: ‘S/he was not born in Alnash but in Kukmor.’

<sup>15</sup>Udmurt corpora are available at <http://udmurt.web-corpora.net> (last accessed 27 March 2023). They consist of three annotated corpora: a main corpus (Udmurt corpus, i.e. a corpus of contemporary written literary Udmurt), and two subcorpora. The main corpus currently contains 9.57 million tokens and consists of texts of contemporary press, blog texts, the Udmurt translation of the New Testament and some articles of Udmurt Wikipedia. The searches were carried out in October 2021.



The other half of the test sentences (10 sentences in total) contained the verb *et'ini* 'to invite', a direct object and a subject that was intended to be negated. As in the case of the test dialogues with the verb *vordskini* 'to be born', proper names and common nouns were different in each dialogue. The intended meaning of the dialogues is rendered by (43a–b) ((43a i) and ii) illustrate two theoretically possible interpretations of the same sentence), while a concrete test item is given in (44).

(43) Context: 'Who invited Zhenja to the party? Artjom?'

- a. i) - *It is not ARTJOM who invited him, it is Nastja who invited him.*  
[focus; non-elliptical 2<sup>nd</sup> clause]  
ii) - *Artjom did not invite him, (while) Nastja invited him.*  
[contrastive topic; non-elliptical 2<sup>nd</sup> clause]
- b. - *It is not ARTJOM who invited him but Nastja.* [focus; elliptical 2<sup>nd</sup> clause]

(44) (*Śuan-in*)

wedding-INE

'At a wedding'

- *El'vira-jez kin et'-i-z śuan-e? l'ena=a?*  
Elvira-ACC who invite-PST-3SG wedding-ILL Lena=Q  
'Who invited Elvira to the wedding? Lena?'
- *Ńe L'ena so-je eť-i-z, noš Griša.*  
NEG Lena 3SG-ACC invite-PST-3SG but Grisha  
Intended meaning: 'Not Lena invited her but Grisha.'

Table 1 summarizes the configurations of negators, verbal predicates, negated constituents and other elements that were tested.

## 4.2. Corpus data

Corpus data were retrieved from *Udmurt corpus* (which is the main corpus of the Udmurt corpora),<sup>16</sup> by searching for the particle *ńe*.<sup>17</sup> The total number of relevant hits amounted to 93 (examples similar to (20), with *ńe* preceding the predicate and not a lower sentence constituent, were excluded).

<sup>16</sup>Data for the "standard" way of constituent negation was not retrieved from the corpus for reason of the formal overlap between sentential negation constructions and constructions with a constituent negation reading. The overwhelming majority of the hits would presumably have encoded sentence-level negation, and selecting the possible relevant hits would have exceeded a reasonable time frame.

<sup>17</sup>The consultant has an excellent command of Hungarian.



**Table 1.** Configurations tested

1	[S/O XP NegAux V] [YP V]
2	[S/O XP NegAux] [YP V]
3	[S/O XP NegAux V] [but YP]
4	[S/O NegAux V XP] [V YP]
5	[S/O NegAux V XP] [but YP]
6	[XP S/O NegAux] [YP V]
7	[XP S/O NegAux V] [but YP]
8	[S/O <i>né</i> XP V] [but YP]
9	[S/O V <i>né</i> XP] [but YP]
10	[ <i>né</i> XP S/OV] [but YP]

### 4.3. Further consultations with a native speaker

In a third phase of the research, I consulted one of the informants about further questions that had emerged during the analysis of the collected data. The task of the consultant was to translate from Hungarian to Udmurt sentences similar to (45)–(47).<sup>18</sup> The test sentences aimed at investigating i) the grammaticality of double negation constructions, i.e., sentences containing both sentential negation and constituent-level negation, cf. (45), and ii) whether the occurrence of negation and of focused numerals in the same clause gives rise to sentences with an ambiguous scope reading, cf. (46)–(47).

- (45) - *Dóra egy csepp-et sem szereti a fonológiá-t.*  
Dora one drop-ACC NEG love.3SG>3SG the phonology-ACC  
‘Dora does not like phonology at all.’
- *Nem a fonológiá-t nem szereti egy csepp-et sem, hanem a szintaxis-t.*  
NEG the phonology-ACC NEG love.3SG>3SG one drop-ACC MINIM  
but the syntax-ACC  
‘It is not phonology that she does not like at all but syntax.’
- (46) - *Nagyapá-nk az ázsiai országok közül háromban jár-t.*  
grandfather-1PL the Asian country-PL from\_among three-INE go-PST.3SG  
‘As for Asian countries, our grandfather has been to three of them.’
- *Nem HÁROM országban jár-t, hanem négy-ben. ⇨ Foc*  
NEG three country-INE go-PST.3SG but four-INE  
‘He has been not to THREE but to FOUR of them.’

<sup>18</sup>This does not mean, however, that Speaker A automatically accepted the test sentences without proposing any modification: as mentioned in footnote 15 in Section 4.1, she consistently changed the conjunction of elliptical second clauses from *noš* to *a*, and in [S/O NegAux V XP] [V YP] configurations (cf. (56)), she modified the word order of the second clause into [YP V].



- (47) - *Nagyapá-nk az ázsiai országok közül kettő-ben nem jár-t.*  
 grandfather-1PL the Asian country-PL from\_among two-INE NEG  
 go-PST.3SG  
 ‘As for Asian countries, it is two of them that our grandfather has not been to.’  
 - *Nem, HÁROM országban nem jár-t.* **Foc** >  $\neg$   
 NEG three country-INE go-PST.3SG  
 ‘No, it is three of them that he has not been to.’

## 5. RESULTS

In what follows, I present the results of the grammaticality judgement tasks and of the corpus search. The structural analysis of the constructions and the scope of negators will be discussed in Section 6. The results of the consultations conducted with the native speaker will also be discussed in Section 6, since these were also mainly concerned with the scope of negators.

### 5.1. Grammaticality judgement tasks

Tables 2 & 3 summarize the judgements of the consultants. As mentioned in Section 4.1, speakers had to correct each sentence that they rated below 5. As set forth in Sections 3.6 & 4.1, the research was concerned with the grammaticality of a predefined set of parameters (type of negator; word order in the first clause; ellipsis in the second clause; ellipsis of the connegative stem of the lexical verb in the first clause). Thus, corrections that did not affect these parameters were not taken into consideration from the point of view of the grammaticality of the sentences. To put it another way, when a speaker rated a given test sentence below 5 but her correction clearly did not affect the above parameters (e.g., she only deleted the conjunction of the elliptical second clause but otherwise left the sentence intact), her rating was taken to be 5.

As the tables illustrate, Speaker A was much more permissive and had much lower variability in her judgements than Speaker B.<sup>19</sup> Sentences that were given at least 4 points by both speakers were interpreted as grammatical, while those where the two speakers’ evaluations differed at least by 2 points were considered as subject to interspeaker variation.

Almost all test sentences with an elliptical second clause (i.e., configurations ending in [but YP]) were given at least 4 points by both speakers,<sup>20</sup> which suggests that ellipsis in the second clause is grammatical both in negative verb (48)–(50) and in *né* particle-constructions (51)–(53), independently of the position of the negated constituent (immediately preverbal (48), (51)/not immediately preverbal (49), (52)/postverbal (50), (53)). This implies that the negated constituent

<sup>19</sup>The only exception, as visible in Table 2, was the [S *né* XP<sub>Loc</sub> V] [but YP] configuration in sentences with the verb *vordskini* ‘to be born as speaker B gave it 3 points’. The same configuration, however, turned out to be grammatical in sentences with *et’ini* ‘to invite’, cf. (51).

<sup>20</sup>The sentence in (57), though, differs from (54) and (56) (but not from (55)) also by the fact that the connegative stem of the lexical verb is ellipsed in the first clause.



**Table 2.** Consultants' judgements about sentences with the verb *vordskini* 'to be born' and a locative adjunct to be negated

	Configuration	Speaker A	Speaker B	Average points
1	[S XP <sub>Loc</sub> NegAux V] [YP V]	5	5	5
2	[S XP <sub>Loc</sub> NegAux] [YP V]	5	4	4.5
3	[S XP <sub>Loc</sub> NegAux V] [but YP]	5	5	5
4	[S NegAux V XP <sub>Loc</sub> ] [V YP]	5	3	4
5	[S NegAux V XP <sub>Loc</sub> ] [but YP]	5	4	4.5
6	[XP <sub>Loc</sub> S NegAux] [YP V]	4	2	3
7	[XP <sub>Loc</sub> S NegAux V] [but YP]	5	4	4.5
8	[S <i>ńe</i> XP <sub>Loc</sub> V] [but YP]	5	3	4
9	[S V <i>ńe</i> XP <sub>Loc</sub> ] [but YP]	5	5	5
10	[ <i>ńe</i> XP <sub>Loc</sub> S V] [but YP]	5	4	4.5

**Table 3.** Consultants' judgements about sentences with the verb *eťini* 'to invite' and a subject to be negated

	Configuration	Speaker A	Speaker B	Average points
1	[O XP <sub>S</sub> NegAux V] [YP V]	5	5	5
2	[O XP <sub>S</sub> NegAux] [YP V]	4	4	4
3	[O XP <sub>S</sub> NegAux V] [but YP]	5	5	5
4	[O NegAux V XP <sub>S</sub> ] [V YP]	5	5	5
5	[O NegAux V XP <sub>S</sub> ] [but YP]	5	4	4.5
6	[XP <sub>S</sub> O NegAux] [YP V]	4	2	3
7	[XP <sub>S</sub> O NegAux V] [but YP]	5	5	5
8	[O <i>ńe</i> XP <sub>S</sub> V] [but YP]	5	4	4.5
9	[O V <i>ńe</i> XP <sub>S</sub> ] [but YP]	5	4	4.5
10	[ <i>ńe</i> XP <sub>S</sub> O V] [but YP]	5	4	4.5

i) fulfils the role of focus in both construction types, and ii) can appear in any of the positions in which focused elements occur in contemporary Udmurt (immediately preverbal, not immediately preverbal and sentence-final, as presented in Section 3.2).

- (48) Context: 'Who invited Anja to the party? Ivan?'  
*So-je Ivan e-z eťi, (a) Anton.*  
 3SG-ACC Ivan NEG.PST-3 invite.CNG.SG but Anton  
 'Not Ivan invited her but Anton.' (Speaker A: 5, Speaker B: 5)



- (49) Context: ‘Who invited Juliya to the reception? Misha?’  
*Miša so-je e-z et’i, (a) St’opa.*  
 Misha 3SG-ACC NEG.PST-3 invite.CNG.SG but Stjopa  
 ‘Not Misha invited her but Stjopa.’ (Speaker A: 5, Speaker B: 5)
- (50) Context: ‘Who invited Ljuda to the concert? Vladislav?’  
*So-je e-z et’i Vlad’islav, (a) Vika.*  
 3SG-ACC NEG.PST-3 invite.CNG.SG Vladislav but Vika  
 ‘Not Vladislav invited her but Vika.’ (Speaker A: 5, Speaker B: 4)
- (51) Context: ‘Who invited Kristina to the coffee shop? Danil?’  
*So-je ŋe Dañil et’-i-z, (a) D’ima.*  
 3SG-ACC NEG Danil invite-PST-3SG but Dima  
 ‘Not Danil invited her but Dima.’ (Speaker A: 5, Speaker B: 4)
- (52) Context: ‘Who invited Elvira to the wedding? Lena?’  
*Ŋe L’ena so-je et’-i-z, (a) Griša.*  
 NEG Lena 3SG-ACC invite-PST-3SG but Grisha  
 ‘Not Lena invited her but Grisha.’ (Speaker A: 5, Speaker B: 4)
- (53) Context: ‘Who invited Marina to the celebration? Katja?’  
*So-je et’-i-z ŋe Kat’a, (a) T’imofej.*  
 3SG-ACC invite-PST-3SG NEG Katja but Timofej  
 ‘Not Katja invited her but Timofej.’ (Speaker A: 5, Speaker B: 4)

In negative verb constructions, the analysis of the negated constituent as a focus is also supported by the fact that both informants considered the VP-coordination structure as grammatical not only with the verb *et’ini* ‘to invite’ but also with *vordskini* ‘to be born’, at least when the locative adjunct was in the immediately preverbal position (54)–(55) (i.e., in the position which, as presented in Section 3.2, is the most accepted position for foci according to Asztalos 2020). As argued in Section 3.6, a contrastive topic analysis of the locative phrases is unlikely in these sentences, since the meaning of a verb like ‘to be born’ requires that the locative adjunct had an exhaustive reading. The variant with the locative adjunct in postverbal position (56) received a less favourable judgement by Speaker B, who placed the negated constituent in her correction into the immediately preverbal position, while the variant with the locative phrase preceding the verb non-immediately (57)<sup>21</sup> was least favoured by both speakers.

<sup>21</sup>The word order of the second clause was corrected to YP V by both informants (i). The same correction was suggested for the corresponding (i.e., [S/O NegAux V XP] [V YP]) *ot’ini* ‘to invite’-constructions as well.

(i) [...] *Irkutsk-in vordsk-i-z.*  
 Irkutsk-INE be\_born-PST-3SG  
 ‘(...) s/he was born in Irkutsk.’



- (54) Context: ‘Where was your child born? In Budapest?’  
 So **Budapešt-in** *ẽ-z* *vordski*, *Buḡarest-in* *vordsk-i-z*.  
 3SG Budapest-INE NEG.PST-3 be\_born.CNG.SG Bucharest-INE be\_born-PST-3SG  
 ‘S/he was not born in Budapest, she was born in Bucharest.’  
 (\*‘In Budapest s/he was not born, (while) in Bucharest s/he was.’)  
 (Speaker A: 5, Speaker B: 5)
- (55) Context: ‘Where was your daughter born? In Alnash?’  
 So **Alnaš-in** *ẽ-z*, *Sarapul-in* *vordsk-i-z*.  
 3SG Alnash-INE NEG.PST-3 Sarapul-INE be\_born-PST-3SG  
 ‘She was not born in Alnash, she was born in Sarapul.’  
 (\*‘In Alnash she was not born, (while) in Sarapul she was.’)  
 (Speaker A: 5, Speaker B: 4)
- (56) Context: ‘Where was your child born? In Yakutsk?’  
 % So *ẽ-z* *vordski* **Jakutsk-in**, *vordsk-i-z* *Irkutsk-in*.<sup>22</sup>  
 3SG NEG.PST-3 be\_born.CNG.SG Yakutsk-INE be\_born-PST-3SG Irkutsk-INE  
 ‘S/he was not born in Yakutsk, she was born in Irkutsk.’  
 (Speaker A: 5, Speaker B: 3)
- (57) Context: ‘Where was your daughter born? In Yoshkar-Ola?’  
 % **Joškar-Ola-in** *so* *ẽ-z*, *Kozmod'emjansk-in* *vordsk-i-z*.  
 Yoshkar-Ola-INE 3SG NEG.PST-3 Kozmodemjansk-INE be\_born-PST-3SG  
 Intended meaning: ‘She was not born in Yoshkar-Ola, she was born in Kozmodemjansk.’  
 (\*‘In Yoshkar-Ola she was not born, (while) in Kozmodemjansk she was.’)  
 (Speaker A: 4, Speaker B: 2)

As Tables 2 & 3 show, all of the sentences with an immediately preverbal negated constituent and a non-elliptical first clause (i.e., those with the configurations [S/O XP NegAux V] [YP V] and [S/O XP NegAux V] [but YP], cf. rows 1 and 3 of the Tables and examples (48), (54)), were given 5 points by both speakers. This may be related to the “standard” nature of negative verb constructions, and is also in line with the proposed analysis of the negated constituent as a focus, since, as mentioned above, the immediately preverbal is the most preferred position for foci in Udmurt. The immediately preverbal position was highly accepted even when it was clearly not a base position for the negated constituent. In constructions with elliptical first clauses (i.e., with the connegative stem ellipted), Speaker B gave higher points for sentences with an immediately preverbal negated constituent (configuration [S/O XP NegAux] [YP V], 4 points) than for those with a sentence-initial negated constituent (configuration [XP S/O NegAux] [YP V], 2 points), cf. rows 2 and 6 of the Tables. In the case of the minimal pair with *ẽṭini*, this meant that the OSV ordered sentence (58) was judged more favourably than the

<sup>22</sup>Obviously this has to be confirmed by prosodic investigations in the future.



sentence showing the basic SOV pattern (59). The fact that the negated subject was preferred in a non-canonical position, identical to the position in which foci are most preferred (cf. [Asztalos 2020](#)), also suggests that the negated constituent bears the focus role in the sentence.

- (58) Context: ‘Who invited Irina to the wedding? Artjom?’  
*So-je Art’om e-z, Valerija et’-i-z.*  
 3SG-ACC Artjom NEG.PST-3 Valerija invite-PST-3SG  
 ‘Not Artjom invited her but Valerija.’ (Speaker A: 4, Speaker B: 4)
- (59) Context: ‘Who invited Raisa to the restaurant? Sasha?’  
 % *Saša so-je e-z, Artur et’-i-z.*  
 Sasha 3SG-ACC NEG.PST-3 Arthur invite-PST-3SG  
 ‘Not Sasha invited her but Arthur.’ (Speaker A: 4, Speaker B: 2)

Finally, a couple of more general remarks have to be said about the overall evaluation of sentences with an elliptical first clause (i.e., with the connegative stem ellipted). Speaker B gave lower points to these sentences than to their non-elliptical counterparts, as illustrated by the sentences in (55) vs. (54). Throughout the whole test, both in the *vordskini* ‘to be born’ and in the *et’ini* ‘to invite’ sentences, it was the configuration [XP S/O NegAux] [YP V] (with elliptical first clause and sentence-initial negated constituent, cf. the examples in (57) and (59)) and row 6 in the Tables) that received the lowest points (i.e., 2) by Speaker B, and this was also the configuration that received the lowest point on average (i.e., 3). It thus seems that the ellipsis of the connegative stem of the lexical verb is somewhat less preferred than its spell-out.

Turning to *ñe*-constructions, as it was anticipated at the beginning of this section, elliptical *second* clauses proved to be grammatical in their case as well, independently of the position of the constituent negated by *ñe*, cf. the sentences in (51)–(53) and rows 8–10 of the Tables. This shows that constituents negated by *ñe* are also foci, and that they can also appear in any of the positions in which foci can occur in contemporary Udmurt (cf. [Asztalos 2020](#)).

## 5.2. Corpus search

As mentioned in Section 4.2 corpus data were only retrieved for the *ñe* particle but not for the negative verb constructions. Data show that *ñe* constructions themselves may appear in elliptical clauses (60), and that, contrary to negative verb constructions, they do not necessarily require the presence of the alternative(s) of the negated constituent (61):

- (60) (...) *Šundikar lešt-išk-e pinal-jos-li, a ñe arlıdo*  
*Shundykar make-REFL-3SG youngster-PL-DAT but NEG elderly*  
*kišnomurt-jos-li.*  
*lady-PL-DAT*  
 ‘Shundykar [a summer camp for kids] is organized for children, and not for elderly ladies.’

([Udmurt corpus](#), [udmurto4ka.blogspot.ru](http://udmurto4ka.blogspot.ru), Marina Sergeeva 2013–2016)





- (61) (...) *aś-te-lī kule priznat'sja: ti sīče ěe gen-jos ponna i ěe*  
 self-2PL-DAT must confess.INF(RU) 2PL such NEG gene-PL for and NEG  
*paškiť lī ponna.*  
 wide bone for  
 '(...) you have to admit to yourself: you are like that not because of your genes and not  
 because of the heavy bones.'  
 (Udmurt corpus, udmurto4ka.blogspot.ru, Marina Sergeeva 2013–2016)

Corpus data also confirm the findings of the grammaticality judgement task that constituents negated with *ěe* can occur in different positions with respect to the main clausal predicate, e.g., not immediately before the verb, cf. (31), or postverbally (62):

- (62) *No samoj tunsiko-jez val ěe so, a pijaš Gajan ěimo.*  
 but SUP interesting-DET be.PST NEG that but boy Gajan named  
 'But the most interesting was not that (part) but a boy named Gajan.'  
 (Udmurt corpus, igoninamaria.ru, Marija Igonina 2015)

Since the particle *ěe* is a functional element borrowed from Russian, the question may arise whether it is more frequently used with Russian than with Udmurt lexemes (or than with older loanwords more adapted to Udmurt). In the data retrieved from the corpus, 20.4% of constituents negated with *ěe* were composed of Russian lexemes, 17.2% of Russian and Udmurt lexemes, and 62.4% of Udmurt lexemes. Thus, negation with *ěe* does not seem to be more frequently used with Russian than with Udmurt lexemes (or than with older loanwords more adapted to Udmurt).

## 6. ANALYSIS

The present section is concerned with the structure of the two construction types under discussion, focusing mainly on the information structural role and the syntactic status of the negated constituent, as well as on the scope of negation. Sections 6.1 will concentrate on negative verb constructions with a constituent negation reading, and Section 6.2 discusses *ěe* particle constructions.

### 6.1. Negative verb constructions

**6.1.1. The negated constituent as a pragmatic focus.** As anticipated in Section 5, I propose that the negated constituent fulfils the role of focus in the sentence. Such an analysis is supported by the following arguments:

- i) the results of the ellipsis-test: elliptical 2nd clauses (containing the alternative(s) of the focus) are grammatical (48)–(50);
- ii) negated constituents are grammatical in those linear positions in which focused items may appear in contemporary Udmurt, cf. (48)–(50);
- iii) the immediately preverbal position is preferred (at least by Speaker B) even when the neutral position of the negated constituent would be elsewhere in the sentence, cf. (58) vs. (59).



The above observations thus suggest that the constituent which negation refers to fulfils the role of focus in the Udmurt sentence. It still remains, however, a question whether focus is syntactically marked (that is, associated with a dedicated structural position like the immediately preverbal focus in Hungarian, cf. [É. Kiss \(1998, 2006\)](#)), or whether it is a pragmatic focus, possibly marked by prosody. The following considerations suggest that focus is rather a pragmatically than a syntactically marked category in Udmurt:

- i) *Focus does not have a fixed position in the sentence.* As outlined in Section 3.2, focused constituents in Udmurt most commonly appear in the position immediately preceding the verb (cf. [Tánczos 2010](#); [Asztalos 2020](#)), however, they are not restricted to this position as they can also occur preverbally but not adjacent to the verb, furthermore, postverbally and sentence-finally (cf. [Asztalos 2020](#)). According to my Udmurt informants, prosody plays a role in focus marking.<sup>23</sup> [Asztalos \(2020, 41–46\)](#) finds that focus is interpreted in the same way in all the above (linear) positions, that is, in none of the positions does the focus have an obligatory exhaustive or contrastive reading. The facts that focused items do not have a fixed position and that none of the positions they can occur in is associated with exhaustivity and/or contrastivity suggest that focus is not associated with a dedicated structural position in Udmurt (cf. also [Asztalos 2022](#)).
- ii) *A given order of elements can have more than one interpretation.* As presented in Section 3.6, negative sentences, when the context is not specified, may have more than one interpretation. According to the informants, prosody plays a role in distinguishing the different interpretations.
- iii) *The presence of the alternative(s) of the negated constituent:* Constituent negation is exemplified in the literature mostly by biclausal structures mentioning the alternative(s) of the negated constituent, cf. (25)–(28). The negation of a syntactically marked structural focus position would not necessarily require the presence of alternatives for a focus negation reading, as illustrated by the Hungarian sentence in (7) (repeated here as (63)):

- (63)    *Nem SZIBÉRIA-BA men-t-em el.*  
          NEG    Siberia-ILL    go-PST-1SG    PV  
          ‘It is not Siberia that I went to.’

To sum up, in negative verb constructions, a constituent negation reading is obtained by the focalization of the constituent that negation is directed to. The observed facts suggest that the possible linear positions of foci are not associated with a dedicated structural focus projection, and focus in Udmurt is rather of a pragmatic nature, marked by the context and, according to the informants, by prosody. The question, however, still remains whether it is focus negation or sentential negation that takes place in these constructions. Section 6.1.2 deals with this problem.

<sup>23</sup>Identifying the elements that (can) stand out of the scope of negation is, however, out of the scope of this study.



**6.1.2. Constituent negation reading as expressed by sentential negation.** The present subsection aims at providing a tentative analysis of the syntactic structure of negative verb constructions with a constituent negation reading. I will survey three theoretically possible ways of analysis (listed below as 1., 2.1 and 2.2), and will argue that negative verb constructions are to be analysed as sentential negation constructions in which negation scopes over (at least) the focus and the main clausal predicate.

The possible ways of analysis to be discussed are the following:

1. *Focus negation*: As stated in Section 2, focus negation is defined for the purposes of this study as a type of negation which only takes scope over the *focused* constituent but not the presupposed part of the sentence. In other words, the presupposed part of the clause, including the main (verbal) predicate, is outside of the scope of negation, and this is also manifested in syntax by the fact that the predicate of the presupposed part is morpho-syntactically not negated. A possible complex sentence paraphrase of the constructions is then given in (64). The presupposed part of the clause is realized as a relative clause bearing the subject role of the complex sentence, while the focus is paraphrased as the predicate of the complex clause. Negation does not extend over the subject/presupposed part:

(64) [<sub>subj</sub> *Where I went*] [<sub>pred</sub> *is not SIBERIA*].

Scope relations of focus, negation, and the presupposed part of the clause (which are not necessarily reflected by the linear ordering of elements) can be schematized in this case as illustrated in (65):

(65) [ $\neg$  *Foc*] [<sub>presupp</sub> ...]

2. *Sentential negation*: Negative verb constructions with a constituent negation reading are to be analysed in this case as sentential negation constructions. This can take place in two ways: 2.1. Meanings of the type *It is not SIBERIA that I went to* (with negation taking scope over focus) are expressed in Udmurt by sentences of type *It is SIBERIA that I did not go to* (with focus taking scope over negation, as in the examples in (33d) and (34c)). A possible paraphrase is given in (66). In this case, negation scopes over the presupposed part of the clause (realized as the subject in the paraphrase), but does not extend over the focused part (paraphrased as the predicate of the complex clause):

(66) [<sub>subj</sub> *Where I did not go*] [<sub>pred</sub> *is SIBERIA*].

Scope relations can be schematized as in (67):

(67) [*Foc*] [ $\neg$  <sub>presupp</sub> ...]

In this case, meanings of the type *Where I went is not Siberia* would become available by *entailment*, since the truth value of the proposition *Where I did not go is Siberia (but other relevant places, I went to)* entails the truth value of the proposition *I did not go to Siberia (but*



other relevant places, I went to), which, in its turn, entails the truth value of the proposition *Where I went is not Siberia (but other relevant places)*.

2.2. The other possibility is that negation scopes over the complex made by the focus and the verbal predicate, and the whole proposition is negated. A possible paraphrase of the sentences is given in (68):

(68) *It is not true that*  $[[_{subj} \text{ where I went }] [_{pred} \text{ is SIBERIA}]]$ .

In this case, scope relations can be schematized as in (69):

(69)  $\neg [[Foc] [_{presupp} \dots]]$

In what follows, I am going to argue for the analysis in 2.2. I will first discuss why a sentential negation analysis is more plausible than a focus negation analysis, then I will show why the analysis in 2.2 is preferable over the one in 2.1.

Arguments for a sentential negation, and against a focus negation analysis include the following:

- i) Negative sentences in Udmurt, as presented in Section 3.6, are ambiguous;
- ii) Data suggest that focus is not associated with a structural syntactic position (cf. Section 6.1.1);
- iii) Constructions with a constituent negation reading are realized by the same means as sentential negation, i.e., the negation of the main predicate of the clause. Negative verbs form a complex unit with the lexical verb (cf. Georgieva, Salzmann & Weisser 2021) and carry inflectional material (see Sections 3.3): in other words, the verbal predicate is negated in a morphosyntactic sense. Negation takes high scope in the sentence as demonstrated by Georgieva, Salzmann & Weisser (2021) (see also Section 3.4).

The analysis in 2.1 can be rejected on the basis of the results of the ellipsis test. If constructions with a constituent negation reading were expressed by sentences of the type *It is SIBERIA that I did not go to* (or, to put it another way, *Where I did not go is Siberia*), with the constituent negation reading arising as the result of entailment, ellipsis in the second clause would give ungrammatical results, as illustrated by (70):

(70) \**It is SIBERIA that I did not go to but Hungary.*

However, as highlighted in Section 5.1 (and see also Section 6.1.1), ellipsis in the second clause is indeed grammatical, which rules out the possibility that what we face are constructions of type (66) and constituent negation reading arises by entailment.

According to the analysis in 2.2, negation scopes over the complex made by the focus and the verbal predicate. Thus, from a syntactic point of view, negation counts as sentential negation: it is part of the verbal inflection and it also scopes over the focused constituent.

In constructions with a constituent negation reading, as mentioned in Sections 3.6 & 5.1, the focus can both precede and follow the main predicate of the clause. When it precedes it,



as in examples (48)–(49), (54)–(55) and (57)–(59), inverse-scope reading takes place (as negation takes scope over the operator that precedes it, i.e., the focus ( $\neg > \text{Foc}$ )). That is, the scope of negation extends over the main clausal predicate and the focused constituent. However, when the focus follows the clausal predicate (as in (50) and (56)), scope relations are expressed transparently. The clausal predicate in both cases falls under the scope of negation, that is, it is not possible to negate exclusively the focus with the negative verb strategy.

The focused constituent, however, can also stand outside the scope of negation as in sentences of type *It is SIBERIA that I did not go to* (33d), (34c): in this case, focus takes scope over negation ( $\text{Foc} > \neg$ ). The interaction of the two operators gives rise to transparent-scope constructions when the focus precedes the main predicate as in (33d), and to inverse-scope constructions when it follows it (34c).

The examples in (71)–(74), containing a quantifier and negation in (71)–(72) and a focused quantifier and negation in (73)–(74), also indicate that the scope of negation is not fixed: it may extend over a (focused) quantifier ( $\neg > Q$ ), giving thus rise to an inverse scope reading as in (71) and (73), but quantifiers can also stand outside the scope of negation ( $Q > \neg$ ) as in (72) and (74), resulting in transparent-scope constructions.<sup>24</sup>

- (71) *Djšetskiš-jos tros e-z vue.*  $\neg > Q$   
 student-PL many NEG.PST-3 arrive.CNG.PL  
 ‘Not many students arrived.’ (Edygarova 2015, 282, cited by Georgieva, Salzmann & Weisser 2021, 471)

- (72) *Tros-ez djšetskiš-jos e-z vue.*  $Q > \neg$   
 many-DET student-PL NEG.PST-3 arrive.CNG.PL  
 ‘Many students did not arrive.’ (Edygarova 2015, 282, cited by Georgieva, Salzmann & Weisser 2021, 471)

- (73) Context: ‘As for Asian countries, our grandfather has been to three of them.’  
*So kwiŋ šajer-e e-z vuili, a ŋil'-az.*  $\neg > Q$   
 3SG three country-ILL NEG.PST-3 arrive.CNG.SG but four-ILL.DET  
 ‘He has been not to THREE but to FOUR of them.’ (constructed)

- (74) Context: ‘As for Asian countries, it is two of them that our grandfather has not been to.’  
*Evel, so kwiŋ šajer-e e-z vuili: Kitaj-e, Japoŋi-je*  
 be.NEG 3SG three country-ILL NEG.PST-3 arrive.CNG.SG China-ILL Japan-ILL  
*no Ujpal Kore-je.*  $Q > \neg$   
 and North Korea-ILL  
 ‘No, it is three of them that he has not been to: China, Japan, and North-Corea.’  
 (constructed)

To sum up, data lead to the conclusion that focus in standard Udmurt is not syntactically marked but is merely a pragmatic focus, marked by the context and presumably by prosody.

<sup>24</sup>Available online at <https://rosstat.gov.ru/folder/56580>, last accessed 22 May 2023.



Sentences containing a focused constituent can be negated. Negation is to be analysed as sentential negation as it is morphologically expressed on the main predicate of the clause, that is, it makes part of the verbal inflection. Negation scopes over the main predicate and it may also scope over the focus, in which case it is to be interpreted at the level of constituents. When the focus precedes the predicate, inverse-scope constructions arise. The focus, however, can also be outside of the scope of negation, giving thus rise to a *Foc* >  $\neg$  reading and, depending on the position of the focused constituent with regard to the main predicate of the clause, either to transparent or to inverse-scope constructions.

## 6.2. Constructions with *né*

The results of the ellipsis test (cf. Section 5.1) show that constituents negated with the particle *né* also fulfil the role of focus in the sentence. Although, similarly to negative verb constructions, constituents negated with *né* do not have a fixed position in the sentence (they can immediately or non-immediately precede the verb or stand postverbally, cf. Section 5.1), the following considerations suggest that foci negated with *né* are not necessarily of a merely pragmatic nature:

- i) *The unambiguous interpretation of the constructions:* Contrary to negative verb constructions, *né*-constructions have an unambiguous interpretation: as mentioned in Sections 3.5 & 3.6, the particle *né* always negates the constituent immediately following it.
- ii) *The non-obligatory presence of the alternative(s) of the focus:* Contrary to negative verb constructions, foci negated with *né* do not necessarily require the presence of the alternative(s) of the negated constituent: even in the absence of the alternative(s) it is obvious that negation refers to the constituent immediately following the particle *né*, as it was illustrated by the example in (61), cf. Section 5.2.

Thus, there are reasons to assume that constituents negated with the particle *né* stand in a syntactically marked focus position. The arguments below suggest that what we face with *né*-constructions is focus negation in the sense as it was defined for the purposes of this study (schematizable as  $[\neg \text{Foc}] [\text{presupp} \dots]$ , see Section 2 and point 1. of Section 6.1.2), and not sentential negation as with negative verb constructions:

- i) When *né* negates a constituent, the main predicate of the clause is in the affirmative form as presented in Sections 3.5 & 5. In those sporadic cases when *né* immediately precedes the verbal predicate, negation refers to the verbal predicate and not to a lower sentence constituent and thus expresses sentential negation, cf. (20).
- ii) The particle *né* is suitable for negating a constituent subordinated to a negative predicate, giving thus rise to a double negation construction as in (75)–(76). Negative verb constructions are not suitable to express double negation in the same simple clause.

- (75) Context: ‘As for Asian countries, it is South Korea that our grandfather has not been to.’
- |           |               |                |            |               |          |                     |
|-----------|---------------|----------------|------------|---------------|----------|---------------------|
| <i>Ńe</i> | <i>Južnoj</i> | <i>Kore-je</i> | <i>e-z</i> | <i>vuili,</i> | <i>a</i> | <i>Ševernoj-az.</i> |
| NEG       | Southern      | KOREA-ILL      | NEG.PST-3  | ARRIVE.CNG.SG | but      | NORTHERN-ILL.DET    |
- ‘It is not South Korea he has not been to but North Korea.’ (elicited)



- (76) Context: ‘Dora does not like phonology at all.’  
*Nokeńa no ńe fonologi-jez u-g jarati, a ńintaksis-ez.*  
 at\_all also NEG PHONOLOGY-ACC NEG.PRS-3 LIKE.CNG.SG but SYNTAX-ACC  
 ‘It is not phonology she does not like at all but syntax.’ (elicited)

I propose that the borrowing of the functional element *ńe* from Russian leads to the development of a focus projection in Udmurt. Thus, constituents negated with *ńe* are to be analysed as syntactic foci, appearing in the functional projection FocP dominated by a right-branching NegP projection as illustrated in (77):

- (77) [<sub>NegP</sub> *ńe* [<sub>FocP</sub> *fonologijez*]]

Since the negative particle *ńe* always precedes the focus, it gives rise to transparent-scope constructions. An inverse scope reading of the string *ńe* + *focus* is out.

## 7. TYPOLOGICAL IMPLICATIONS

In what follows, I will argue that the evolution of a right-branching NegP and of a syntactic focus position on the one hand, and the development of transparent-scope constructions in focus negation on the other hand, are both concomitants of the presumed ongoing SOV-to-SVO change of Udmurt (on the SOV-to-SVO change of Udmurt, see Asztalos, Gugán & Mus 2017 and Asztalos 2018, 2021).

According to É. Kiss (2014), in Old Hungarian, the SOV-to-SVO change has led to the evolution of a functional left periphery in the sentence, including FocP and NegP projections. The motivation for the development of right-branching functional projections was a requirement for operators to *c*-command and precede the expression that they have in their scope (É. Kiss 2015, 45). I suggest that what we see in Udmurt *ńe* particle constructions is, to a certain extent, parallel to the developments in Old Hungarian: *ńe*, if analysed as the head of NegP, *c*-commands and directly precedes the expression in the FocP projection. While in negative verb constructions, as we have seen it in Sections 3.6 & 6.1, the exact scope of negation is ambiguous, the development of a head-initial NegP projection dominating a FocP projection gives rise to unambiguous constructions. Thus, the emergence of head-initial constructions in Udmurt involves also the development of right-branching functional projections in the sentence structure, and triggers fundamental structural changes in the expression of negation.

As anticipated above, the emergence of *ńe*-constructions as *transparent*- (or *linear*-) scope constructions can also be interpreted as a concomitant of the ongoing SOV-to-SVO change of Udmurt. Amiraz (2021), in his typological study carried out on 110 languages, examined the scopal interaction of universal quantifiers and negation in constructions of type *All that glitters is not gold/Not all that glitters is gold*, and found that in languages that allow the same scope relation to be expressed both by linear- (78a) and by inverse- (78b) scope constructions, inverse-scope constructions are historically older. However, Amiraz (2021) also observes that languages show a tendency to develop scope-transparent constructions. Linear- vs. inverse-scope strategies show some correlation with basic word order: in Amiraz’s (2021) sample, inverse-scope



constructions were common, while transparent-scope constructions were uncommon in verb-final languages (2021, 14).

- (78) a. *Not everyone saw John.*  $\neg > Q$ ; linear order:  $\neg Q$   
 b. *Everyone didn't see John.*  $\neg > Q$ ; linear order:  $Q \neg$

Although the present study is concerned with the scopal interaction of negation and *focus* and not with that of negation and quantifiers, there is no *a priori* reason to assume that scope relations would differ too much in the two cases (as the examples in (71)–(74) also suggest). The most “standard” way for expressing a constituent negation reading involves in Udmurt inverse-scope constructions with the focus (immediately) preceding the unit of the *negative verb* + *connegative stem*, which exemplifies well Amiraz's (2021) typological generalizations, i.e. that inverse-scope constructions are historically older and they are more typical for verb-final languages than linear-scope constructions. On the other hand, transparent-scope constructions like *negative verb* + *connegative stem* + *focus* and *ñe*-particle constructions are with no doubt later developments in Udmurt, and their development may be connected with the presumed ongoing SOV-to-SVO change of Udmurt.

## 8. CONCLUSION

In this paper I argued that contemporary Udmurt has two main strategies for expressing a ‘constituent negation reading’: constructions with a morphosyntactically negated predicate and *ñe* particle constructions.

1. The native expression comprises sentential negation constructions with a morphosyntactically negated predicate (typically a complex unit of the negative verb and the connegative stem of the lexical verb), and a pragmatic focus. Negation scopes over the complex of the main predicate and the focus. The focused constituent can both precede and follow the negated predicate. When it precedes it, it gives rise to inverse-scope constructions, while when it follows it, it results in transparent-scope constructions. The focus, however, can also stay out of the scope of negation. In the latter case what we face are not constructions with a constituent negation reading but constructions with the focus taking scope over negation ( $\text{Foc} > \neg$ ).
2. The other strategy involves the negative particle *ñe* borrowed from Russian. The negator *ñe* always immediately precedes the constituent to be negated (giving thus rise to transparent-scope constructions), and combines with a predicate in the affirmative form (unless the negator and the predicate express double negation). The constituent negated by *ñe* has been analysed as a syntactically marked focus appearing in the functional projection *FocP*, dominated by a right-branching *NegP* projection. *Ñe*-constructions have been analysed as instances of focus negation.

On the basis of É. Kiss's (2014) findings on Old Hungarian and Amiraz's (2021) typological study, I argued that the evolution of a right-branching *NegP* and of a syntactic focus position, as well as the development of transparent-scope constructions in focus negation are concomitants of the ongoing SOV-to-SVO change of Udmurt.





# ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The research reported here was supported by the following research project grants of the National Research, Development and Innovation Office of Hungary: NKFIH 129921 *‘Implications of endangered Uralic languages for syntactic theory and the history of Hungarian’*, NKFIH 135958 *‘How prosody shapes word order: An integrated interface-based approach to the post-verbal domain in OV languages’*, and NKFIH 125206 *‘Nominal Structures in Uralic Languages’*. The paper has greatly benefited from the insightful comments and suggestions of Katalin É. Kiss and the two anonymous reviewers of *Acta Linguistica Academica*. I am especially grateful to my native speaker consultants Yuliia Speshilova and Diana Vakhrusheva, and also wish to thank Balázs Surányi and other colleagues in the above mentioned projects for their helpful comments while making the first steps in the research presented here. Previous versions of this work were presented at *Nyelvelmélet és kontaktológia 5* (Budapest, November 2021) and the Workshop *Consequences of the OV-to-VO change on different levels of clause structure* at ICHL 25 (Oxford, August 2022). I am also grateful to the audiences at these occasions.

# LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS AND SYMBOLS

¬	negation
>	scope relation (the operator to the left of the symbol has a wider scope than the one to the right)
/	contrastive topic
1	first person
2	second person
3	third person
ACC	accusative case
CMPR	comparative
CNG	connegative stem
DAT	dative case
DET	determinative suffix
EV	evidential past tense
Foc	focus
FocP	focus phrase
FUT	future tense
GEN	genitive case
ibid.	in the same place
id	the same
ILL	illative case
INE	inessive case
INF	infinitive
INS	instrumental-comitative case
MINIM	minimizer
Neg, NEG	negative word



NegAux	negative verb
NegP	negative phrase
O	object
ORD	ordinal numeral
PL	plural
pred	predicate
presupp	presupposed part of the clause
PRS	present tense
PST	past tense
PTCL	particle
PTCP	participle
PV	preverb (verbal prefix)
Q	question particle
Q	quantifier
RU	Russian lexeme with Russian inflectional morpheme
S <sub>subj</sub>	subject
SG	singular
SUP	superlative
V	(lexical) verb
vP, VP	verbal phrase
XP	negated constituent
YP	alternative of the negated constituent

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