SIMONCSICS, PÉTER

Linguistic gestures:
On negation, with special reference to Permian languages
(A distributional analysis)

To the memory of Erik Vászolyi-Vasse

Negation is not only a logical operation, but also an emotional act usually in initial position of an utterance or a phrase. Permian languages like most of their Uralic cognates use negative auxiliaries for expressing denial and prohibition. The author is paying attention to some concomitant gestures of denial and prohibition having an impact on the phonic material negative auxiliaries are built of. The original negative auxiliary stem in Uralic and thus in Permian was an illabial vowel *e-. It is observed that the illabial stem changed to a labial one in present tense in Permian (Komi o- and Udmurt u-). Labialization of present tense forms of negation as a facial gesture is supposed to emphasize the *hic et nunc* of denial and to make it more conspicuous, so to say, visible for the partner at present, i.e. the hearer. Another negative stem, more limited in use in Permian languages, is *a-* . Similarly, it is explained also by gestural factors which are in accordance with its physiological nature: when producing *a* one usually opens his mouth wide with a concomitant pulling back of his head which is the so-called „Turkish way" of expressing „no". The negative stems, Komi *-ë* and Udmurt *-a* are illabials and used in general questions as question tags, i.e. in final position of a phrase.

Keywords: negative auxiliary, *hic et nunc* of denial, present vs. past, labialization as facial gesture.

0. Preliminaries

Before presenting, discussing and, hopefully, also solving the problem of negation in Permian, we offer a brief review of Permian vocalism, since this is the linguistic framework within which the problem of negation in Uralic and, specifically, Permian is located and where the solution may possibly be found. The negative auxiliaries in Permian are mostly monosyllabic vocalic stems *e-*, *ë-*, *o-*, *u-*, which is of a piece with the overall tendency to monosyllabicity in the word-stock of Permian. Grosso modo, both Komi and Udmurt have seven vowel phonemes:

$$
\begin{array}{ccccc}
i & & ï & & u \\
& e & ë & o & \\
& & a & &
\end{array}
$$

In Vászolyi's transcription we find *y* instead of *ï* and *ø* instead of *ë*. For the palatalized affricate of Komi – following Wiedemann's transcription – digraph *dź* is used in this paper. Initial syllable stress is common in Komi, while in Udmurt – under the influence of the neighbouring Turkic languages Chuvash and Tatar – stress has moved to the last syllable. Unexpected/irregular stress is marked by a post-syllabic dot {·} in texts cited by Csúcs and a pre-syllabic raised comma {ʻ} in Vászolyi's. Vowel length is indicated by raised hyphen {¯}. There are also other differences in transcription, but they have little or no relevance to our topic. As to the analysis of the texts cited here I use the following symbols: – precedes an inflectional suffix as well as the negative particle/question tag of a general question; = precedes a derivational suffix; "..." indicates a close/literal translation, '...' indicates a loose, but idiomatic translation; ^ indicates an opaque compound. Capitals represent grammatical terms as, for instance, PSTPARTICIPLE stands for past participle, SG1 for first person pronoun, PXSG1 for first person singular possessive suffix, VXSG1 for first person singular verbal suffix etc.

In addition to their strikingly similar structure two further characteristics of Permian vocalism should be mentioned here: the absence of vowel-harmony and the lack of stem-vowel alternations, the latter of which will be of particular importance here. Both features are uncharacteristic of Uralic.

1. The problem as seen from a comparative point of view

It is common knowledge, even a commonplace, that Permian languages belong to the majority of cognate languages that employ negative auxiliaries. Strictly speaking, this is the only major grammatical feature shared with the other Uralic languages. As to their grammatical category, auxiliaries in Uralic are classified as verbs carrying (ideally) markers of person, number, tense and mood. In fact, only one cognate language has full paradigms of negative auxiliaries marking all four categories mentioned above, namely Nganasan, a Northern Samoyedic language, situated on the northernmost periphery of the Uralic region, Wagner-Nagy (2011). In most cases negative auxiliaries in Uralic have only incomplete paradigms and lack either markers of tense or mood, or both, but usually retain markers of person and number, leaving representation of the remaining categories to the main verb called, in this context, connegative.

Thus linguistic negation in the Uralic languages seems to be a more personal business than in Indo-European languages, where impersonal negative particles are used to represent and emphasize, even overemphasize, the logical aspect of negation. The real space where negation as well as position (and communication in general) goes on is personal in every language community. In the Uralic languages, however, by virtue of personal markers attached to the negative auxiliary stem, negation is more marked linguistically than in most Indo-European languages. Thus Uralic negation takes place in a distinctively personal space established by the participants in the speech situation: the speaker, the listener, and a third person who is distant from both and/or a virtual player and may represent also the speech act itself. This space can be best demonstrated by the so-called T-structure introduced by János Lotz (1967):

$$1 \;\underline{\quad\quad\quad}\; 2$$
$$|$$
$$3$$
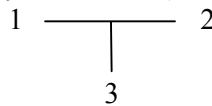
where speaker (SG1) and listener (SG2) form a common axis of discourse tt is close, intimate and real and contrasts with (SG3) that is located further away, distant, and even virtual. As an example of this axis let us consider the positive and negative paradigms of Udmurt in singular present:

Present

	Positive		Negative	
VXSG1	*mïn=iśko*	'I walk'	*u-g mïn=iśkï*	'I don't walk'
2	*mïn=iśko-d*	'you walk'	*u-d mïn=iśkï*	'you don't walk'
3	*mïne*	'(s)he walks	*u-g mïnï*	'(s)he doesn't walk'

Here the morpheme *=iśkï* in VXSG1 and VXSG2, but clearly absent in SG3, has a role different from the way the reflexive suffix is usually taxonomized. In my analysis it is a kind of affective morpheme uniting the proximate speech participants *you and me* against a more distant *him/her*.

Concerning totality to be expressed n e g a t i v e p h r a s e s equal „n o r m a l ", i.e. p o s i t i v e v e r b s in respect to tense, mood, person and number. But the negative auxiliary has a full paradigm only in Nganasan, as mentioned above. Categories that happen to be missing from auxiliaries (tense and mood) ree-merge and are marked on the connegative main verb. In fact, in Permian as well as in Mari negative auxiliaries in the present tense carry the marker *-k-*/*-g-* and -*γ*-, respectively, both being historically identical with the present marker **-k-* of Proto-Finno-Ugric (possibly even Proto-Uralic). By contrast, the corresponding Finnish morpheme *-q-* (phonetically a glottal stop), being identical with the imperative suffix, is attached to the connegative. Thus connegatives

may be marked, in most cases, by a suffix identical/homophonic with that of imperative SG2, which can also be a zero. In both Permian languages the paradigms of the negative auxiliaries are of the latter type. The negative auxiliary appears together with the connegative, which as a rule it precedes. For the sake of brevity and clarity of presentation here only VXSG1 (and in one case also VXSG2) forms will be cited. For the same reason, the future paradigms of Komi and Udmurt, as well as the imperfect and pluperfect paradigms of Komi are omitted, as they are but slightly modified variants of various present and past tenses. As to the missing counterpart of the narrative past VXSG1 in Komi it is worth noting that in this respect Komi is more „logical" than Udmurt: it is evident that, when the narrator, i.e. the first person in grammatical terms, describes a scene or tells a story that happened in the past in which (s)he was not a participant and was informed about only through hearsay, (s)he cannot be represented linguistically as someone – moreover, the grammatical first person at that – on the scene. Thus in the case of the Komi narrative past we have chosen the other representative of the axis of speech, SG2, to demonstrate our point. Samples of the negated forms of Udmurt and Komi verbs, *mïnï-* 'to walk' and *śet-* 'to give':

Indicative Present Sg1
    Udmurt   *u-g mïn=iśkï*   'I don't walk'
    Komi   *o-g śet*   'I don't give'

Testimonial Past Sg 1
    Udmurt   *ëj mïnï*   'I didn't walk'
    Komi   *e-g śet*   'I didn't give'

Narrative Past Sg1
    Udmurt   *ë^vël mïn=iśke-m ~*   'I didn't walk'
                 mïn=iśki=mte(je)
    Komi   –

Narrative Past Sg2
    Udmurt   *ë^vël mïnem(e-d) ~*   'You didn't walk'
                 mïnï=mteje-d
    Komi   *ab=u śetë=m-ïd*   'You didn't give'

Conditional Sg1
    Udmurt   *ëj mïnï-sal*   'I wouldn't walk'
    Komi   –

Imperative (Prohibitive) Sg2
    Udmurt   *e·-n mïn(ï)*   'Don't walk!'
    Komi   *e-n śet*   'Don't give!'

(Csúcs 1990: 53–54, Rédei 1978: 83–84).

A quick glance shows that negative auxiliaries (1) are preposed, (2) are vowel-initial (i.e. they are vocalic stems), and (3) possess two stem variants: an *u- ~ o-* stem in the present (and future) indicative, and an *e- ~ ë-* stem in all other moods and tenses. Vowel-initial negative auxiliaries seem to be a general feature of Uralic, from Saami through Mordvinian to Kamassian and Selqup, and as I have suggested elsewhere (Simoncsics 2011a) partly even in Hungarian. In the Udmurt narrative past negation can also be expressed synthetically (by a caritive participial form) as an alternative to the analytic form also based on the *ë-* stem: *ë^vël* 'negative auxiliary stem^be'. Similarly, in the Komi narrative past negation is also formed analytically: *a^bu* 'negative particle (possibly a loan of unknown origin)^be'. Apart from the latter variant there seems to be complementary distribution between negative *u- ~ o-* and *e- ~ ë-* stems with respect to present indicative and the remaining tenses and moods. In other words and in a broader perspective, in the present indicative we have only *u- ~ o-* stems, while *e- ~ ë-* stems occur in the other tenses and moods together with negative forms with *a-*. It is this kind of double representation of the negative auxiliary in Permian (and in Mari, and, in part, also in Mordvinian) that has prompted some scholars reconstruct two negative stems for Proto-Finno-Ugric, namely **e-* and **a-* (Bereczki 1996: 55). And „there's the rub"! Applying Occam's razor „Numquam ponenda est pluralitas sine necessitate" even in the remote period of Proto-Finno-Ugric we may ask: why reconstruct two negative stems, if the majority of peripheral languages in the West, North and South of the Finno-Ugric region, Balto-Finnic and Hungarian, indicate that just one negative stem is enough? (We could speak of similar phenomena in Samoyedic, but we defer the discussion of this to a later date.)

But how can we bring these two stems to a common denominator? The simplest way of solving this riddle would be to suppose paradigmatic vowel-alternation for Permian. But, in contradistinction to some closer (and more distant) cognates, such as Mari, Khanty, Vogul and even Hungarian, there is no paradigmatic stem-vowel alternation (Ablaut) in Permian, as pointed out by Austerlitz (1985: 99). Nevertheless, W. Steinitz mentions Ablaut phenomena in Permian in his famous „Geschichte des finnisch-ugrischen Vokalismus", noting however that most of these are dialectal and some of them „hitherto unexplained". In the following I will try to solve this Permian enigma.

2. Solving the problem from the outside: extralinguistic effects

I suggest that the distribution of *u-* ~ *o-* and *e-* ~ *ë-* stems in respect of present indicative and non-present tenses and moods offers a clue. Present tense is close to the axis formed by the speaker and the listener and is simultaneous with the speech act, which makes the message it carries more actual and emphatically more informative. Since negation is by itself emphatic and semantically richer, and may also convey, in addition to its logical content, p e r s o n a l a t t i t u d e s o f the speaker distinguishing himself from other participants and/or constituents of the speech act and may express refusal, distantia-tion, abhorrence etc., and, as a consequence, it is accompanied, more often than not, by bodily gestures as well. These may include facial expressions, such as grimaces, as well as lip-rounding, which is the most economical of facial gestures, demanding the least muscular effort. It is worth emphasizing that negative auxiliaries as they usually appear in Permian, as well as in other cog-nate and non-cognate languages, are introductory elements of a phrase, so their initials are, by nature, the most prominent constituents of the utterance in ques-tion. Labial *u-* ~ *o-* initials when compared to illabial *e-* ~ *ë-* initials are more visible and *hic et nunc* reveal more about the emotions concomitant with nega-tion to the partner in the speech act, i.e. the listener.

Negation expressed by negative auxiliaries in Uralic thus represents a com-plex linguistic phenomenon where a logical operation is combined with phonic representations of emotions and sentiments of persons directly involved in the act of negating, since negation takes place in a space overtly defined by gram-matical persons. In some cognate languages and specifically in Permian, nega-tive emotions and sentiments of the speaker also exert an influence on the phonic material used in negation in the form of facial gestures, such as the labialization of illabial vowels. Steinitz's hints in this direction when he writes „In mehreren urspr[ünglichen] vordervokalischen Wörtern ist es – wohl unabhängig vom Sy[rjänischen] – neu entstanden, wohl in Zusammenhang mit der (bisher unerk-lärten) doppelten Entwicklung von **e* > wotj[akisch] *o* und *u…*)" (Steinitz 1944: 129). Although Steinitz cites several examples showing this „unexplained" vowel-change from front vowels to back ones (see again footnote[1]), he omits mentioning the Udmurt negative stem *u-* and its Komi counterpart *o-*, although both fit well into the process of a front-to-back change from *e* or *ë* to *o* and a further step from a Pre-Proto-Permian *o* to *u* in Udmurt (***e-* > **o-* > *u-*). Ap-proaching the problem from an angle slightly different from that of Steinitz, as I see it the negative *o-* ~ *u-* stem developed from the original Uralic **e-* stem and was preserved until the dissolution of Proto-Permian. And the fact that a geo-graphically close cognate, Mari, c e t e r i s p a r i b u s, also uses *o*-stem nega-tive auxiliaries in the present tense indicates that the process of the labialization

of the illabial initial of the negative auxiliary stem possibly goes back to Pre-Proto-Permian in both time and space.

In addition to the present marker *-g-* the labialization of the illabial initial **e-* of the negative auxiliary duplicates the distinction of present and pushes past tenses into the background, where the logical nature of negation becomes more prominent, i.e. they are more analytic in nature, using particles *ë^vël* and *a^bu* in Udmurt and Komi, respectively. Both Udmurt *ë^vël* and Komi *a^bu* '[there] isn't; cf. Hungarian *nincs(en)*' are uninflected compounds consisting of a negative element and a remainder of the respective existential verb: Udmurt *ë-* is identical with the stem of negative auxiliary *ë-* of Uralic origin and *ab-* is probably a loan (see point **4.** below). The main verb appears as a past participle with personal suffixes *mïn=em-ed* 'walk=PSTPARTICIPLE-PXSG2; cf. Hungarian *men(e)=t-ed*' and *śet=em-nïd* 'give=PSTPARTICIPLE-PXSG2; cf. Hungarian *ad=t-od*'. The whole structure is in fact a negation of a participle without reference to tense with the meaning "there is no going/giving of yours; cf. Hungarian *nincs meneted/adtod*, or *nincs menésed/adásod*. The lack of representation of tense explains the free alternation of narrative past and present tense proper in folklore texts. E.g.:

Narrative Past

Udmurt   *ë^vël mïn=em-ed* 'you didn't walk'
    NEG.STEM^***be*** main verb=PSTPARTICIPLE-PXSG1[1]

Komi   *a^bu śet=ëm-ïd* 'you didn't give'
    NEG.PART^***be*** main verb=PSTPARTICIPLE-PXSG2

To the point above we may add that in Udmurt the optional variant of narrative past can occur even without a negative particle, e.g. *mïnï=m=te-jed* 'STEM =PSTPARTICIPLE=CARITIVE-PXSG2; you didn't walk [so they say]' where a caritive suffix would suffice.

Generally speaking, in analytical constructions specifically in past tenses and moods other than indicative and imperative – where personal involvement (and markedness) becomes weaker and/or fades away – the logical nature of negation comes to the fore and becomes more conspicuous. In Udmurt, for instance, the conditional in the singular can be wholly impersonal, through use of the negative particle *ëj* (< negative auxiliary stem *ë-*) with the main verb in conditional without personal suffixes: *ëj mïnï=sal* 'I/you/(s)he would not walk'.

Furthermore, in polar questions the question-tags *-ë* and *-a* are used in Komi and Udmurt, respectively. It is worth noting that (1) Komi is more archaic in this respect, too, as shown by the use of the "original" negative stem *-ë*, and (2) Ud-

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[1] ^ marks a compound consisting of the negating auxiliary / particle and the truncated stem of the existential verb 'to be'; ***be*** represents the truncated stem of the existential verb.

murt -*a* should be the proper counterpart of archaic *ë*- stem, since as a question-tag it has lost its prominent (initial) disposition to labialization and, moreover, there is no final -*ë* in Udmurt lexemes. So the question-tag follows the overall distributional pattern of Udmurt where *a* is the most frequent vowel in final position also. (3) The question-tag is attached freely to the verbal or nominal predicate independent of its tense. E.g.:

Komi

  (*ii*)   *ez-ë sim*'it was rusty, wasn't it?'
  (*vi*)   *oz-ë sajdmi*   'is he coming to his mind, he isn't?'

Udmurt

(*xvii*)   *mənam evël-a […] ta diśe?* 'this dress is mine, isn't it?'
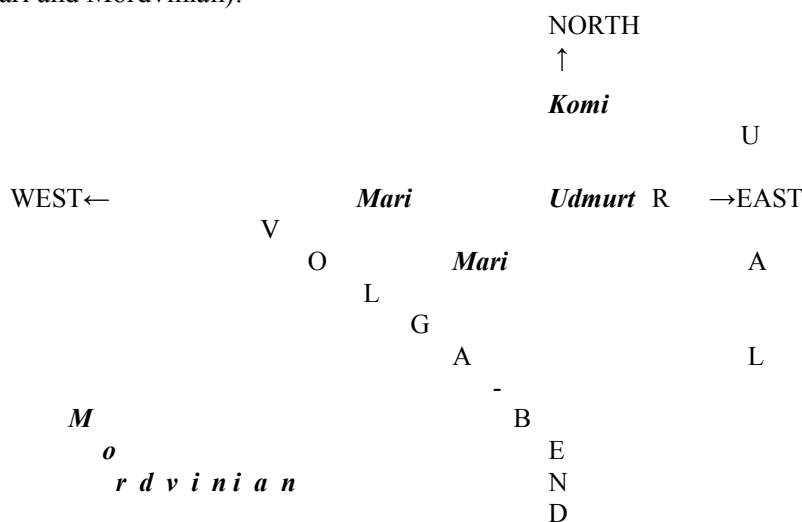   (Wichmann JSFOu 19/161–162; Csúcs 1990: 73)
   *Ani, nunïed bërde-a ma?* 'Ani, your baby is crying, isn't (s)he?'
                    (Ašalči Oki: Punï kïl'; Csúcs 1990: 112)

3. Linguistic gestures in an areal context: stem-alternations illabial *e-*, *ë-*, *i-* ~ labial *o-*, *u-* as seen from a geographical perspective

As stated above in addition to Permian, Mari also uses this alternation under similar conditions. The common starting point of the development in Permian and Mari negation is the negative stem with illabial initial **e-* reconstructed for Pre-Proto-Permian, i.e. Proto-Finno-Ugric, probably even Proto-Uralic. Let us look at a schematic map of the cognate languages in question (Udmurt, Komi, Mari and Mordvinian):

```
                          NORTH
                            ↑

                          Komi
                                              U

WEST←                 Mari        Udmurt  R    →EAST
              V
              O       Mari                     A
                L
                  G
                  A                            L
                    -
        M                           B
          o                         E
            r d v i n i a n         N
                                    D
```

Negative *o*-stem auxiliaries in the present tense occur in Komi and Mari, while *u*-stem occurs in Udmurt. In Mordvinian there are no negative auxiliaries with *o*- stem in present tense (nor *u*-stem either). Both Mokša and Erza dialects of the language apply negative particles with *a*- in present tense where the provenience of the stem *a*- is unclear so far. Yet, Mordvinian forms are part of the overall picture of the area, since in testimonial past it also uses an *e*-stem auxiliary, thus making a clear distinction between present and testimonial past. The distinction between present and past and, further, between testimonial and narrative past seems to be a common feature of the area north and south of the Volga-bend where the four language cognates surrounded by Turkic peoples (Chuvash and Tatar) are situated. In a recent study Bereczki argued that even Hungarian might have preserved this distinction (possibly under Turkic influence) in its various past tense forms, which are now mostly obsolete (Bereczki 2004). (For the time being we will not discuss the fact that distinction between testimonial and narrative past tenses is also a general feature east of our area. The vast Siberian territory inhabited by Uralic, Turkic and Palaeo-Siberian peoples offers a treasure-trove of this distinction thanks to the folkloristic nature of its languages and cultures). Let us return now to the "smaller" area of the Permian languages and their cognates in the Volga region and try to reconstruct the line of development leading from **e*- to Udmurt *u*- and Komi and Mari *o*-; in other words, let us try to find the origin of this innovation. The geographical distribution of these languages and their respective negative auxiliary stems is shown schematically below:

Komi
o-

Udmurt
u-

M   **M**
 a   a
  r   r
   i   i
                                             o-
M
  o
   r
    d v i n i a n
     [ ]-
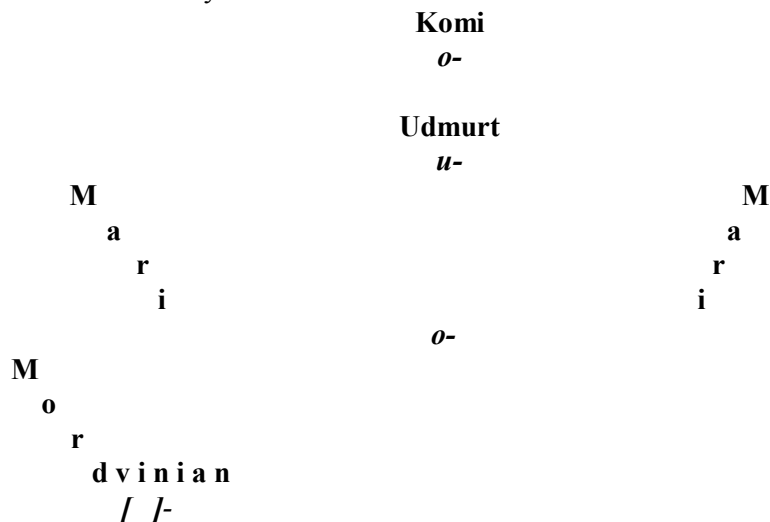
(The symbol *[ ]* indicates that the change of illabial to labial negative auxiliary stem in the present tense did not take place in Mordvinian.)

Udmurt is in the geographic centre and seems to have been also the centre of the innovation where *e- changed to o-. Phonologically a change from a Proto-Finno-Ugric *e- stem to a Pre-Proto-Permian o- stem seems natural, if we imagine the economy of the process so that the force which produces it step by step is measured by the least possible amount of effort required: (step 1) the back of tongue moves forward horizontally creating a larger space in the back of the buccal cavity resulting ë- (front > back change), and (step 2) a concomitant movement of the lips, whereby an illabial vowel (ë-) changes to a labial one (o-). This phase, which I would call supralinguistic, is dominated by a gestural move, a facial grimace, i.e. lip-rounding expressing negative feelings (surprise, distantiation, rejection, abhorrence etc.) concomitant with denial or negation in general. Once this gesture of lip-rounding became integrated into the system of negation, in other words, once it was „petrified", it became available for participation in intra-linguistic processes. To demonstrate the overall tendency of o to change to u we may consider such pairs as Komi <u>on</u> (dialectally also <u>un</u>) and Udmurt <u>um</u> 'dream', Komi <u>o</u>lëm and Udmurt <u>u</u>lem 'life', Komi gërd 'red' and Udmurt gord 'id.', Komi ker 'log, beam' and Udmurt kor 'id.' where o seems to be the archaic original. The ethnonym <u>ud</u>-murt itself throws light on a similar development: the Mari ethnonym <u>o</u>do-mari 'Udmurt' contains the original labial mid vowel. (Hajdú 1981: 44). Note, in this connection, the widespread and translinguistic use of the labial vowel o to express surprise, recoil, being taken aback: Komi *ok ok o! kiś-kë taj i te taććë voëmïd?!* 'Oh, oh, oh! From where have you come here?!' Rédei (1978: 100). As for Mordvinian as a representative of the o-zone consider *on* 'dream', *od* 'new, young', *nolams* 'to lick', with etymological correspondences in Permian also. Thus a further development can be seen in Udmurt where Proto-Permian-Volgaic o- has changed to u- by another natural process (step 3) where the tongue moves vertically from low position to high. According to a well-established tenet of language geography centres are prone to be innovative, while peripheries are usually conservative. Applying this to the languages in question Komi and Mari belong to the periphery by having retained o- as the result of steps 1 and 2, while Udmurt seems to be the centre, having developed it further to u- (step 3). Seen from a Permian angle the most conservative languages are those where the original Uralic negative stem remained illabial, *e- or *i-, i.e. Mordvinian, Balto-Finnic, Hungarian, Samoyedic and partly even Ob-Ugrian, which form the outer circles of the periphery. The change from e- to o-, continuing to u- in Permian and Mari, on the other hand, is not just a historical, but also a synchronic, a living and productive process, as attested by Steinitz.

At first glance, it may seem that negative o-stem is also found in the imperative. In fact, ostensible imperatives like Komi *med <u>oz</u> śet* 'let him/her not give; may (s)he not give', *med <u>oz</u> śetnï* 'let them not give; may they not give' and *ogë*

śetëj 'let us not give; may we not give' and – with a slight difference – also Udmurt *meda·z mïnï* 'let him/her not go; may (s)he not go', *meda·z mïnele* 'let them not go; may they not go' are not strictly speaking imperatives. These are syntactic structures (imperative VXSG2 of *med-* 'to wish, to want, to plan' + indicative VXSG/PL3) expressing wish or desire and as regards their modality they are optatives rather than imperatives. From a strictly morphological point of view the cores of these structures are indicative SG/PL3 forms. The Udmurt forms of the imperative SG/PL3 are exceptions due to the stress (and possibly also length) on the final syllable where instead of an expected **meduz* we have *meda·z*. The explanation is that stressed / long low vowels do not usually rise, according to the Donegan – Tálos – Abondolo hypothesis, cf. Abondolo (1996), Donegan (1978/85), Tálos (1983). On the other hand, *ë-n śet* 'don't give', *ë-në śet-ëj* 'you (pl) don't give' are true SG2/PL2 imperatives of formed with the "past" stem (i.e. the original) variant of the negative auxiliary *ë-*. Present vs. past and imperative vs. other moods are basic coordinates in verbal orientation and, partly, also complementary, at least in negation in Uralic: when present and past are distinguished by initial labialization as in Permian, then imperative is left unmarked, when imperative is distinguished by labialization as in Nenets, then we have the opposite case where present remains unmarked.

The labialization of negative *e-* ~ *ë-* stems in Permian is an example of how a linguistic change can be triggered by extralingual gestures, where a facial grimace can become internalized and its phonic representation become part of the paradigm**.**

In a broader context, taking Mari (and even also Mordvinian) into consideration, the nucleus of the labialization process must have been in Udmurt where the first step from *e-* ~ *ë-* to *o-* was taken by the alteration of only one feature in the vocalic stem, i. e. „labialization". Udmurt, that is to say the centre, developed further by raising the tongue-level from mid to high. The periphery, Komi and Mari and, indeed, Mordvinian remained at the first stage, retaining the *o-*stem in the present tense. The case of Komi and Mari is, in this respect, simple and straightforward. Mordvinian is problematic where negation in the present is formed in a totally different manner, using negative particles with an *a-* stem, whereas in the past it retained the illabial (*e-* ~ *i-)* stem (except in the use of the alternative *aš-* stem in Mokša). The archaic nature of Mordvinian is apparent if one takes a look at the testimonial past tense forms of the negative paradigm:

	Mokša	**Erza**
Sg1	*i-ź-əń ~ aš-əń soda*	*e-ź-iń soda* 'I didn't know'
Sg 2	*i-ź-ə-t' ~ aš-ət' '…'*	*e-ź-it' '…'*
Sg 3	*i-ś ~ aš-əś~aš-əź '…'*	*e-ś '…'* ….

where the negative stem E *e-* ~ M *i-* (and also *aš-* of different, as yet unknown, origin) is followed by past tense marker *-ź-/-ś-* and the respective person marker and the stem of the main verb. A similar archaism occurs dialectally also in Estonian, e.g. *esin anna* 'I didn't give', Hakulinen (1941: 226).

At this point and instead of a summary, let me cite Austerlitz: "The idea of a Permian Centre can also be expanded and grafted on a larger set of coordinates. It could serve as a model or framework for thinking about the original dispersion and the subsequent history of the earliest groups of speakers of the Fennic and the Fenno-Ugric languages.

Is it an accident that, in terms of geographical reality, the Finno-Ugric Centre was, *grosso modo*, identical with the Permian Centre?" Austerlitz (1985: 108).

4. The problem of Komi *abu* and Udmurt *ëvël*

Negative particles, Komi *abu* and Udmurt *ëvël*, are used in so-called existential phrases where (1) a quality of the subject is negated, as for instance, Udmurt *ton piči ёvël ni* 'you are not [a] little [child] any more' Csúcs (1990: 100); Komi *bogatïrës ñe-kodi vermiś abu vëlëma* 'there was nobody capable of defeating the knights', Rédei (1978:109) or (2) the fact of possessing something is denied, as for instance Udmurt *kǝllen lǝez evǝl* 'the tongue doesn't have a bone' Csúcs (1990: 75); Komi *ёni pë ńe-kën ńi-nëm abu* 'now, he says, there is nothing nowhere' Rédei (1978: 102). And (3) last, but not least, these forms serve as general negative particles, usually in initial position.

It should be pointed out at once that there are two basic occurrences of negation: general negation, on the one hand, and as the question-tag part of general question on the other. They are quite clearly distributed in the Permian languages too: general negation as a rule is in the initial position of the utterance, while the question-tag usually follows the part of speech (verbal or nominal predicate) with which it forms a unit, so it is in final – or at least in non-initial – position. There seems to be an inverse relationship between the initial and final position of the negative stem, i.e. general negation vs. question tag, in Komi and Udmurt. The Udmurt centre is „conservative" with respect to general negation by retaining the „original" compound with illabial vocalism (*ë^vël*) and „innovative" with respect to the vocalism of the question-tag (*-a*), while the (more) peripheral Komi is „innovative" with respect to the general negation by employing an *a-* stem (*a^bu*) and „conservative" in the vocalism of the question-tag (*-ë*). While the various occurrences of these negating forms seem disparate at first glance, below the surface they have more in common. First of all there is the differentiation between the two types of negation, between general negation and question-tag: in Udmurt we have *ëvël* and *-a*, in Komi *abu* and *-ë* in the respec-

tive functions. Regarding vowel frequency in Udmurt *ë-* and *-a* represent the two extremes of vocalism: *ë* is the least frequent and *a* the most frequent vowel (Csúcs 1980: 25). In initial position, i.e. in general negation, it is the least frequent initial vowel – the *ë* of *ëvël* – that makes negation conspicuous. As to final *-a* as question-tag let us consider again the overall distributional tendency that in Udmurt *-ë* does not in practice occur in final position, in other words, it must be substituted by a more marked vowel: *a* both as regards frequency and also as regards height (low). In short: in Udmurt the counterpart of mid *ë* is a low *a* when there is need to make a function more emphatic. The tendency is identifiable also in the reconstruction of two negative stems, **e-* and ** a-* for Pre-Permian, i.e. Proto-Finno-Ugric (Bereczki 1996: 55). (Note that it is well known that in Udmurt there is no vowel harmony that could be exploited had such a need arisen. It is therefore more than interesting that *a* plays a similarly prominent role in deixis in opposition to the mid vowel *o*, cf. *ta̱*, *ta̱iz* ... vs. *so̱*, *so̱iz* … 'this, just this … ' vs. 'that, just that …' charged with the informational plus of 'proximity'.) In Komi the situation is the inverse of Udmurt: the question tag *-ë* is conservative and the *a-* of general negation *abu* is an innovation, together with the overall shape of the word with its final *u* which is a rather rare final vowel and occurs mainly in affective words. Initial *a-* is an innovation also from the viewpoint of gesture: the manner of production of initial *a-* is usually associated with a slight movement of the head backward as if the speaker were recoiling from something: it is the so-called „Turkic gesture" of *no*, Jakobson (1987: 474-478). The gesture is co-ordinated with or rather superimposed on the physiological automatism of sound production resulting – as Roman Jakobson puts it – in *a* as a „motor sign" of *no*. It is translinguistic and used widely as a concomitant or non-canonical way of negating, as, for instance, in Hungarian where there are two variants: an extra short *a* with a so-called „fester Ansatz" ['ə], with an annoying connotation, and an extra long *a* [*ā*] with a connotation of understanding and forgiveness, Simoncsics (2004: 372–377).

5. Examples

For the convenience of the reader here follow a number of examples morphologically analysed and selected from authentic texts to demonstrate the main points of my paper: *e-*, *ë-*, *i-* ~ *o-*, *u-*, i. e. the alternation of illabial-labial vowels as a secondary distinction between past and present in negation; the use of general negation Komi *abu* 'there isn't' and Udmurt *ëvël* 'id.'; the use of question-tags *-ë* and *-a* in Komi and Udmurt, respectively.

Komi dialects

Upper Vychegda

(*i*) *o-z-ε tenε, mikit vań-ε/ leź=nï śera=m vylε?*
   "NEG.AUX^LAB^PRESENT-VXSG3-^ILLAB^NEG.STEM you-ACC.SG2
   Mikit Vań-ACC/ let=INF laugh=PPARTICIPLE onto?"
   'isn't it you, my Mikit Vań/who is being ridiculed?'

<div align="right">(Vászolyi-Vasse 2003: 262)</div>

Middle Vichegda

(*ii*) *ambar-ë peta-s, ružjë vidla-s, e-z-ë sim*
   "granary-ILL go-PAST, rifle touch-PAST, NEG.AUX^ILLAB^PAST-
   VXSG3-NEG.AUX^ILLAB^STEM rusty"
   'to the granary he went, touched his rifle to see whether it was rusty or not'

<div align="right">(Rédei 1978: 101)</div>

(*iii*) *me o-g vermï ta-lun kaj=nï*
   "I NEG.AUX^LAB^PRESENT-VXSG1 able this-day go=INF"
   'I can not go today'

<div align="right">(Rédei 1978: 101)</div>

Lower Vichegda

(*iv*) *a me pë ig lok vëjujt=nï, a me pë vëv korś=nï, me pë vëv-korśi=ś, me pë ig vij*
   "but I, say, NEG.AUX^ILLAB^PAST come fight=INF, but I, say, horse
   look=INF, I, say, horse-look=PRESPRT, I, say, NEG.AUX^ILLAB^PAST-
   VXSG1 be"
   'well, he says, I didn't come to fight, I came to look for a horse, he says,
   I am a horse-looker, he says, I was not [a fighter]'

(*v*) *men pë oz i kov śermëd-ïd*
   "I.DAT, say, NEG.AUX^LAB^PRESENT-VXSG3 need bridle-PXSG2"
   'I don't need, he says, your bridle'

<div align="right">(Rédei 1978: 103–104)</div>

Udora

(*vi*) *bośt-ëma jem da t'ukajtl-ëma vok-ïs-lïś jaj-së, o-z-ë sajdmï*
   "take-NARR.PAST-SG3 needle and prick-NARR.PAST-SG3 brother-
   PXSG3-GEN-ABL, NEG.AUX^LAB^PRESENT-SG3-
   NEG.AUX^ILLAB^STEM regain consciousness"
   'she took a needle and pricked his brother's body [to see] whether
   he becomes conscious'

<div align="right">(Rédei 1978: 110)</div>

Vim

(*vii*) *si-lën ńi-nëm ab^u*
   "(s)he-GEN no-thing NEG.PART^be"
   '(s)he does not have anything'

(*viii*) *mun-ë, mun-ë, tuj-ïs <u>ab^u</u>, keral-ë, keral-ë, vir-ïs <u>ab^u</u> – piž-ën*
mun-ëm va vïti
"go-VXSG3, go-VXSG3, path-PXSG3 <u>NEG^APART^be</u>, cut-VXSG3,
cut-VXSG3, blood-PSXG3 <u>NEG^APART^be</u> – boat-INSTR go-
PASTPRT water across"
'goes, goes, there is no path, cuts, cuts, there is no blood – going through
the water by boat'

(*ix*) *kik vok da jorta-jort-ës <u>o-z aӡ́ӡ́ï-nï</u> – śin*
"two brother and companion-companion-ACC <u>NEG.AUX^{LAB}-SG3 see-
PL3</u> – eye"
'two brothers and <u>they don't see</u> each other – eyes'

(*x*)   *tū jïl-ë mïj o-z ëšjï ? – kol'k*
"nail top-ILL what NEG.AUX^{LAB}PRESENT-SG3 stuck – egg"
'What wouldn't you hang on the head of a nail? – egg'

(*xi*) *tï vojtïšt-ë, ta vojtïš-të da ñe-kor <u>o-z vojtïš</u> - iśerga*
"here drop-VXSG3, there drop-VXSG3 but never
<u>NEG.AUX^{LAB}PRESENT drop</u> – earring"
    'dropping here, dropping there, still <u>never drop</u> [to the ground] – earrings'
(Rédei 1978: 110–113)

Middle Inva
(*xii*) *soja-vona orććøn suˈwawø=ny a øta-mød-nys-ø <u>oz-ø aӡ́ӡ́ø</u> – śin-nez*
"sister-brother together stand-VXPL3 but one-other-PXPL3-ACC
<u>NEG:AUX^{LAB}PRESENT-PL3 see</u> – eye-PXPL3"
'sister and brother stands together, but they don't see each other – eyes'

(*xiii*) *mun-ø, mun-ø, a <u>śl'ed-ys ab^u</u> – pyž*
"go-VXSG3, go-VXSG3, but <u>track-PXSG3 [there] isn't</u> – boat"
'goes and goes, but leaves no track'

(*xiv*) *zaˈpodsø raӡa-n, raӡa-n, a teę=ny bør <u>o-n vermy</u> – sarˈtas šul'aˈw-øm*
"fence break-VXSG2, break-VXSG2, but put=INF again
<u>NEG.AUX^{LAB}PRESENTVXSG2 can</u> – wood chip chop-PASTPRT"
'you're breaking, breaking the fence, yet put it back you can not –
chopping wood chips'
(Vászolyi-Vasse 1999: 394)

Kolva and Usa
(*xv*) *<u>med nyl-yd sije o-z boś</u>!*
"let daughter-PXSG2 it NEG.AUX^{LAB}PRESENT-VXSG3 touch"
'Don't allow your daughter to touch it!'

(*xvi*) *čørt tød myj kuʒ́, i-g aʒ́ʒ́yl, kørennej aęum*
   "devil know [IMP] what how, NEG.AUX^ILLAB^PAST-SG3 see,
   aborigine myself"
   'hell knows what exactly happened, I haven't seen it, I am a local myself'
                                                  (Vászolyi-Vasse 2001: 409)

Udmurt dialects

(*xvii*) *»mənam e-vë·l-a« šu=sa »ta diś-e?«*
   "I-GEN NEG.AUX^ILLAB^STEM-be-NEG^A^PART" say-GER "this dress-
   PXSG1?"
   ' this dress isn't mine' says she ', it is?'
                        (Wichmann JSFOu 19/1: 161–162; cited by Csúcs 1990: 73)

(*xviii*) *ləmə ke iči lue, ńań u-g da·ltə, ləmə ke tïros, ńań no ďeś*
    "snow if small be.FUT.SG3 corn NEG.AUX^LAB^PRESENT-SG3 grow,
   snow if much/full, corn good"
    'if the snow is small, then corn won't grow, if there is much snow,
   corn will be good'
                        (Fedotov ORUD 120–121; cited by Csúcs 1990:74)

(*xix*) *wal'l'o ta-ʒ́ e-z u·la-le, e-z*
   "earlier this-TERM NEG.AUX^ILLAB^PAST-SG3 live-VXPL,
   NEG.AUX^ILLAB^PAST-VXSG3"
   "they didn't live in this way earlier, did they?"
                        (Fedotov ORUD 129; cited by Csúcs 1990: 74)

(*xx*) *śekta-śko, śudi-śko! e-n ʒo·žge!*
   "entertain-VXSG1, feed-VXSG1! NEG.AUX^ILLAB^IMP-SG2 scold'"
   'I entertain you, I feed you! Don't scold me!'
                        (Wichmann JSFOu 11/1: 90; cited by Csúcs 1990: 75)

(*xxi*) *kaban-leś val u-g kə·ška=śkə*
   "haystack-ABL horse NEG.AUX^LAB^PRESENT-SG3 frighten=REFL"
   'the horse is not afraid of [the] haystack'

(*xxii*) *kək gondər odig gu-e u-g te·rə*
   "two bear one hole-ILL NEG.AUX^LAB^PRESENT-SG3 fit"f
   'two bears do not fit into one hole'
(*xxiii*) *kəl-len lə-ez e-vəl*
   "tongue-GEN bone-PXSG3 NEG.AUX^ILLAB^STEM-be"
   'The tongue does't have a bone'
                        (Wichmann JSFOu 19/1: 8–9; cited by Csúcs 1990: 75)

(xxiv) *pinal-jos-se śudə=nə ə-vəl bəgate=m*
    "child-PL-3ACC feed=INF NEG.AUX^{ILLAB}STEM-be able=PASTPRT"
    'she couldn't feed her children'

(xix) *mon tod-iśko u·-d ke-no vera*
    "I know-VXSG1 NEG.AUX^{LAB}-SG2 if-PART say"
    'I know it even if you don't say'
                (Wichmann JSFOu 19/1: 125; cited by Csúcs 1990: 77)

(xxv) *va·ń-a pinal-e e^və·l-a?*
    "is-NEG^APART child-PXSG1 NEG.AUX^{ILLAB}STEM-be-NEG^APART?"
    'Is there a child to me, or is there not?
              (Wichmann JSFOu 19/1: 149–150; cited by Csúcs 1990: 78)

(xxvi) *so-os-len mumï-zï no bubï-zï no ëj val*
    "(s)he-PL-GEN mother-PXPL3 and father-PXPL3 NEG^{ILLAB}PART be-PAST"
    'they had neither mother nor father'
              (Kelmakov OUR 64; cited by Csúcs 1990: 80)

6. Summary

Linguistic negation is undoubtedly part of the logical foundation of language and the most elementary process of cognition whereby we classify (identify and differentiate) parts of our symbolic world. Therefore it is understandable that studies concentrate on the means of expressing the logical aspect of negation, suffice to mention only two recent major works: Hamari (2007 and Wagner-Nagy (2011). Much less attention has been paid to the circumstances where and effects by means of which negation takes place. The accompanying circumstances and effects are more prominent and marked in Uralic than, for instance, in most Indo-European and Turkic languages, to mentioning the two major language families between which Uralic is as it were "sandwiched". In contradistinction to Uralic, negation in these two major language families usually lacks any personal marking. Generally speaking, Uralic negation takes place in a linguistically marked personal space by using negative auxiliaries. In the present paper we have focused on Permian languages and have identified how they distinguish present tense forms of negative auxiliaries by extra- or supralinguistic gestures of recoil, distancing oneself by means of labialization and the use of an *a*- stem. In Permian we were able to identify a peripheral area, Komi to the north and Mari to the south, where we can witness the first step of this innovation as labialization. The labialization of the illabial negative auxiliary stem of mid *e*- (*ë*-)

took place in present tense forms, resulting in a similarly mid, *o-* stem. This *o-* stem, in a further wave of innovation, developed to *u-* in Udmurt, the possible centre where the whole process of this innovation began. The process is absolutely regular, i.e. there are no exceptions. The extralinguistic gesture of labialization thus became grammaticalized and part and parcel of the present tense paradigms. Yet another innovation took place in Permian, strangely enough not in the centre, but in the periphery, i. e. in Komi, where the initial of the negative particle for general negation is *a-* and, similarly to the labialization of present tense forms of negative auxiliary, it is explained by extra- or supralinguistic factors, namely the coordination or simultaneity of sound production with the bodily gesture of recoil. Both of these innovations are seen as interplay, and consequently also as a complementary distribution of various forms of negation. The well-established distinction in comparative linguistics between initial final and non-initial (final) positions is fruitfully exploited also at the syntactic-syntagmatic level of Permian negation. By virtue of the various innovations in negation Permian seems to be also a central area of the Proto-Finno-Ugric language community whereto means of negation of outer areas can be compared.

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