

# Auxiliaries, Negative Verbs and Word order in the Sami and Finnic Languages

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## 1. Introduction\*

The following generalization holds for the great majority of the Uralic languages: Either a language has a copula in the 3sg predicative construction (Mary **is** a teacher), or the negative verb of the language in question has a separate past tense form. Mikko Korhonen has suggested that the reason for this is that the introduction of the copular construction in some of the Uralic languages subsequently has led to the loss of a past tense negation verb (Cf. Korhonen 1981:310f, and especially Korhonen 1973:). I will first give an overview of the different languages and classify the counterexamples, then I will present Korhonen's analysis, and finally I will try to find out whether it is possible to shed some light upon this phenomenon by assuming a non-lexicalist theory on the interface between syntax and morphology.

## 2. The Uralic languages: An overview

Theoretically, two factors can always be combined in four ways, as in the table below. Any attempt to link the two factors to each other face two possible counterexamples (the shaded areas in the table)

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\* In preparing this article I have benefitted from discussions with Marit Julien, Ago Künnap, Tapani Salminen, the audiences of a Sami Syntax lecture in Tromsø and a lecture series on the history of the Estonian language in Helsinki. Remaining errors are my own. The research behind the present article is funded by the Norwegian Research Council.

	+copula	-copula
past tense form of neg.verb	1	2
no past tense form of neg.verb	3	4

Table 1

The Ugric languages and Southern Samoyed have no negative verb, and they are therefore left out of the discussion. The remaining languages can be grouped according to table 1. First we consider the clear cases. Type 2 is the case where the copular construction was never introduced and the past tense form of the negative verb is the only possible form. Type 3 is the case where the copula is obligatorily present, and where no past tense form of the negative verb exists. Geographically, type 3 is found solely among the Sami and Finnic languages, and type 2 consists of all the languages in the remaining branches of the Uralic language family, and in addition some of the Sami and Finnic languages, most notably the languages in the periphery of the Sami-Finnic area<sup>1</sup>.

Type 2-lgs: The Mordvin, Mari, Permian and Samoyed lgs.  
 Finnic: Livonian, Southern Estonian  
 Sami: Southern,... (see below)

Type 3-lgs: Finnic: Northern Estonian, Votian, Ingrian, Karelian, Finnish  
 Sami: Inari, Skolt, Kildin and Northern Sami

As for the type 2-languages, several of them have a copula. The point here is that it is used only as a carrier of some morphosyntactic feature: tense, mode, 1p, 2p. In Southern Sami, the *leæ*-copula can according to Bergsland 1946 be used in 3sg.pres., but then only focussed: *manne leæm boâries* 'I **am** old, but *manne boâries*, 'I am old'.

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<sup>1</sup> Here I am not going to choose between the different theories of the origin of the past tense form of the negative verb, most notably, whether the \*-és-marker for past tense can be traced back to Proto-Uralic or not (see e.g. Korhonen 1967:211ff, Künnap 1993, and references cited therein). Important for the present article is the fact that in some languages the negative verb behaves differently in the present and in the past tense, whereas in other languages it does not. For the diachronic part of the article, it is of course crucial that the type 3-languages have developed from a type 2-stage and not vice versa. To my knowledge this assumption has not been challenged in the above-mentioned discussion.

The counterexamples to Korhonen's hypothesis are of two types, 1 and 4. They have different status, though. Since the introduction of the copula is seen as the triggering factor, type 1 is the expected transition stage when moving from type 2 to type 3. When looking at the Sami languages, we find that they form the expected continuum, from Southern Sami to Northern Sami.

Type 2                      ->                      Type 1                      ->                      Type 3  
 Sami: Southern,                      Ume, Pite, Lule,                      Northern

The distribution of the different forms of the negative verb can be found in table 2:

		S i n g u l a r			D u a l			P l u r a l		
		1	2	3	1	2	3	1	2	3
South	Jämtland	ʃ	ʃ	ʃ	ʃ	ʃ	ʃ	ʃ	ʃ	ʃ
	Härjedalen	ʃ	ʃ	ʃ	ʃ	ʃ	ʃ	ʃ	ʃ	ʃ
	Tän	ʃ	ʃ	ʃ	ʃ	ʃ	ʃ	ʃ	ʃ	ʃ
	Röros	ʃ	ʃ	ʃ	ʃ	ʃ	ʃ	ʃ	ʃ	ʃ
	Åsele/Vefsn	ʃ	ʃ	ʃ	ʃ	ʃ	ʃ	ʃ	ʃ	ʃ
Ume	Malå	ʃ	ʃ	ʃ	•	•	•	•	•	ʃ
Pite	Arjeplog	ʃ	ʃ	ʃ	•ʃ	•ʃ	•ʃ	•ʃ	•ʃ	ʃ
Lule	Southern Jokkmokk	ʃ	ʃ	ʃ	•	•	•	•	•	ʃ
	Northern Jokkmokk	ʃ	ʃ	ʃ	•	•	•	•	•	ʃ
	Tysfjord	ʃ	ʃ	•	•	•	•	ʃ	•	ʃ
	S.Gällivare	ʃ	ʃ	ʃ	•	•	•	•	•	ʃ
	M.Gällivare	∅	∅	∅	∅	∅	∅	∅	∅	∅
	N.Gällivare	∅	∅	∅	∅	∅	∅	∅	∅	∅
North	Jukkasjärvi	∅	∅	∅	∅	∅	∅	∅	∅	∅
	id. for the rest of the lgs	∅	∅	∅	∅	∅	∅	∅	∅	∅

ʃ = negative verb with past tense form based on some variant of the past tense marker -ç#ç#j-

• = negative verb with past tense form based on some variant the past tense marker -j-

empty slots = forms missing in the material

∅ = No separat past tense form

Table 2: Form of the past tense negative verb in the Sami languages (Based on data from Korhonen 1967:27-95, 212)

The copula shows the same gradual pattern, from ∅ in Southern Sami via *l* in Lule Sami to *leah* in Northern Sami.

Finally we come to type 4, the real counterexamples. If faced with such languages, we will eventually have to look for a different triggering factor to explain the loss of the past tense of the negated verb, preferably a factor that is not present in the type 3-languages. Unfortunately, according to Erkki Itkonen there actually are two members of the real counterexample type 4, namely Vepsian and Ter Sami (Cf. Itkonen 1950). Korhonen 1973 explicitly disagree with Itkonen's claim. According to Korhonen, there still are a certain amount of copula data in both Vepsian and Ter Sami corpora. Here I will follow Korhonen and assume

that type 4 can be emptied by a more thorough look. One possible explanation for an eventual deviant pattern could be the fact that Ter Sami and Vepsian are among the languages most heavily influenced by the (copulaless) Russian. Within this scenario, Ter Sami and Vepsian could have developed a copular construction as a part of the Germanic-Finnic-Sami Sprachbund, and later the construction could have been weakened by Russian influence.

What remains is thus a rich array of transition stages along the Swedish/Norwegian border on their way from type 2 to type 3.

### 3. Korhonen's explanation

According to Korhonen 1981 p. 310, Proto-Sami and Proto-Finnic can be reconstructed in the following way (using modern Finnish word-forms for the ease of exposition):

	positive		negative	
pres.	<i>minä tulen</i>	I come-1SG	<i>minä en tule</i>	I NEG-1SG come
	<i>isä tulee</i>	father come-3SG	<i>isä ei tule</i>	father NEG-3SG come
past	<i>minä tulin</i>	I come-PRET-1SG	<i>minä esin tule</i>	I NEG-PRET-1SG come
	<i>isä tuli</i>	father come-PRET.3SG	<i>isä esi tule</i>	father NEG-PRET.3SG come
perf.	<i>minä tullut</i>	I come-PTC	<i>minä en tullut</i>	I NEG-1SG come-PTC
	<i>isä tullut</i>	father come-PTC	<i>isä ei tullut</i>	father NEG-3SG come-PTC

Table 3

After the copula had made its arrival into the grammar of Sami and Finnic languages we got the following situation:

	positive		negative	
pres.	<i>minä tulen</i>	I come-1SG	<i>minä en tule</i>	I NEG-1SG come
	<i>isä tulee</i>	father come-3SG	<i>isä ei tule</i>	father NEG-3SG come
past	<i>minä tulin</i>	I come-PRET-1SG	<i>minä esin tule</i>	I NEG-PRET-1SG come
	<i>isä tuli</i>	father come-PRET.3SG	<i>isä esi tule</i>	father NEG-PRET.3SG come
			<i>minä en tullut</i>	I NEG-1SG come-PTC
			<i>isä ei tullut</i>	father NEG-3SG come-PTC
perf.	<i>minä olen tullut</i>	I COP-1SG come-PTC	<i>minä en ole tullut</i>	I NEG-1SG cop come-PTC
	<i>isä on tullut</i>	father COP.3SG come-PTC	<i>isä ei ole tullut</i>	father NEG-3SG COP come-PTC

Table 4

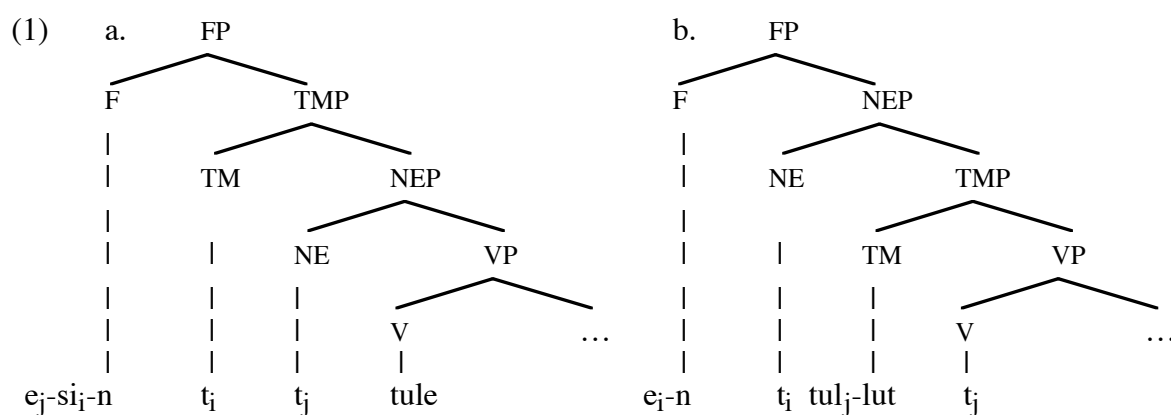
On the basis of a copular clause *minä olen tullut* the obvious negative form is *minä en ole tullut*. Thus, we have a situation with 3 different past and perfect negative forms as opposed to 2 different positive ones. According to Korhonen, the last one (*minä en ole tullut*) is an indisputable perfect form, so the forms *minä esin tule* and *minä en tullut* were left

competing for the past tense form. Some languages chose the former, and other languages the latter.

One difference should be noted between the new and the old negated past tense forms. In **all** the languages with a past tense negation verb, the past tense is expressed with exactly the same suffix as the past tense of other verbs, whereas in **all** languages with past tense expressed on the main verb, the past tense marker is identical with the participle suffix, and hence differs from the ordinary positive past tense marker.

### 3. An analysis

Inspired by the analysis of Finnish argued for in Holmberg et. al. 1993, I propose the following analyses for type 2 and type 3, respectively<sup>2</sup>:



<sup>2</sup> The following abbreviations are used:

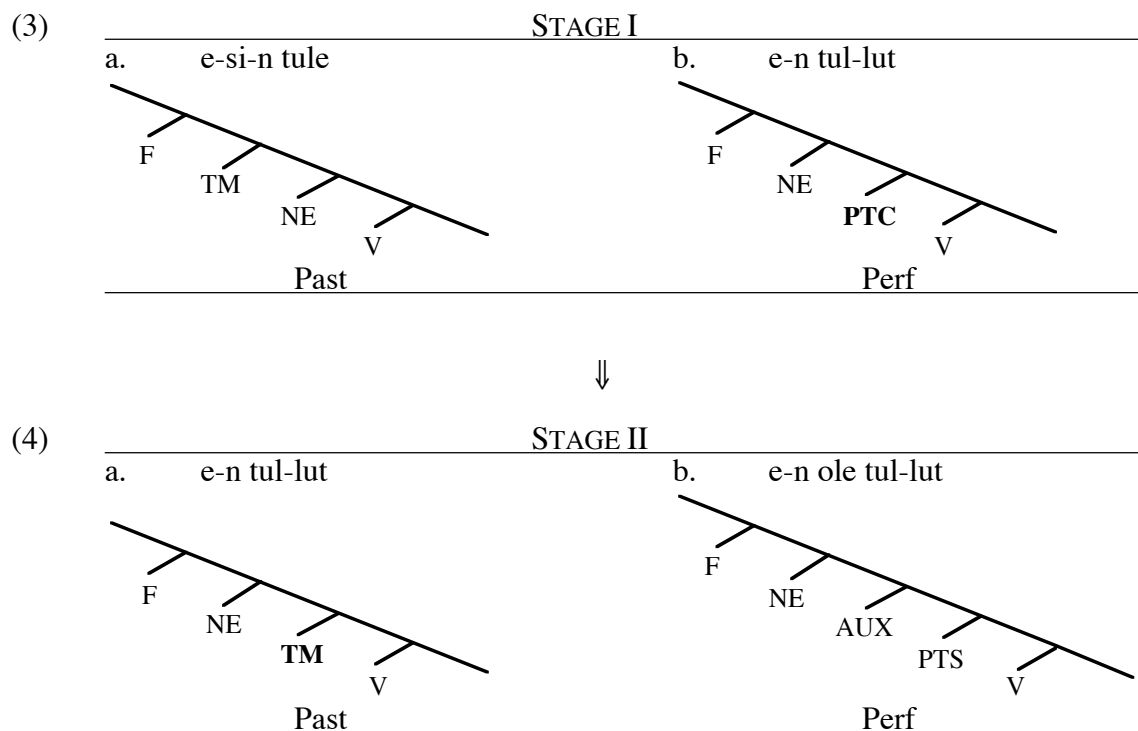
F	Finite (agreement)	t	trace (of a moved constituent)
FP	Finite Phrase	TM	Tense-mode
$i, j$	indices	TMP	Tense-mode phrase
NE	Negation	V	Verb
NEP	Negation phrase	VP	Verb phrase
PTC	Participle		

In the tree structures, lexical and functional morphemes (MORPHEME in the structuralist sense) are treated in the same way: Both are heads of complement-taking projections. Seen from a syntactical point of view, morphological suffixes have a direct impact upon word order, as inflection is formally represented by movement of lexical heads (stems) to lexical heads (suffixes). As a result, we end up with a syntactic structure being the mirror image of the morphological one. For arguments and discussion, cf. Holmberg et. al. op.cit., Baker 1985, 1988.

Note that in addition to the switching of nodes, the past tense morpheme has been switched as well, in accordance with the generalization stated in the preceding section:

(2)	<u>Positive</u>	<u>Negative</u>	
	tul-i-n	en tul-lut	*en tul-i

According to Korhonen's explanation, at a given phase in the development three different negative forms have been available for two constructions (table 4). In non-lexicalist terms, it can be presented in the following way. At stage I (cf. (3a,b)), past tense and present perfect differ from each other in two ways; The former has a TM node that the other one lacks, and the latter one has a PTC node that the former lacks. Then, as a result of the introduction of the copula, we get three different constructions, ((3a,b) and (4b)). Since at this stage the copular verb marks the perfectivity of the verb phrase, the participle suffix *-nut* in (3b) is available for reanalysis, and it is reanalysed as a TM marker, as in (4a). NE starts subcategorizing for TM, and (3a) becomes ungrammatical.



Even though *-nut* in (3b) is available for reanalysis, it still is unclear why it should be reanalysed, thereby pushing out (3a). The pull forces are there, but the push forces are missing, so to speak. One possible push force in the shift from stage I to stage II comes from paradigm economy. Cf. table 5:

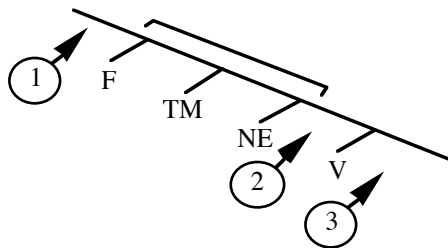
Stage I	Transition stage	Stage II	# of formatives
e-si-n tule	e-si-n tule	(4a) e-n tul-lut	2
e-n tul-lut	e-n tul-lut e-n ole tul-lut	(4b) e-n ole tul-lut	
		(3a) e-si-n tule	3
		(4b) e-n ole tul-lut	

Table 5

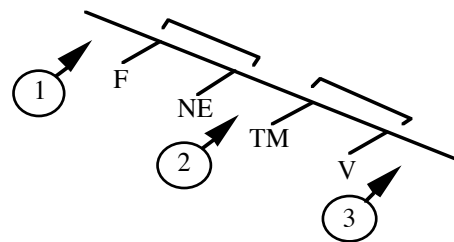
The first solution, involving only two formatives is more economic, and is hence preferred.

Note that, contrary to what has been shown for similar transition processes within e.g. the Scandinavian languages (see e.g. Platzack and Holmberg 1993), we do not expect any word order differences as a result of the change from one structure to another. Both in the new and in the old structure there are three possible adjunction sites: Before, inbetween and after the two verb forms. Cf. 5, where [1], [2] and [3] denote possible adunction sites for adverbials.

(5) a. [1] esin [2] tule [3]



b. [1] en [2] tullut [3]



Hence, the only external arguments for the present analysis are the match between copula occurrence and morphology and the tense allomorphy shown in (2).

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### **Yhteenveto**

Joidenkin tutkijoiden mukaan syntaksi ja morfologia heijastavat suoraan toisiaan (Baker 1985, 1988; skandinaavisista kielistä Holmberg & Platzack painossa; suomesta Holmberg ym. 1993). Mikko Korhonen (Korhonen 1981) on osoittanut, että itämerensuomalaiset kielet ja pohjoissaame menettivät kieltoverbinsä preteritimuodot sen johdosta, että niihin kehittyi kopula. Tässä artikkelissa esitän syntaktisen analyysin, jonka lähtökohdaksi otan Korhosen näkemyksen. Esittelen muutosketjun typologiaa taulukossa 1, ja erotan teoreettisesti mahdolliset ja mahdottomat siirtymävaiheet. Korhosen analyysi on esitetty taulukoissa 3 ja 4. Kappaleessa 3 pyrin kehittämään Korhosen analyysia vastaamalla kysymykseen, joka jäi siinä avoimeksi, eli miksi juuri *isä ei tullut* voitti *isä esi tule* -mallin. Erotan aiheuttavat ja sallivat tekijät (push- and pull-factors). Sallivaksi tekijäksi katson sen, että AUX-noodi sisältää perfektiivisyyden, ja sallii siten *-nut* -aineksen sisältävän noodin uudelleentulkinnan. Aiheuttava tekijä seuraa siitä paradigmaekonomian periaatteesta, että formatiivien määrän tulee olla niin pieni kuin mahdollista (ks. taulukko 5).