

# ***From head-final towards head-initial grammar***

***Generational and areal differences concerning word order production and judgement in the Udmurt speech community***

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# Claims

- ongoing SOV > SVO change in Udmurt under the influence of Russian
- reflected by generational differences in word order production and judgement
- influence of Tatar (SOV) → slows down the change (in trilingual areas)

# Outline of the talk

1. Background
2. Motivation and aims of the research
3. Data collection and methods
4. Results
5. Conclusions

# 1. Background

# The Udmurt language in a nutshell

- Uralic language family, Finno-Ugric branch
- spoken by 340 338 native speakers in Russia (2010)
- Udmurt Republic (minority language) + Tatarstan, Bashkortostan, Mari El, Perm Krai, Kirov Oblast, Sverdlovsk Oblast etc.

# Sociolinguistic and areal background

- mostly bilingual speakers (Udmurt–Russian)
  - ***old speakers***: balanced or Udmurt-dominant bilingualism
  - ***young speakers***: balanced or Russian-dominant bilingualism (Salánki 2007: 59)

→ influence of Russian
- southern areas: Tatar is also spoken

→ influence of Tatar

# Typological background

- ***basic word order***: order of S, V and O in discourse-neutral sentences (independent, indicative clauses; full, definite NP-s; agentive V)
- correlation between basic word order at the sentence level and b. w. o. at the phrasal level → *head-final / head-initial*

(cf. Greenberg 1963, Lehmann 1973, 1978a, 1978b, Vennemann 1974, Dryer 1992)

# Russian: (S)VO / head-initial language

(cf. Bailyn 2012: 239)

(1) Context: 'What's new?'

**SVO:** *Ivan*                    *zaščit' il*                    *svoju* *dissertaciju.*

Ivan                    defended                    his                    dissertation

'Ivan defended his dissertation.'

(2) **Comp-S:** *Ivan* *skazal, čto on ustal.*

Ivan    told                    that    he    got\_tired

'Ivan told that he got tired.'

(3) **'want'-VP:** *Ivan* *hočet* *stat'*                    *million'erom.*

Ivan    wants    to\_become    millionaire

'Ivan wants to become a millionaire.'

(4) **Adj-Standard:** *Ivan*                    *bystreje*                    *men'a.*

Ivan                    faster                    I.GEN

'Ivan is faster than me.'



# Tatar: (S)OV / head-final language

(5) **SOV:** „*Bala almany ashyi.*”

child apple eats

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

(6) **Rel–N:**

„*Alsu Marat jazgan xatny uqyj.*” (Greed 2014: 70)

Alsu Marat written letter reads

‘Alsu reads the letter that was written by Marat.’

(7) **V–Aux:** „*Bala inde uqyj belä.*” (ibid.)

child already reading knows

‘The child can already read.’

# Comparative-historical background

- Proto-Uralic: consistent SOV (head-final)  
(Bereczki 2003: 59, 96)

- SOV > SVO in Finnish, Estonian,  
Hungarian

+ under Russian influence in

- Mordvin

- Permic: Komi-Zyrian, Komi-Permyak

(Ponariadov 2010: 87, 95)

# Descriptive background

- Udmurt: non-rigid (but consistent) SOV, non-verb-final sentences are pragmatically marked

(Zhuikov 1937, Bulychov 1947, Gavrilova 1970, Suihkonen 1990, Csúcs 1990, Timerkhanova 2011, Vilkuna 1998, Winkler 2011)

- SOV–SVO:
  - SVO is not marginal (Salánki 2007)
  - SVO can also be discourse-neutral

(Ponariadov 2010, Asztalos–Tánczos 2014, Asztalos 2016)

# Motivation and aim of the research

- influence of Russian (head-initial)
  - different bilingualism of the old and the young generations
  - SVO is not marginal and can be discourse-neutral
  - SOV > SVO in the other Permian languages
- to test whether Udmurt is undergoing an SOV > SVO typological change

# Data collection and methods

# The examined constructions

- Dryer's *correlation pairs* (1992: 108)  
(*Postp, N+Det, V+Aux<sub>Temp</sub>* → *strictly head-final*)  
+
  - modal Aux + VP: *can + have a break*
  - Adj + AdpP: *rich + in minerals*
  - N + AdpP: *presentation + about the typological change of Udmurt*

# The survey and the informants

- fieldwork (winter 2014–spring 2015), questionnaire
- discourse-neutral sentences → context: ‘*What happened?*’ (or topical subject)
- 90 respondents (3 questionnaire variants → 29+29+32)
  - from all main dialectal groups + Izhevsk
    - grouped into: 1. respondents living in Udmurtia
    - 2. in Tatarstan
  - age groups: 1. born between 1935–1965 (32)
  - 2. 1970 and 2002 (56)
- non-representative survey

# Question types

- **closed-ended questions:**
  1. completing sentences by ordering and conjugating/  
declining given words:
    - *What's new?*
    - *Nothing interesting. Yesterday \_\_\_\_\_ (soup, Mary, to cook).*
  2. grammaticality judgement about head-initial phrases:
    - *What's new?*
    - *Georgy fell off a ladder.    a) good    b) not too good    c) bad*
  3. grammaticality judgement about both the head-initial  
and the head-final variants
- **open-ended question:** comparing two figures  
*('Anja is taller than Tanja')*



# Results

# Head-initial vs. head-final

- with almost all of the constituent types, the head-initial variants were produced and judged grammatical by a part of the speakers
- still, head-final orders are more frequent and more acceptable
- some speakers for some constituents preferred the head-initial variants over the head-final ones

# Generational and areal differences 1.

- younger speakers produced more frequently and judged more favourably the head-initial variants than older ones
  - *apparent time-hypothesis*: an age-stratified variation can be the sign of a linguistic change in progress (cf. Trudgill 1992)
- speakers from Udmurtia produced more frequently and judged more favourably the head-initial variants than speakers from Tatarstan

# Generational and areal differences 2.

- *older speakers from Tatarstan*: almost exceptionless preference for the head-final variants
- *younger ones from Udmurtia*: the highest % of production and acceptance of the head-initial variants

# Inclination of the constituents for word order change

[ CP  
IP  
NP  
AdjP ]

Highest inclination	Average inclination	Lowest inclination
<p><b>V + S</b> (existential + possessive structures)</p>	<p><b>Comp + Sent.</b> <b>V + O</b> <b>'want' + VP</b></p>	<p><b>V + Adv<sub>manner</sub></b> <b>Cop + Pred</b> <b>N + Gen</b></p>
<p><b>V + AdpP</b> <b>N + Rel</b></p>	<p><b>Aux<sub>mod</sub> + VP</b> <b>Adj + AdpP</b> (pred.)</p>	<p><b>N + AdpP</b> <b>Adj + AdpP</b> (attr.)</p>

# V + S (existential sentences) – areal difference

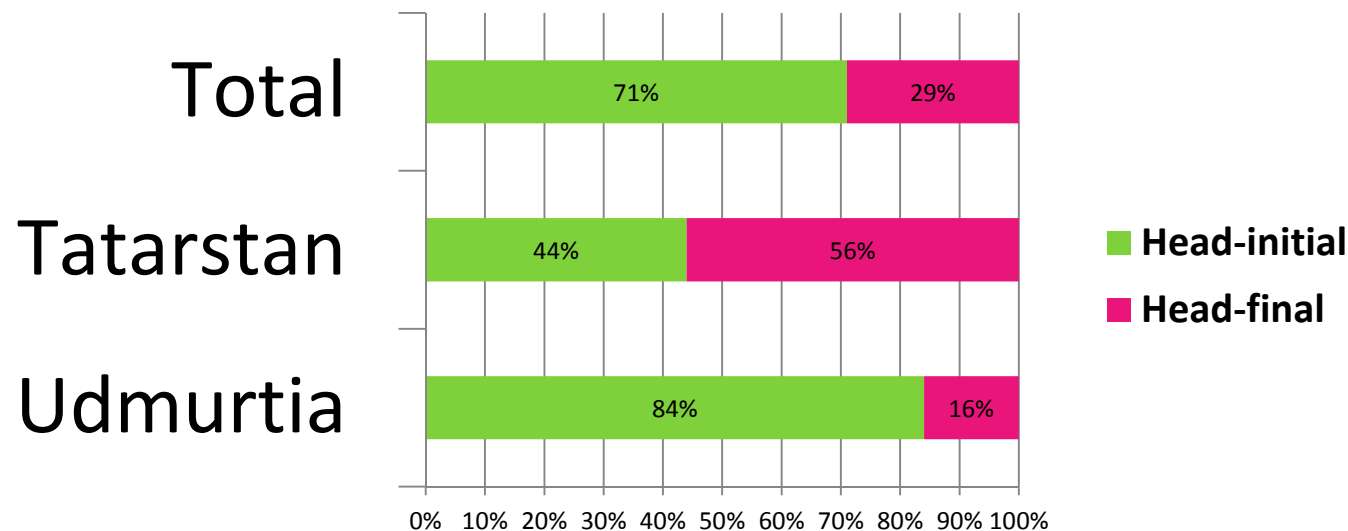
Context: 'Our village is big and nice.'

(8) a. *Otyn* *vań* *kinoteatr* *no* *klub*.

there is cinema and clubhouse

b. *Otyn* *kinoteatr* *no* *klub* *vań*.

'There is a cinema and a clubhouse.'

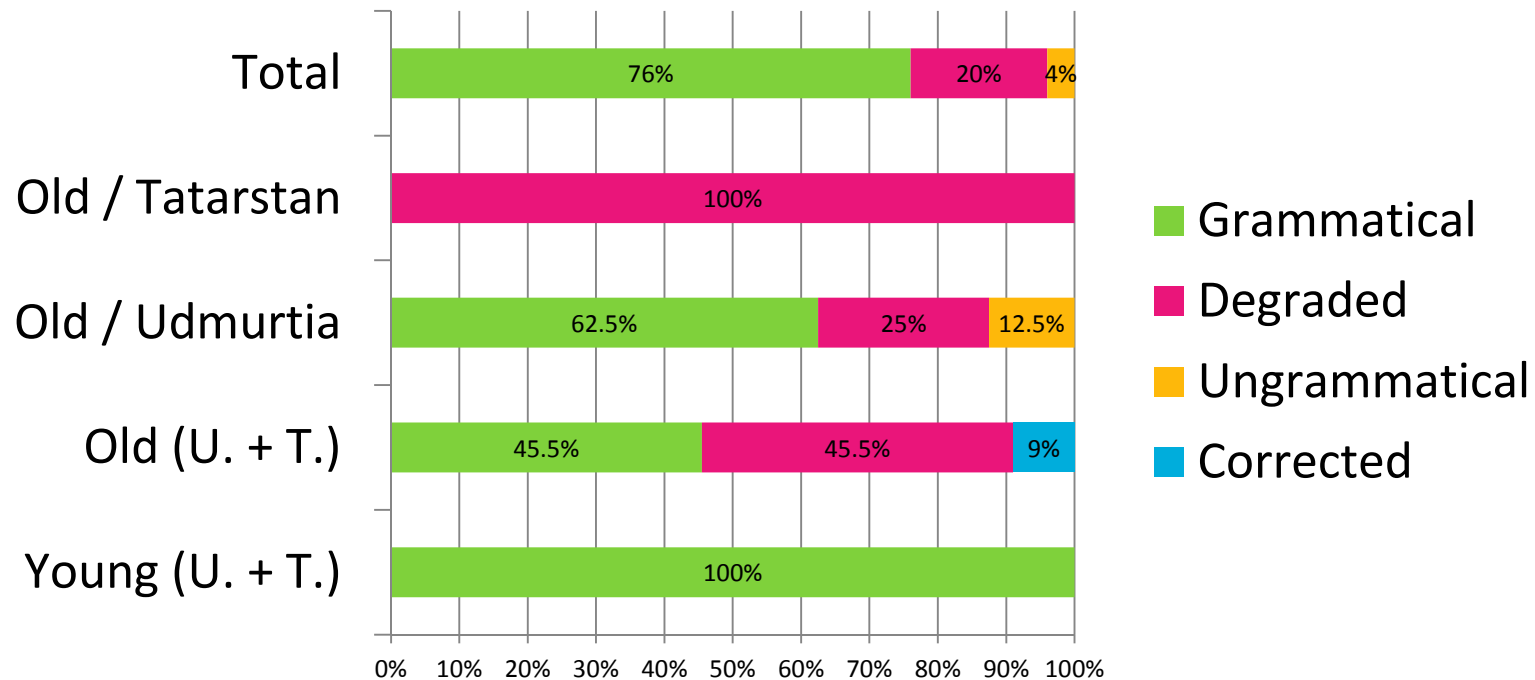


# V + AdpP – areal + generational

(9) *Mon*     *śulmaškiško*     *D'ima*     *śaryś.*  
I            worry            Dima        about

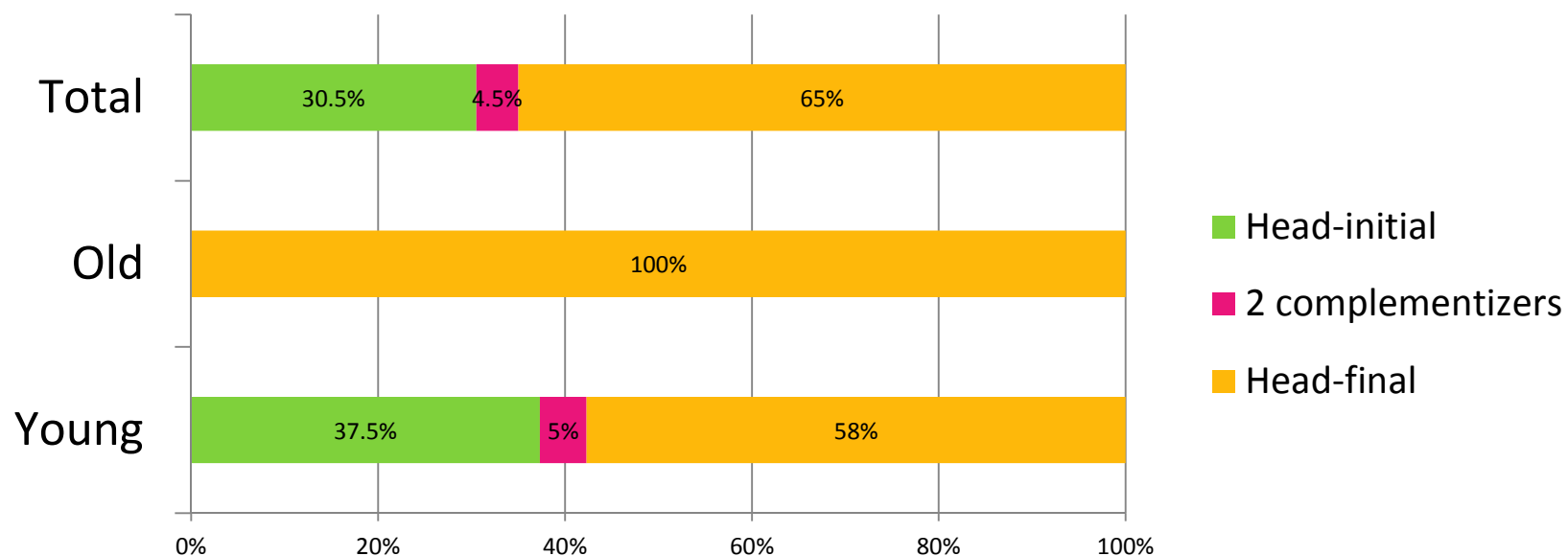
'I am worried about Dima.'

(head-final: *Mon D'ima śaryś śulmaškiško.*)



# Comp + Sent – generational difference

- (10) a. *Tren'erjos veralo, čto sport tuž pajdajo.*  
 trainers say that sport very useful
- b. *Tren'er-jos veralo, sport tuž pajdajo šuysa.*  
 trainers say sport very useful that
- c. *Tren'er-jos veralo, čto sport tuž pajdajo šuysa.*  
 'Trainers say that sport is healthy.'





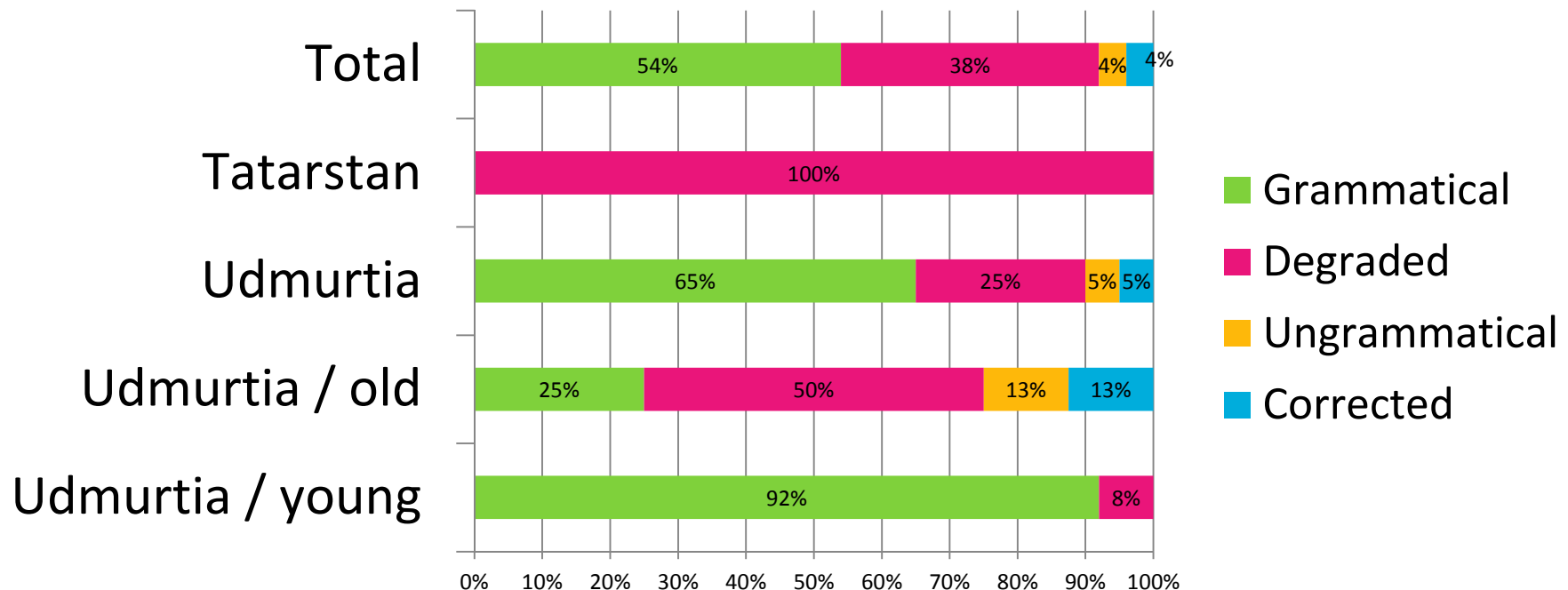
# 'want' + VP – areal + generational

(11) *Jegitjoslen* potiz *šuldyrjaškemzy* (...)

of\_youngs came\_out having\_fun

(head-final: *Jegitjoslen* *šuldyrjaškemzy* potiz (...))

'Young people wanted to have fun (...)'



# Conclusions

- VO grammar also present in Udmurt
- but OV grammar still dominant
- most inclined for change: V+S, V+AdpP, N+Rel
- generational differences → change from head-final to head-initial
- influence of Russian (head-initial) – a part of the younger speakers are Russian-dominant bilinguals
- influence of Tatar (head-final) → slows down the change in trilingual areas

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