

Mermaid Construction in Tatar

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1.1. Introduction: Mermaid Construction

Mermaid Construction (MMC):

- compound-predicate construction
- typically consists of a predicate, a noun, and a copula

(Superficially:) *Hanako=ga* *ik-u* *yotee=da.*
Hanako=NOM **go-NPST** **plan=COP**
“Hanako plans to go.” (Japanese)

- # *Hanako=ga* *yotee=da.*
Hanako=NOM plan=COP
“Hanako is a plan.”

1.1. Introduction: Mermaid Construction

- Tsunoda (2020b):
ik-u yotee=da is a **compound predicate**
the sentence is **monoclausal**

Hanako=ga [*ik-u* *yotee=da.*]
Hanako=NOM [**go-NPST** **plan=COP**]_{VP}
“Hanako plans to go.” (Japanese)

1.1. Introduction: Mermaid Construction

Five prototypical properties of MMC (Tsunoda 2020b):

1. The structure is [Clause] Noun Copula, superficially at least.
2. The Noun is an independent word (not a clitic) that is a noun.
3. The subject of the Clause and the Noun are non-coreferential.
4. The Clause can be used as a sentence by itself.
5. The Clause is not the subject of the “Noun + Copula”.


* Not the necessary and sufficient conditions

1.1. Introduction: Tatar language

- Turkic > Kipchak > Tatar
- SOV, AN, agglutinative
- scrambling in colloquial speech
- MMC unreported in Tsunoda (2020)

(5) $\left[\begin{array}{l} \textit{Belem} \quad \textit{däräzä-se} \\ \text{knowledge level-POS.3} \end{array} \right]_{\text{NP}}$ $\textit{šaqtiĵ} \textit{ tübän}$ $\textit{i-de}$ $\textit{šul}$ $\left[\begin{array}{l} \textit{bu} \quad \textit{klass-niĵ} \\ \text{this class-GEN} \end{array} \right]_{\text{NP}}$

very low COP-PST.3 EMP



“The level of study in this class was very low.”

2. MMC in Tatar

- (6) *Öj-gä* *qajt-ïrya* (*isäp|nijät*) (Ø).
house-DAT return-INF (thought|intention) (COP)
LT: “[To go home] the intention is.”
FT: “(One) plans to go home.”

- (7) Superficial structure of the Tatar MMC
[Infinitival Clause] Noun (Copula)

2.1. Tatar Infinitives

Morphology:

- positive: -(I)rGA / -ArGA
- negative: -mAsKA

Syntax (semantics):

- independent infinitive (deontic, modal, imperative)
- adverbial modifier (modal, aspectual)
- (adnominal modifier; peripheral usage)
- (nominal phrase; controversial usage)

2.1.1. Independent infinitive

Deontic, imperative meaning

- (8) *Tiriš-ïp* *uqi-rya*.
endeavor-CVB study-INF
“Study hard.”

Speaker’s wish with the past tense copula *i-de*

- (10) *Öj-gä* *qajt-ïrya* *i-de*.
house-DAT return-INF COP-PST.3
“(I) would like to go home.”

2.1.2. Infinitive as a modifier

Adverbial modifier (modal, purposive, aspectual, desiderative, etc.):

- (11) *Dust-ibiz-ni* *aeroport-qa qarši+al-irya* *bar-di-q.*
friend-1PL-ACC airport-DAT **pick.up-INF** go-PST-1PL
“We went to the airport to pick up our friend.”

Adjective modifier (modal, degree):

- (12) *Kit-ärgä* *tiješ.*
leave-INF obligatory
“(One) must leave.”

2.1.2. Infinitive as a modifier

Noun modifier

marginal; co-occur with an existential predicate

(14) *Äjt-ergä* *xaq-ïm* *bar.*

say-INF right-POS.1SG exist

“I have a right to say.”

(15) *Kil-ergä* *isäb-em* *bar.*

come-INF thought-POS.1SG exist

“I have a plan to come.”

2.2. Contrastive analysis

To what extent do Tatar MMCs conform with the five prototypical MMC properties (Tsunoda 2020b)?

1. The structure is [Clause] Noun Copula, superficially at least.
2. The Noun is an independent word (not a clitic) that is a noun.
3. The subject of the Clause and the Noun are non-coreferential.
4. The Clause can be used as a sentence by itself.
5. The Clause is not the subject of the “Noun + Copula”.

a. [Clause] Noun Copula

	Clause	Noun	Copula
(6)	$\overbrace{\left[\begin{array}{cc} \text{Öj-gä} & \text{qajt-irya} \\ \text{house-DAT} & \text{return-INF} \end{array} \right]}$	$\overbrace{\left[\begin{array}{c} \text{isäp / nijät} \\ \text{thought / intention} \end{array} \right]}$	$\overbrace{\left[\begin{array}{c} (\emptyset). \\ (\text{COP}). \end{array} \right]}$
	“I am planning to go home.”		

The Tatar copula in the present tense is usually zero
→ (6) has the structure of [Clause] Noun Copula.

 Property a.

b. The Noun is an independent word

	Clause	Noun	Copula
(6)	$\overbrace{\text{Öj-gä} \quad \text{qajt-irya}}$	$\overbrace{\text{isäp} / \text{nijät}}$	$\overbrace{(\emptyset)}$
	house-DAT return-INF	thought / intention	(COP).
	“I am planning to go home.”		

isäp (“thought, thought”) and *nijät* (“intention”) are both **independent nouns**

 Property b.

c. The subject and the Noun are not coreferential

No overt subject observed in the Tatar MMC.

However, the intender (actor) can be expressed by the possessive suffix attached to the Noun.

If we assume a covert PRO as the actor of the infinitive verb in (17), it is non-coreferential with the noun, because “I” is not “intention” itself.

- (17) *Öj-gä* *qajt-irya* *(isäb|nijät)-em* (∅).
house-DAT return-INF (thought|intention)-POS.1SG (COP).
“I am planning to go home.”

 Property c.

d. The Clause can be used as a sentence by itself

- Clause
- (18) $\overbrace{\text{Öj-gä} \quad \text{qajt-irya.}}^{\text{Clause}}$
house-DAT return-INF
LT: “To go home.”
FT: “(It is in the cards that one) goes home.”

(18) is grammatical with the independent infinitive structure mentioned in §2.1.1.

 Property d.

e. The Clause is not the subject of “Noun + Copula”

Typically the Tatar infinitives do not have a nominal function

- cf. verbal noun

INF: *qajt-ïrya*

return-INF

“to return, for returning”

VN: *qajt-uw*

return-VN

“returning, the act of returning”

→ Not the subject of “Noun + Copula”

 Property e.

2.2.2. Grammaticalization and monoclausality

Monoclausality of the Tatar MMCs:

Deleting the infinitive results in a nonsensical sentence

(20) # (*Isäp|nijät*) Ø
(thought|intention) COP
intended: “It is the intention.”

Traits of grammaticalization:

Selective Noun slot does not allow substitution with a synonym

(21) **Öj-gä* *qajt-irya* **plan.**
house-DAT return-INF plan
intended: “(One) plans to go home.”

2.2.2. Grammaticalization and monoclausality

Selective tense:

The Tatar MMCs typically occur only in the present tense.

% *Öj-gä* *qajt-irya* *isäp* *i-de*.
house-DAT return-INF thought COP-PST.3
intended: “I was planning to go home.”

cf. Japanese MMC’s selectiveness on tense

(22) *Seezee benkyoosuru koto=da.*
hard study.NPST thing=COP
“Study hard.”

(23)* *Seezee benkyoosuru koto=datta.*
hard study.NPST thing=COP.PST
intended: “You should have study hard.”

2.3. Other nouns that allow the MMC

waqit “time” and *röxsät* “permission”
can have an actor (subject?) in dative

(24) *Miŋa* *joqla-rya* *waqit.*
1SG.DAT sleep-INF time
“It’s time for me to sleep.”

(25) *Aŋa* *ker-ergä* *röxsät.*
3SG.DAT enter-INF permission
“He/She may come in.”

2.3. Other nouns that allow the MMC

waqit “time” and ***röxsät*** “permission”:

different syntactic behavior from that of *isäp* and *nijät*
position of the attached enclitics

(26) *Joqla-rya waqit=mï?*

sleep-INF time=Q

“Is it time for sleep?”

(* *Joqla-rya=mï waqit?*)

sleep-INF=Q time

(28) *Qajt-iryä=mï isäp?*

return-INF=Q thought

“(Are you) planning to come back?”

(? *Qajt-iryä isäp=me?*)

return-INF thought=Q

3. Flows of grammaticalization

Tsunoda's (2020b) hypotheses on the origin of the MMC's grammaticalization

1. adnominal clauses
2. noun-predicate sentences whose subject is a complement clause
3. cleft sentences
4. language contact

New hypotheses of the Tatar MMCs:

1. extension of infinitival modification
2. subject inversion

3.1. Extension of infinitival modification

The Tatar infinitives typically modify verbs as an adverbial

→ The infinitives are extended to modify (abstract) nouns
only when there is an existential predicate

- (31) *Öj-gä* *qajt-irya* (*isäb|nijät*)-em *bar.*
house-DAT return-INF (thought|intention)-POS.1SG exist.
“I have a plan to go home.”

3.2. Ellipsis of an existential predicate

The existential predicate is dropped:

- (31) *Öj-gä qajt-irya (isäb|nijät)-em bar.*
house-DAT return-INF (thought|intention)-POS.1SG exist.
“I have a plan to go home.”

This is confirmed by the fact that its past-tense counterpart is unacceptable and has to be realized with the existential predicate:

- (32) *Qajt-irya isäp (bar i-de | % i-de).*
return-INF thought exist COP-PST.3. | COP-PST.3
“(I) was planning to come back.”

3.3. Formation of a compound predicate

The Tatar MMC Nouns can be interpreted as “**quasi-particle**” nouns

Comparison with the particle *inde* “already”:

(34) *Qajt-ti-η=mï* *inde?*
return-PST-2SG=Q already
“Are you back already?”

(35) **Qajt-ti-η* *inde=me?*
return-PST-2SG already=Q
intended: “Are you back already?”

(28) *Qajt-ïrya=mï* *isäp?*
return-INF=Q thought
“(Are you) planning to come back?”

(? *Qajt-ïrya* *isäp=me?*)
return-INF thought=Q

Syntactic similarity

3.4. Subject Inversion?

Colloquial Tatar allows scrambling

(36) *Min tatarča döres söjlim=me?*
1SG in_Tatar correctly speak:PRS.1SG=Q
“Am I speaking Tatar correctly?”


(37) *Tatarča döres söjlim=me min?*
in_Tatar correctly speak:PRS.1SG=Q 1SG
= (36)

3.4. Subject inversion?

the Tatar MMC nouns might also have undergone the subject inversion

* *Isäp* — *öj-gä* *qajt-irya*.
thought house-DAT return-INF
“The plan is to go home.”

(6) ~~*isäp*~~ *öj-gä* *qajt-irya* *isäp*.
thought house-DAT return-INF thought
“I am planning to go home.”



*[Noun [INF COP]] → [[INF COP] Noun]

4. Conclusion

This study has:

- reported 4 MMC nouns found in Tatar
- discussed their idiosyncratic properties:
 - quasi-particle nouns (more grammaticalized):
isäp “thought”, *nijät* “intention”
 - nouns (less grammaticalized):
waqit “time”, *röxsät* “permission”
- proposed 2 new possibilities of grammaticalization paths based on the finding

Thank you for your attention.