Syntax and semantics of verbal negative markers in Buryat

Petr Rossyaykin (petrrossyaykin@gmail.com)

Lomonosov Moscow State University

3-5 Sept. 2018 **PARIS Inalco**

Buryat (Barguzin dialect)

- Altaic > Mongolic > Buryat > Barguzin
- SOV, strictly head-final, agglutinative, NOM-ACC-DAT case marking

Data collected in Baraghan ulus (village), Kurumkan district, the Republic of Buryatia

Negation - overview

Marker	Function
-gʉi	Standard negation (11), caritive case (7, 10)
bʉ=	Negation of non-indicative verb forms (1)
=bɘʃɘ	Constituent negation (13b, 14)
=ʉgi:	Negative answer, existential negation (5, 6)

Non-indicative negation (bʉ=)

The only prepositive particle in Buryat, bʉ= is used for negation of imperative (prohibitive) and other non-indicative verb forms:

(1) a. unta-∅ b. bʉ=unta-∅
sleep-IMP NEG=sleep-IMP
'Sleep' 'Don't sleep'

It can be located on the left periphery of VP, being separated from the negated verb by lexical verb – object resultative participle in (3) – or adjuncts (4). Sometimes linear position in front of direct object or even subject is allowed but such sentences are not perfectly grammatical.

(2) zagahan ʃar-a:-tai **bʉ=bai-g**
fish fry-PST-COM **NEG=be-JUSS**

(3) zagahan **bʉ=ʃar-a:-tai** bai-g
fish **NEG=fry-PST-COM** be-JUSS
'Let the fish to be not fried'

(4) ?zagahan **bʉ=hongʲino-toi** ʃar-a:-tai bai-g
fish **NEG=onion-COM** fry-PST-COM be-JUSS
'Let the fish to be not fried with onion'

Existential negation (=ʉgi:)

Negative predicate =ʉgi: is used for existential, locative and possessive negation:

(5) a. ula:n sɘsɘg bʲi: / bai-na b. ula:n sɘsɘg=ʉgi:
red flower EX / be-PRS red flower=NEG.EX
1. 'There is red flower' 1. 'There is no red flower'
2. 'Red flower exists'

In case of possessive and locative negation, dative adjunct is added denoting possessor or location:

(6) basagan-da ula:n sɘsɘg-ʉ:d=ʉgi:
girl-DAT red flower-PL=NEG.EX
'A/the girl has no red flowers' (Lit.: 'There are no red flowers at a/the girl's')

Caritive case marker -gʉi (diachroncally related to =ʉgi:) can be used instead. Possessor is in nominative. Syntactically this construction is nominal predication with either overt or zero copula:

(7) basagan(ʔ-da) ula:n sɘsɘg-ʉ:d-gʉi (bai-na)
girl(-DAT) red flower-PL-NEG (be-PRS)
'A/the girl has no red flowers' (Lit.: 'A/the girl is red-flowerless')

	NEG.EX		NEG.POSS, NEG.LOC	
	negated	possessor/location	negated	possessor/location
=ʉgi:	NOM	0	NOM	DAT
-gʉi	–		CAR (-NEG)	NOM

Nominal negation (=bɘʃɘ and -gʉi)

Constituent negation particle =bɘʃɘ is used in proper inclusion (8) and attribution (9) sentences with nouns (8) and non-derived adjectives (9)

(8) a. ʃi doktor-oʃ b. ʃi doktor=bɘʃɘ(-ʃ)
2SG doctor-2SG 2SG doctor=NOT(-2SG)
'You are a doctor' 'You are not a doctor'

(9) a. baabgai tʉrgɘn b. baabgai tʉrgɘn=bɘʃɘ
bear fast bear fast=NOT
'A/the bear is fast' 'A/the bear is not fast'

Caritive case is used with derived adjectives:

(10) a. ʃʉlɘn amta-tai b. ʃʉlɘn amta-gʉi
soup taste-COM soup taste-NEG
'Soup is tasty' 'Soup is not tasty'

Verbal negation (-gʉi and =bɘʃɘ)

Suffix -gʉi is used as a standard negator (11). Paradigmatic asymmetry of negation (A/Cat/TAM according to Miestamo (2005)) is attested: -gʉi is incompatible with several participles and all (except for one) converbs

Standard negation grammatical	Standard negation ungrammatical
future tense, habitual participles, simultaneity converb	object and subject resultatives, perfect, continuative, possibility participles, other converbs

Examples for finitely used future tense (11) and perfect (12) participles:

(11) a. aba jɘrɘ-xɘ b. aba jɘrɘ-xɘ-gʉi
father arrive-FUT father arrive-FUT-NEG
'The father will arrive' 'The father will not arrive'

(12) a. aldar jɘrɘ-hɘn b. *aldar jɘrɘ-hɘn-gʉi
Aldar arrive-PFCT Aldar arrive-PFCT
'Aldar has arrived' 'Aldar has not arrived'

Past tense with -gʉi or constituent negator =bɘʃɘ can be used instead (12b):

(13) a. aldar jɘr-ɘ:-gʉi b. aldar jɘrɘ-hɘn=bɘʃɘ
Aldar arrive-PST-NEG Aldar arrive-PFCT=NOT
'Aldar has not arrived' 'Aldar has not arrived'

If the usage of -gʉi is grammatical =bɘʃɘ cannot be used to negate verbs/clauses without an overt or implicit paired contrasting 'correction':

(14) sonom bɘlɘg ab-a:=bɘʃɘ *(gar-a:r-a: x-ɘ:)
Sonom present take-PST=NOT (hand-INSTR-REFL make-PST)
'Sonom hasn't bought the present, but made it with his own hands'

Given this and the more grammaticalized status of -gʉi (its sensitivity to verb form) we consider -gʉi to be the standard negator.

Standard and sentential negation interaction

Both -gʉi and =bɘʃɘ can be used to turn a proposition p into proposition ~p with opposite truth conditions (11, 13b). Differences appear when there are other scope-taking operators in the sentence:

(15) a. sajana gansa sɘlmɘg-i:-jɘ xar-a:
Sayana only Selmeg-GA-ACC see-PST
'Sayana saw only Selmeg'

b. sajana gansa [sɘlmɘg-i:-jɘ xar-a:]-gʉi
Sayana only Selmeg-GA-ACC see-PST-NEG
1. 'Sayana didn't saw only Selmeg' {only > NEG}
2. *'Sayana saw not only Selmeg' {NEG > only}

c. sajana [gansa sɘlmɘg-i:-jɘ xar-a:]=bɘʃɘ
Sayana only Selmeg-GA-ACC see-PST=NOT
1. *'Sayana didn't saw only Selmeg' {only > NEG}
2. 'Sayana saw not only Selmeg' {NEG > only}

=bɘʃɘ takes scope over gansa 'only' (and presumably over the whole clause) thus resulting in true propositional negation (sentential negation in terms of Jackendoff (1969)). -gʉi corresponds to syntactic sentential negation (Klima 1964) which does not necessarily yield contradictory semantics. It occupies fixed position in syntactic structure – following (Zeijlstra 2004) we can suppose that it immediately dominates vP (i.e. the smallest domain containing all propositional arguments) which can be seen from the sentences with NPI-subjects (16) and objects (17).

(16) a. xɘn-ʃɘ ʉhan dɘ:gʉ:r jaba-xa
who-NPI water on go-FUT
'Everybody can walk on the water'

b. xɘn-ʃɘ ʉhan dɘ:gʉ:r jaba-xa-gʉi
who-NPI water on go-FUT-NEG
'Nobody can walk on the water'

(17) bʲi xɘn-i:-jɘ-ʃ xar-a:-gʉi-b
1SG who-GA-ACC-NPI see-PST-NEG-1
'I have seen nobody'

➢ I conclude that (at least in Buryat) standard negation is an internal (narrow-scope) operation that should be captured in terms of syntax. True (contradictory) propositional negation is in fact constituent negation (13b, 14) with the scope over the whole clause (13b, 15c).

List of glosses

1 – first person agreement, 1SG – first person singular, 2SG – second person singular, ACC – accusative, CAR – caritive, COM – comitative, DAT – dative, EX – existential predicate, FUT – future tense, GA – genitive/accusative, IMP – imperative, INSTR – instrumental, JUSS – jussive, NEG – negation, NEG.EX – existential negation, NOT – constituent negation, NPI – negative polarity item, PFCT – perfect, PL – plural, PRS – present tense, PST – past tense, REFL - reflexive

Literature

Jackendoff (1969) — Jackendoff, R.S. 'An Interpretive Theory of Negation.' In: Foundations of Language 5: 218-241.

Klima (1964) — Negation in English. In The structure of language; readings in the philosophy of language, Jerry A. Fodor and Jerrold J. Katz (eds.) 246–323. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall

Miestamo (2005) — Miestamo, Matti. Standard Negation: The Negation of Declarative Verbal Main Clauses in a Typological Perspective. Berlin: Mouton de Gruyter.

Zeijlstra (2004) — H. Zeijlstra. Sentential Negation and Negative Concord. PhD Dissertation University of Amsterdam. Utrecht: LOT Publications.