

The negative existential  
construction with *āčUH / āč'in* in  
the caritive function in Evenki:  
internal syntactic structure

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# *Āчин* caritives are rather regular in Evenki; examples from [Boldyrev 1994: 19-21, 172]

## • *Āчин* caritives:

- (1) a. *эн̄ү-е* *āчин*  
rain-PART NEG.EX “painless”
- b. *хив̄йн-а* *āчин*  
concern-PART NEG.EX “without concern/worry”
- c. *д̄ю-я* *āчин*  
house-PART NEG.EX “homeless”

## • Other constructions:

- (2) a. *э-вк̄й* *сиңнин-дэ-рэ*  
NEG-PTCP.HAB feel.soory.for-IPFV-PTCP.NEG “not feeling sorry for”
- b. *э-нэ* *таң-на*  
NEG-PTCP.PF count-PTCP.NEG “except (for)” [≈ not counted]

# Altaic and Uralic languages: Type B / A~B (a separate word for existential negation) – [Croft 1991; Wagner-Nagy 2011: 176-181]

(i) Uninflected word (3a) vs. verb (3b), (4a-b); (ii) Theme is **NOM**

[Wagner-Nagy 2011: 198, 204]:

(3) a. *aatim NEG.EX “there isn’t”* vs. *aatim ool-ə-s NEG.EX be-EP-PST.3SG “there wasn’t”* [Nothorn Mansi]

b. *ʔako-štu-š NEG.EX-HAB-3SG.PST “there wasn’t”* [Tundra Nenets]

Google Translate [Korean] :

(4) a. *thayyang-i iss-ess-ta*  
sun-NOM EX-PST-DECL  
“It was sunny”

b. *thayyang-i eps-ess-ta*  
sun-NOM NEG.EX-PST-DECL  
“There was no sun”

Our sources for XX-XXI century examples (analysis is based on the XXI century language):

- 1. Oral stories corpus (Corpus) recorded in the expeditions 2005–2019 mostly in Evenki Municipal region (Northern and Southern dialects). The expedition head – O. A. Kazakevich. Corpus is created by E.L. Klyachko the “Small languages of Siberia: our cultural legacy”, URL: <http://minlang.srcc.msu.ru/>, <http://gisly.net/corpus/>
- 2. The texts “Corpora of the IEA RAS” (XXI century newspaper texts and translated texts, XX century oral stories and sagas): <http://corpora.iea.ras.ru/corpora/texts.php> .
- 3. Examples from dictionaries, descriptive grammars.

The *āчин* construction in finite clauses, adjectival (attributive/predicative) and adjunct (adverbial) use.

• **Finite clause:** (5) *юрис-ал-ка* *век* *ачи[н]-р* [newspaper]  
lawyer-PL-FOC always NEG.EX-PL  
“There are never [ ≈ you can never find] lawyers”

• **Adjectival:** (6) a. [attr.] [*орон-э* *а́ин*] *эвэнки* [oral story]  
reindeer-PART NEG.EX Evenki  
“An Evenki [without a reindeer] (wouldn’t be able to live before)”

b. [pred.] *Бу* *тыкин-дэ* [*атыркан-а а́чин*] [saga]  
1SG always-FOC wife-PART NEG.EX  
“But I haven’t got a wife so far” (lit. ‘I am wifeless’) cf. (10a)

• **Adverbial:** (7) *сунюри[н]* *умуксэ* *ачин-ду=да...*  
pig fat NEG.EX-INST=FOC  
(Dumplings) “...without pig fat...” (are tasty for me) [newspaper]

# Which part of speech does *āчун* belong to?

- [Vasilevich 1940: 43-44]: *āчун* is categorically underspecified. It is:
  - (i) noun: it attaches case and possessive inflection (rarely in oral texts), (7);
  - (ii) adjective: it agrees with the noun [PART] in number (5), but can't attach verb inflection, as in Northern Mansi, cf. (3a), (5) vs. (8):

(8)    *Эдын*            *ачун*            *бу-чo-н*            *энин-н̄у-в*    [oral story]  
         husband        NEG.EX            be-PST-3SG    mother-PROPR-PS.1SG

“My mother had no husband”

- (iii) *āчун* in caritive uses is a verb (1a-c), (7) – *āчун* and not the copula *bi-* assigns PART to the Theme (lacking object, NP<sub>NEG.EX</sub>).

# The missing-object NP<sub>NEG.EX</sub> as an unaccusative PART subject of *āчун*

- The PART NPN<sub>NEG.EX</sub> usually precedes *āчун* (1a-c), (5)-(8), cf. the NP<sub>NOM</sub> (missing object) in Northern Mansi, Tundra Nenets, Korean (3)-(4); in other Uralic languages [Wagner-Nagy 2011].

- The non-existence (*āчун*) is predicated over the logical subject NP<sub>NEG.EX</sub> in an AdjP=SC:

(9)  $\neg \exists$  [does not exist] (NP);

- Number agreement of *āчун* with NP<sub>NEG.EX</sub> is in finite clauses obligatory (5), but it isn't found in caritive use: (10a-b)

(10) a. Nuṇa-**r**-tin [hutə-ja      **aśi-r**]      bi-śō-**tin** [oral story]  
3PL-PL-PS.3PL    child-PART NEG.EX-PL bi-PST-3PL

“They had no children” (lit. ‘They were childless’)

# No number agreement of *āчин* with NP<sub>NEG.EX</sub> in adjectival use:

(10) b. [мудан-а *āчу-р-д̄ү*] дуннэ-ңи-л-д̄ү-вун...  
limit-PART NEG.EX-PL-DAT land-INDPS-PL-DAT-PS.1PL

“In our lands without limit...” (there are a lot of animals) [Kolesnikova 1966: 155]

- (10a): Number agreement with the clause subject *ниңа-р-тин* ‘they’;
- (10b): Number + case agreement with the noun modified: *дуннэ-ңи-л-д̄ү-вун* ‘lands’
- *Āчин* is not frozen, but it agrees with an “outer” NP for agreement (probably, it raises to a higher AgrP outside the SC, cf. (5)).
- [Nedjalkov 1994: 28] gives no examples of *āчин* number agreement: “Both forms [*āчин* and *āчу-р*] may be used in all functions”



# Adverbial uses: nominal morphology in written language, adjectival in oral language

(11) а. *Эвэнки-л ачу-р-ду-тын, ачу-р-ду-тын оро-р,*  
Evenki-PL NEG.EX-PL-DAT-PS.3PL NEG.EX-PL-DAT-PS.3PL reindeer-PL  
“Without Evenkis, without reindeers...” (the expedition would not be able to do so much work) [popular story about Evenki, written language]

b. [*hawa-jə asin*]                      *ə-dəŋə*                      *bodo-ro*  
work-PART NEG.EX                      NEG-PTCP.POST                      exist-PTCP.NEG  
(He learnt how to make fishing nets) “...in order not to stay without work” [oral story] (cf. (6a-b), (10a-b))

- [Nedjalkov 1994: 29] gives examples of *āчун* number/case/possessive agreement in sentential arguments and adverbial uses (as in the written language).

# PART of the subject NP<sub>NEG.EX</sub>

- In finite clauses, PART can in the XXI century be assigned to non-specific/non-referential objects (12a-b) (but (8));

(12)	a.	<i>bī</i>	<i>āčin</i>	<i>bi-čō-w</i>	
		1SG.NOM	NEG.EX	be-PST-1SG	
		“I was not there” (lit. ‘Me was not’)			[oral story]
	b.	<i>d’u-l-ə</i>	<i>užə</i>	<i>ači-r</i>	
		hunt-PL-PART	already	NEG.EX-PL	
		“There are no huts any more”			[oral story]

- Caritive use: PART and no quantification (1a-c),(6a-b),(10a-b), (11b). [Vasilevich 1940]: PART is assigned only and always in adjectival/adverbial use. **Nowadays Evenki**: adverbial use with no PART in the written language (7), (11a) (nominal *āчин*) vs. with PART in oral (11b), (17) (adjectival *āчин*).

Assume that *āчун* is a verbal adjective (V+Adj), and the clause with *āчун* can have different grammatical forms (as verb vs. participle)

- According to [Cinque 1990: 8-9; Cinque 2010: 46-47], phrasal attributive adjectives (caritive use) have a structure of a reduced clause, cf. [Graschenkov 2019: sec. 3.1.5.3, (504), (507)] (adjectives cannot assign case by themselves):

(13) [<sub>Atr/PartP</sub> ... [<sub>VP</sub> [<sub>V'</sub> [<sub>AdjP</sub> [<sub>Adj'</sub> [<sub>NP</sub> NP<sub>NEG.EX</sub>] Adj [*āчун*]]] V<sub>∅</sub> ]]

- PART is a **lexical case**. As [Kiparsky 2001: 348-349] mentions, PART is related to sentence negation (see also [Harves 2013: 657-658]), or to quantification, or to unmarked (non-resultative) aspect. For *āчун* clauses, negation and quantification go together, cf. (9) – the internal structure of *āчун* with negation.

# How is PART assigned to NP<sub>NEG.EX</sub>?

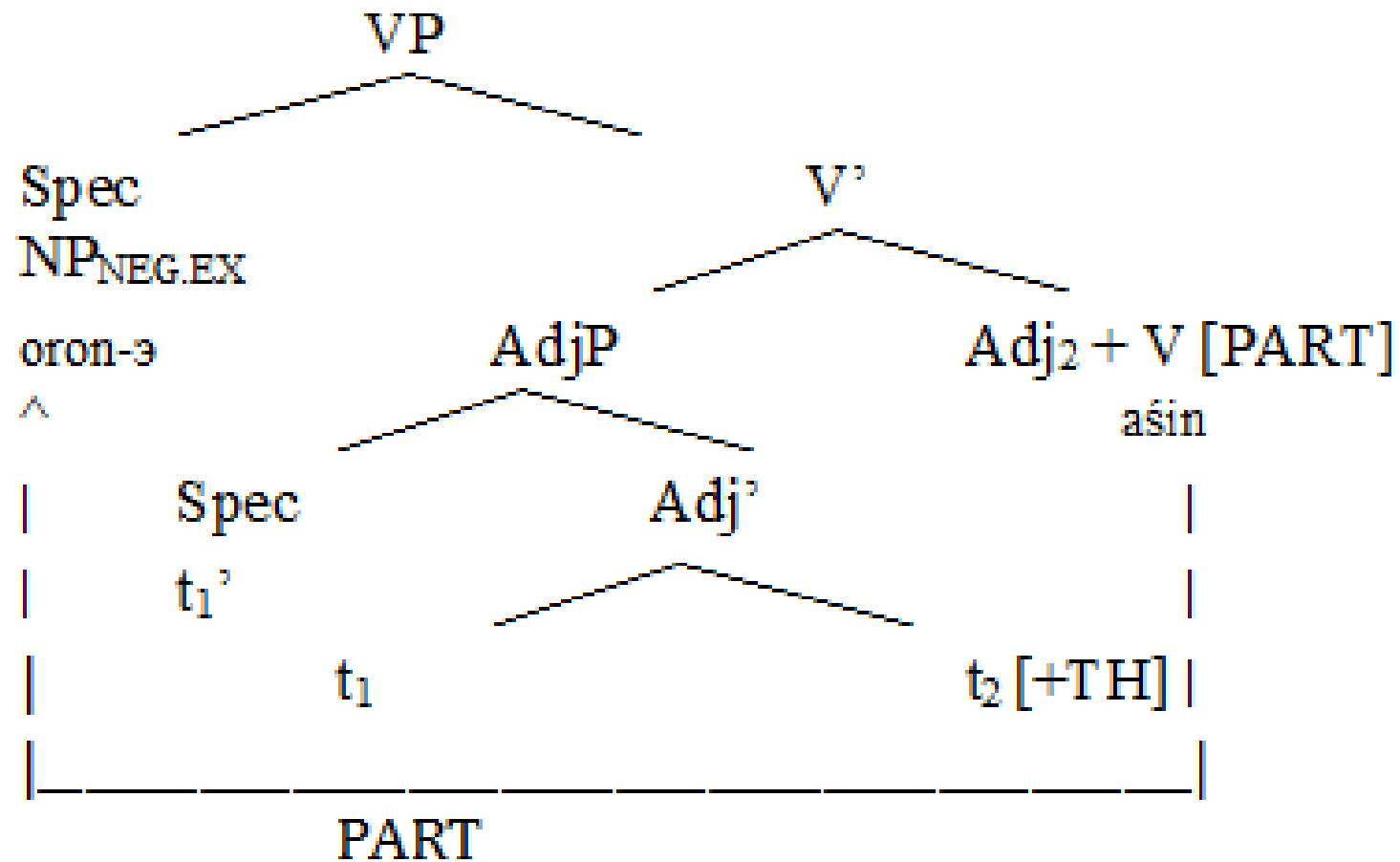
- Structure with no PART (18) for written language adverbial use (7), (11a).
- PART is assigned to NP<sub>NEG.EX</sub> by **āчун** in attributive/predicative (Small Clauses), as in (6a-b), (10a-b); no IP/TP (that usually assign NOM).
- Negation is the semantic component of **āчун** (**āчун** =  $\neg \exists$ ), so Adj [**āчун**] can be represented as composition of heads Neg+Q, (13').

(13') ...<sub>VP</sub>[<sub>V'</sub>[<sub>AdjP</sub>[<sub>Adj'</sub>[<sub>NP</sub>NP<sub>NEG.EX</sub>] Adj=Neg-Q[**āчун**]] <sub>V</sub>∅]]

- PART is assigned to NP<sub>NEG.EX</sub> (the complement of **āчун**); NP<sub>NEG.EX</sub> is **āчун**'s unaccusative subject in an AdjP/SC. **Āчун** is the AdjP/SC predicate. [**Āчун** (Adj) + <sub>V</sub>∅] is the PART-assigner; no functional head such as <sub>v</sub> or T is involved.

(14) Structure for [*oron-ə aśin*] in (6). Adj [=Neg-Q[*āчун*]] + V can assign case to NP<sub>THEME</sub> [Cinque 2010]

(14)



# The issue of the NumP projection (related to (13)-(14)), and of the NP<sub>POSS/LOC</sub>

- No number agreement of *āчун* with NP<sub>NEG.EX</sub> in oral language adjectival occurrences (either attributive (6a) or predicative (6b)), as well as in adverbial uses (11b). The structure (14) has no NumP above VP.
- In finite clauses, the NumP projection is present above the AdjP (if NP<sub>NEG.EX</sub> is NOM (5), (8)) or above VP (if NP<sub>NEG.EX</sub> is PART in (12b)).
- No NP<sub>POSS/LOC</sub> in caritive use: in (6b) and (10a) the possessor is subject (predicative adjectival use); in (6a) and (10b) the possessor is the noun modified (attributive use).

# Possessor/locative phrase in finite clauses: FP dominates

- (ii) NP<sub>POSS</sub> can be internal possessor (*эһиһ-һү-в*; *-һү- PROPR* ‘alienable possessor’) in (8) or external possessor (with DAT in SpecFP in (15) outside the SC, and dominating VP in (14)). NP<sub>POSS</sub> is base-generated inside NP<sub>NEG.EX</sub>. NP<sub>LOC</sub> (16) is base-generated in SpecFP.

(15) *Ороһ-да*                      *миһдү*                      *ачиһ*                      [saga]  
reindeer-FOC                      I.DAT                      NEG.EX

“I don’t even have a reindeer”

(16) *аңи-р*    *о-ра-∅*                      *багдакә-л=tә...*    *уңаско-л-дү-вун*  
NEG.EX-PL become-NFUT-3PL wild.deer-PL-=FOC... area-PL-DAT-PS.1PL(EXCL)  
(Now) “...there are no more wild deer in our areas”                      [oral story]

# The structure of the finite *āчун* construction when NP<sub>NEG.EX</sub> is NOM (5), (8), (12a) vs. PART (12b)

- The NOM is assigned to NP<sub>NEG.EX</sub> by I/T, not by [Adj [*āчун*] +V]: there is no V at all.
- The PART is assigned by [Adj [*āчун*] +V], as in (14). Problem: the subject can raise to SpecIP/TP and get another Case (NOM) (see [Błaszczak 2010: 10]). Błaszczak's proposal: another head V\* is incorporated into I/T prior to syntactic derivation to block its [+NOM] feature.



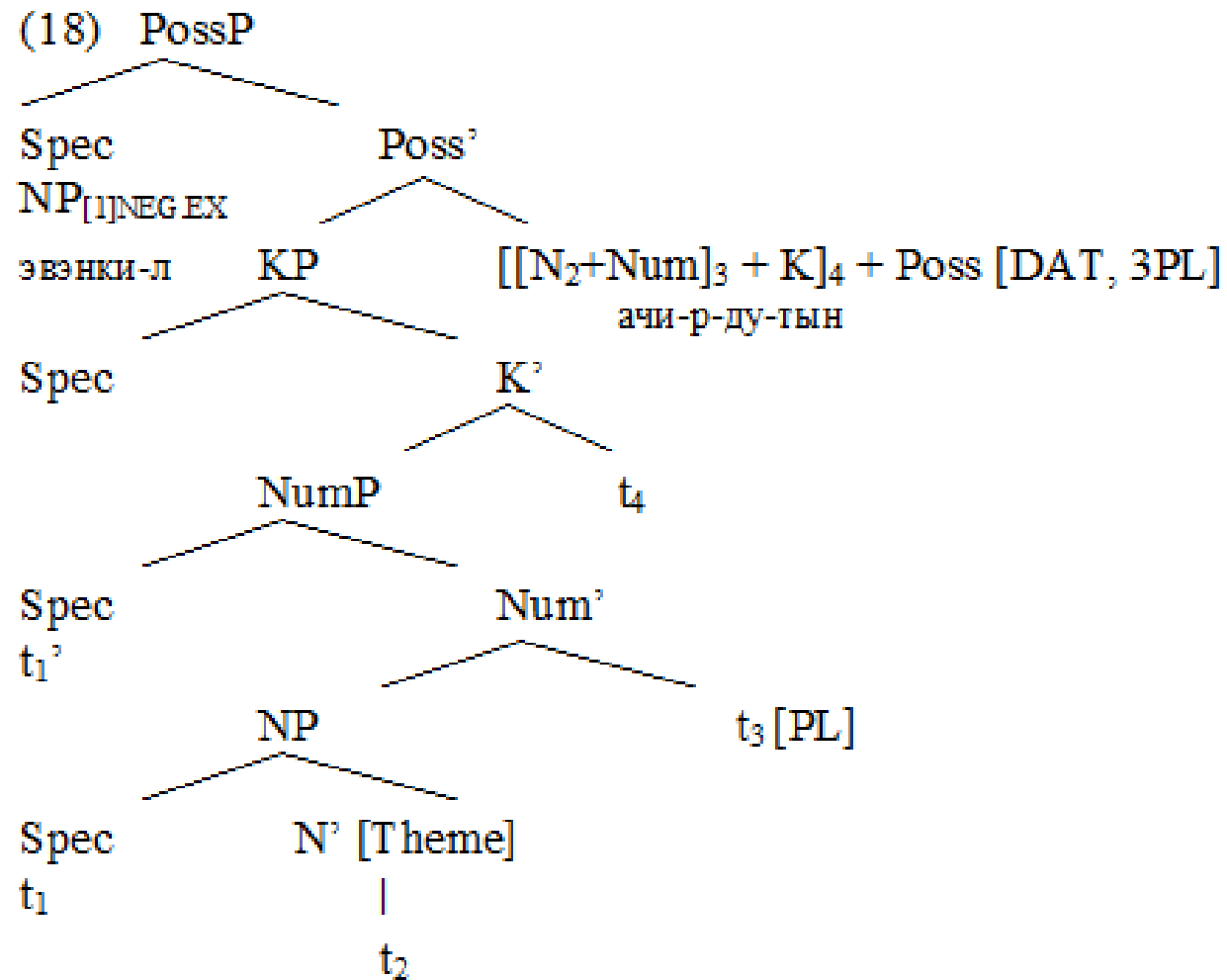
# The nominal *āчун*: possessive construction for adverbial phrases in written language

- In our XXI century data (cf. XX century for different results): PART on NP<sub>NEG.EX</sub> correlates with the lack of case /possessive marking of *āчун*: (7), (11a-b), (17):

(17) ...[кәүә-ja      а́син]...‘torment-PART      NEG.EX’      [oral story]  
“(No prey will you be able to catch) without torments”

- (11b), (17) – structure (14).
- (7), (11a) - *āчун* has nominal properties (number, case, possessive inflection; number and possessive agreement with NP<sub>NEG.EX</sub>); structure (18) (possessive construction).
- Problem: does NP<sub>NEG.EX</sub> in (18) have any Case?

Structure for adverbial *āчин* construction in written language: [Эвэнки-л ачи-р-ду-тын] in (11a)



# Conclusions

- Caritive constructions in oral Evenki consist of *āчун* that is an Adj and its theme ( $NP_{NEG.EX}$ , complement/unaccusative subject), they form the Small clause/ AdjP. They do not have any agreement projection, such as NumP, and no position for external Possessor/Location;
- The Adj status of *āчун* in its caritive use can be proved: *āчун* does not agree with  $NP_{NEG.EX}$ , but it in (10a-b) agrees with a higher NP (head noun in attributive use, subject of the clause in finite or predicative adjectival use);
- $NP_{NEG.EX}$  is assigned the lexical PART case by Adj (*āчун*) +V (null verb) since adjective by themselves are unable to assign case; VP dominates AdjP;
- In adverbial caritives, only in written texts (unlike the XX century Evenki) *āчун* is nominal (N): it forms a nominal possessive construction with  $NP_{NEG.EX}$ , being its head. *Ачун* has Num, Case, Poss markers; it agrees with  $NP_{NEG.EX}$  in number, but doesn't assign Case to it.

Thanks for the attention!