

**Michael Katzschmann**

**English Summary of the Remarks (08.02.2013) on**

**Beáta Wagner-Nagy**

*On the typology and negation in Ob-Ugric and Samoyedic languages*

(Suomalais-Ugrilaisen Seuran toimituksia ; 262) Helsinki 2011, XVII, 336 S.

Even with the restriction to the (North) Samoyedic area some items had to be left unmentioned by me. Some would have been noticed just at very intensive examination. And most of them will not be noticed by the average user anyway.

Summing up it has to be emphasized that WN's approach couldn't reach her desired aim. Her fixation on here often and obviously irrelevant secondary literature just gave her work an academic appearance but didn't do well to it. This is especially evident in her striking ambition to check universal theories for her considered languages on grounds of user-defined specialist literature but scarcely finding any criterium fitting unproblematically into them.

She seems to refer for the most part to a (fashionable) method of (Anglo-American) linguistic comparativistics which often disregards individual language finesses (cf. the prohibitive forms of Nganasan and Enets). The resulting conclusions are therefore rather arbitrary, especially since they seem to have been determined using a checklist based on a maximum commonality. So claimed vacancies are not cross checked on substituting linguistic features.

Those looking for universal parameters in the present state of the science might be not found them yet, though under the premises of genetic disposition of languages they should surely exist. But this might be speculation anyway. Currently forced, unreflected or assumed universals are more confusing than helpful.

So the theoretical discussion of copula and auxiliaries or converbs not picked up later (cf. Chap. I/3.4.) takes a lot of space. Nevertheless or therefore WN can not make up their mind what should be discussed and what doesn't. So she records lots of irrelevant lexemes and omitted relevant. Thus e.g. the inclusion of Ng. *ñudasa* into the HABEO area even didn't convince in her Chrestomathy and is demonstrably false.

The structure of her work doesn't prevent the confusion about discussed and by what reasons ever omitted features (lexemes) at all. Several chapters should have been combined or the structure should have been matched not only to ease the overview and understanding but also to avoid redundancies (cf. e.g. the use of Enets *lod-* (VERB) + INF, Ng. *lêδ-* (AUX) 'not be able'). One and the same lexemes and features can be found widespread over the entire opus like e.g. her remarks on the constituent negation so not resulting into an own chapter for this very special and important negation. All this makes the work hardly comfortable for understanding or quotation alike.

Furthermore her handling not only seems partly selective. Thus, a chapter on the caritive can be found only for Ng., although there are quite more convenient and interesting examples for Enets. E.g. there is an intercept about the Ng. verbal derivation *-tê-* 'being equipped with sth.' but the nominal equivalents (comitative, sociative) even for other languages as well have been turned off. Even if one wondered if this chapter is or should be actually part of the topic the same question could be posed for other parts of their investigation alike. There is not even a trace of Enets *iñā* + CN in Russ. translated as 'of course/koneqno' maybe not fitting into her academic based structure. Though it can't be found in any other of the reviewed languages, it is part of the negational system and should have been mentioned at least (cf. the in an own chapter treated Ng. unique verb *hontj* 'have').

Though the ultimate selection of the examined single lexemes and sentence types is understandable, the realization doesn't fulfil expectations. Therefore the inclusion of verbs with negating semantics - except the constructions basing on PS \**jañko* - can be justified noway. But there might be well divided opinions even or especially when talking about WN's unconventional, sometimes wilful and context neglecting interpretation of several documents.

Some times a look at the not least structurally related Turkish could possibly have lead not only to a more satisfying structure but even handling of the topic. In Turkish the verbal negation -mĭ- (between the verb stem and TM-VX) is principally used according to the Samoyed NEGAUX. (Real) nouns are negated by *değil* (cf. Ng. *nintuu*). Otherwise *yok* is equal to (or maybe even cognate with) PS \*jañku. Furthermore the nominal perception of infinitives in Turkish could have included into the objected chap. IV. Unfortunately, these options were apparently not considered by her quoted luminaries, even though it would have facilitated her investigation from the outset.

It has been shown that this topic regarding the studied languages was to voluminous for just one single author or at least 336 pages were insufficient. So claims and reality inevitably diverge. The work something scratching at the surface, but is not really impressive or containing always consistent results. Instead of to nowhere leading theoretical discussions more examples relativating some of the numerous (contextless) quoted uniques would have been useful to common users and experts alike. So false conclusions are preprogrammed just for non-experts of the considered Uralic languages.

But there would have been more potentials in the outlined topic not at least because of the fact, that the author was fellow or even presumably leading researcher from 2008 to 2010 at the Vienna linguistic project *Typology of Negation in Ob-Ugric and Samoyedic Languages* (2008-2011) financed by the FWF. Aside from the present work this project unfortunately resulted after three years only in a rudimental internet presentation but no proper publications (cf. <http://www.univie.ac.at/negation/index.html>). Regarding this Wagner-Nagy's opus represents an at least honorable step.