



The Hill Mari –*šaš*: speaker's control and its implications

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Our data

- Hill Mari (< Finno-Ugric < Uralic);
- Data gathered in the villages of Kuznetsovo and Mikryakovo (Gornomari district, Republic of Mari El) in different field trips organized by MSU and by HSE;
- The research project (Kuznetsovo): <http://hillmari-exp.tilda.ws/en/>



Descriptive grammars



Descriptive grammars

(Savatkova 2002):

-š^haš is one of the infinitive markers, which expresses ‘the necessity to perform an action in the future’ (“необходимость совершения действия в будущем”);

(Alhoniemi 1993) describes the meaning of -š^haš as ‘*futurisch-nezessiv*’.

Descriptive grammars' account

- In (Savatkova 2002) all examples of the *-šaš* infinitive are in root contexts:

(1) ke-šäš, kornê kužê vet
go-OPT road long PTCL


‘It is necessary to go, the road is long after all’ (Savatkova 2002).

- *-šaš* + irrealis *ê'ê* in a counterfactual optative context:

(2) li-šäš ê'ê kuku igä...
be-OPT RETR1 cockoo youngling

‘If only I could become a cockoo’s youngling!’

- So, the *-šaš* infinitive expresses some **modal meanings**.



Can we analyse the *-šas̃*
form as a mood?

Category of mood in Hill Mari

Paradigm of the verb *lâdaš* 'read'

Positive

Imperative mood

person	SG	PL
2	lât	lât-da

Jussive mood

person	SG	PL
3	lâd-âžê	lâd-âštê

Desiderative mood

person	SG	PL
1	lâd-ne-m	lâd-ne-nä
2	lâd-ne-t	lâd-ne-dä
3	lâd-ne-žë	lâd-ne-štë

Negative

person	SG	PL
2	it lât	i-dä lât

person	SG	PL
3	än-žë lât	än-žë-štë lâd-ep

person	SG	PL
1	ë-ne-m lât	ë-ne-nä lât
2	ë-ne-t lât	ë-ne-dä lât
3	ë-ne-žë lât	ë-ne-štë lât

Mood forms are marked for **person**. Negative forms are formed with the help of the **auxiliary ë-**

The paradigm of the –*šaš* form

Positive

-*šaš* form

	SG	PL
1	lâd-šaš	lâd-šaš
2	lâd-šaš	lâd-šaš
3	lâd-šaš	lâd-šaš

Negative

	SG	PL
1	lâd-šaš agêl	lâd-šaš agêl
2	lâd-šaš agêl	lâd-šaš agêl
3	lâd-šaš agêl	lâd-šaš agêl

agêl is used to negate nominal constituents (Kirillova 2017):

(3) mën' tidä-m vâčê-**šaš** agêl
I this-ACC wait-OPT NEG
'I guess I won't wait for him'

(4) tädä učit'el' agêl
this teacher NEG
'He is not a teacher.'

The -*šaš* form is not marked for **person**, and it is **not negated with the negative auxiliary ä-**

Person features of the –šāš form

- **No person marking** on the –šāš form
- Restricted expression of the subject of the verb: of all pronouns only **män'** (1SG) can possibly be expressed:

(5) män'/ *tän'/ *tädä/ *mä/ *tä/ *nänä ke-šāš
I *you *he *we *you_all *they go-OPT
'I guess I'll go.'

However, the –šāš form can refer to any person and number combination, e.g. 2SG:

(6) xot' bē irgodēm xala-š ke-n tol-šāš
at.least PTCL tomorrow city-ILL go-CVB come-OPT
{Why are you sitting at home?} 'You could at least take a ride to the city tomorrow!'

Person features of the –šaš form

- The compatibility of the –šaš form with different persons can be further shown by its **binding properties**.
- The reflexive pronoun in Hill Mari marks person with the help of possessive suffixes, e.g.: *äšk-äm-em-äm* ('myself') vs. *äšk-äm-et-äm* ('yourself').
- The –šaš form can bind reflexive pronouns marked for different persons:

(7) *äšk-äm-žä-m*

REFL-ACC-POSS.3SG.ACC

's/he'd better' dress up'

näräjä-šäš

dress_up-OPT

Imperative particles

- According to (Mordashova 2017), imperative and jussive forms adjoin special particles that may express politeness, urgency etc.
- No such particles with *-šaš*

Particle/ Mood	IMP	JUSS	<i>-šaš</i>
= <i>âma</i> / = <i>ämä</i> / = <i>emä</i>	OK	OK	*
= <i>aj</i>	OK	OK	*
= <i>jä</i>	OK	*	*
= <i>š</i>	*	OK	*

Embedded clauses

- A popular claim is that imperatives cannot be embedded (Palmer 1986, Han 1998), although there are counterexamples (Portner 2007).
- If we treat the clause with *-šaš* as an independent clause, it seems that the *-šaš* form **cannot be embedded** either:

(8) *ävä-m päl-ä män' to-kê-na tol-šaš
mother-POSS.1SG know-NPST.3SG I home-ILL2-POSS.1PL come-OPT
expected: 'Mom knows that I am intending to come home'.

Embedded clauses

- However, the –*šaš* form can be embedded under a **different complementation strategy**.
- Hill Mari uses both a non-finite (infinitives and nominalizations) and a finite strategy (borrowed complementizers *što*, *štoby*). Embedded infinitives and nominalizations are marked for case.
- The -*šaš* form can be embedded as an infinitive:

(9) paškudê män' ke-šäš-äm päl-en
neighbor I go-OPT-ACC know-PRET
'My neighbor knew that I was intending to leave'.



The –*šaš* form in Hill Mari grammar

- The -*šaš* form is not a mood in Hill Mari.
- Rather, it is a non-finite form used in independent clauses.



Semantics of *-šas̆*

Semantic of the –*šaš* form

- Depending on the predicate and the subject of the *šaš*-utterance, the meaning of -*šaš* is either **optative**, or **intentional**.

In (Goussev 2005) the semantics of optative and intention is formulated in the following way:

optative	intention
Speaker wants P	Speaker wants P
Speaker has no control over P	Speaker has control over P



Control condition

- Under what circumstances does the speaker have control over P?



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‘If you want a thing done well,
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- So, the combination of 1SG speaker and 1SG subject of the action is the key



Control condition

The utterance is interpreted as **intention** to perform a certain action, iff:

- the speaker is the subject of the *-šaš* form;
- the predicate is [+control];
- P is a possible state of affairs in the world.

Otherwise the utterance is interpreted as **optative**.

Control and interpretations

- [-control] predicate: optative

(10) jur cǎrnǎ-**șăș!**
rain stop-OPT
'If only the rain stopped!'

- Obstacles to P, P impossible:

(12) sarapan-âm ârgâž-**șaș**, ârg-en am mâștâ
dress-ACC sew-OPT sew-CVB NEG.NPST.1SG can
'It would be nice to sew a dress but I cannot sew'.

Control and interpretations

- Subject = 1SG, [+control], P possible:

→intention

(13) xal-aš ke-šäš

city-ILL go-OPT

'I guess I'll go to the city'

(14) män' tidä-m vâčê-šaš agêl

I this-ACC wait-OPT NEG

'I guess I won't wait for him'

Further development: intention → necessity

- There are some contexts where the intention to do something arises as a result of the recent developments.
- {A school alumnus tried to enter two universities (in the first one programming is taught, in the second one engineering is taught). The alumnus got accepted to the second one.}
- (15) jara inžen'er-eš täm'en'-šäš
 all.right engineer-LAT study-OPT
 'All right, I'll study engineering'

Further development: intention → necessity

- The –*šaš* form can be used in the reaction to a command:

(16) {Wash the dishes!}

jara, *mâš-šaš*

all_right wash-OPT

‘Fine, I’ll wash them’ {actually not fine}.

- This is not the only way to react to this command: the indicative *mâškam* also possible. Consultants feel that *mâššaš* in (16) shows that the speaker is unwilling to perform the action and only agrees to wash the dishes because they were asked to do so.

Further development: intention → necessity

This ‘reluctant answer’ use is restricted to 1SG:

(17) {A schoolboy has missed all the classes and he will most probably get an unsatisfactory grade. His mother has come to the school to talk to the teacher. The teacher is ready to give a C if the schoolboy hands in the home assignments.}

- T: cilä tonê-š päšä-vlä-m kandê-žê
all home-ATTR work-PL-ACC carry-JUSS
‘He must hand in all the home assignments’
- M: #jara kandê-šaš
all_right carry-OPT
intended: ‘All right, he will’

-šaṣ expressing necessity in questions

In interrogatives, the assessor of the modal judgement is shifted from the speaker to the addressee – see (Speas, Tenny 2003) on the interrogative shift. The –šaṣ form conveys necessity:

(18) tölät palšê-šaṣ?

you.DAT help-OPT

‘Should I help you?’

(19) ma-m äštä-šaṣ?

what-ACC do-OPT

‘What should I do?’

-šas̃ expressing necessity in questions

The use of -šas̃ in questions is restricted to 1SG:

- (19) ma-m äštä-šäs̃?
what-ACC do-OPT
'What should I do?'
'What should he do?'
'What should we do?'

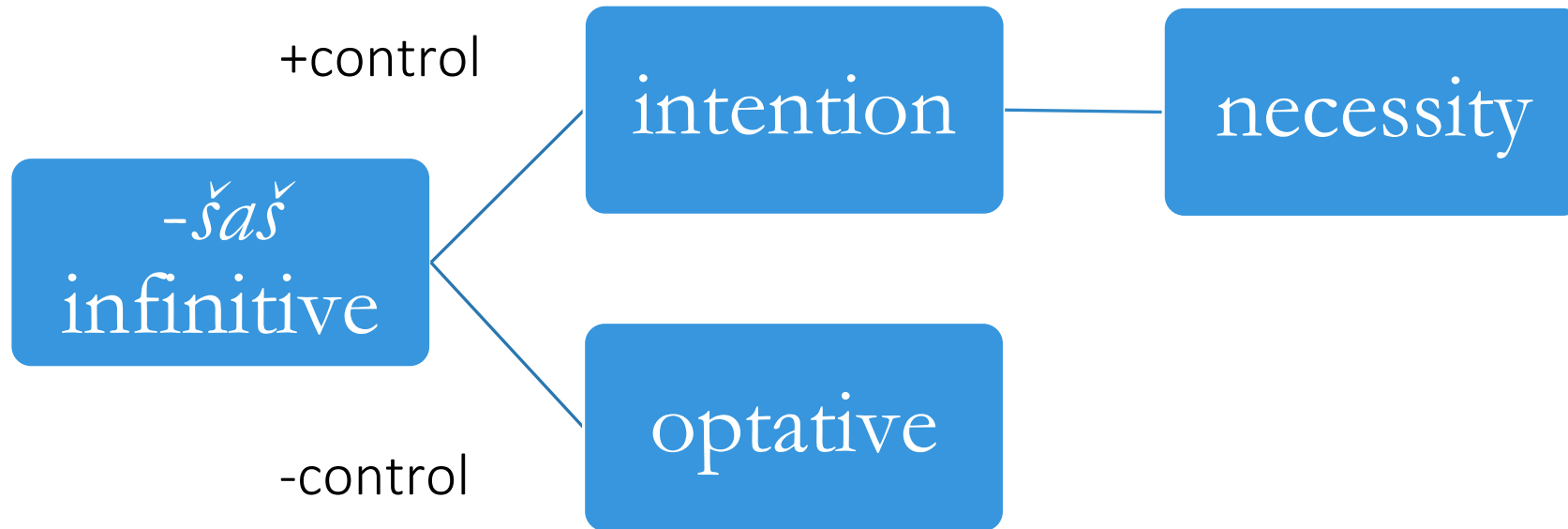
-*šas'* expressing necessity in questions

- Trying to bind a reflexive in questions:

(20a) kâce ajo-eš äšk-äm-em-äm nărăjä-šäs'
how holiday-LAT REFL-ACC-POSS.1SG-ACC dress.up-OPT
'How should I dress for the holiday?'

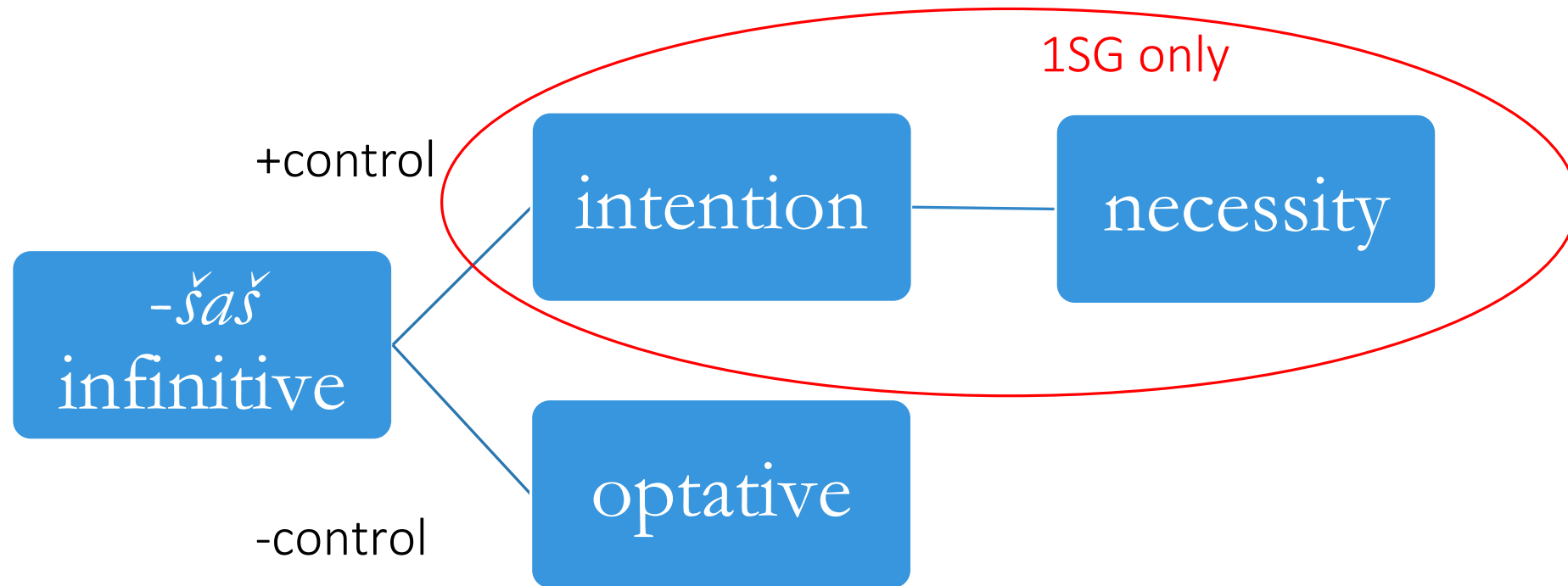
(20b) *kâce ajo-eš äšk-äm-žä-m nărăjä-šäs'
how holiday-LAT REFL-ACC-POSS.3SG-ACC dress.up-OPT
intended: 'How should he dress?'

The interpretation of the *–šas̆* form



So, the *–šas̆* infinitive is not specified for speaker's control, it is interpreted differently in different contexts

The interpretation of the *-šas̆* form



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Further development of the control-neutral *-šāš*

- There are several modal forms based on the *-šāš* form, which are specified for the speaker's control:
- *-šāš* + the irrealis markers *â'â* (be.AOR) or *âlân* (be.PRET) constitutes **optative**
- *šāš* + the destinative suffix *-lâk* constitutes **debitive** (in predicative position)

Optative forms based on *-šas̃*

The combination of *-šas̃* + the irrealis *âl'â/ âlân* yields real optative:

- (21) *kačk-ândal-šas̃* *âl'â* (#*mäläm* *lem-äm* *opt-en* *pu*)
eat-ATT-OPT be-AOR I.DAT soup-ACC *клас̃ть-CVB* give.IMP
'It would be nice to eat'

The combination of *-šas̃* + *âlân* yields the counterfactual optative (P impossible):

- (22) *kačk-ândal-šas̃* *âlân*
eat-ATT-OPT be-PRET
'If only I had eaten!'

Debitive form based on *-šas̃*

- (23) *tädä* *školâ-štâ* *temen'-šäs̃-lâk*
this school-IN study-OPT-DEST
'He must go to school.'
'I wish he went to school.'
'He must be a schoolboy.'

Conclusion

- The –šaš infinitive is not specified for speaker's control, it is interpreted differently in different contexts.
- There are contexts in which –šaš is interpreted as a marker of **intention** and as a marker of **necessity**.
- All these contexts are restricted to 1SG – prominence of the speaker in the speech act.
- Different interpretations of -šaš are then 'fixed', if helped by other grammatical markers.

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