

Timofey ARKHANGELSKIY (Hamburg)

## Etymology of the Udmurt enimitive *uk* and grammaticalization of discourse particles<sup>1</sup>

This paper deals with the etymology of the Udmurt enimitive marker *uk*. Contrary to the existing etymologies, which claim *uk* to be either a Chuvash or a Tatar borrowing, I claim that it was in fact grammaticalized from a tag question construction, which involves a negative verb and a question particle. This is supported by early written sources and dialectal data. Casting the net in a diachronically and geographically diverse variety of sources allows one to find traces of earlier grammaticalization stages that support my claim. Given that there are conceptually very similar enimitive constructions in the Samoyedic languages, negative interrogatives may prove to be an important grammaticalization source for the enimitive markers. Apart from *uk*, I examine several other cognate particles, which apparently were formed in a similar way.

### I. Introduction

Udmurt (Uralic > Permic) has a large assortment of discourse particles and elements that convey pragmatic meaning in at least some of their senses. While part of them go back at least to the Proto-Permic period and have cognates in the closely related Komi language, many have been borrowed from the neighboring Turkic languages: some from Chuvash (a member of the Oghuric branch of the Turkic family) and even more from Tatar (a member of the Kipchak branch of Turkic). This is a rather expected outcome of the long history of contacts with Chuvash and, later, Tatar (Agyagási 2012), given the ease with which discourse elements are usually borrowed (Matras 2010: 81).

One of the most common discourse particles is *uk*. Its main discourse role can be described as enimitive, in terms of Panov (2020). This means that it marks the proposition as a piece of information that is presumably uncontroversial for both the speaker and the addressee, and can therefore be used as an argument in the discussion (1).

(1) Udmurt (Udmurt duńńe, 09.11.2011)

*So-os bud-o=uk, so-in=ik tjrš-iškom.*

that-PL grow-PRS.3PL=ENIM that-INS=ID put.effort-PRS.1PL

{The interviewee says they not only care about the amount of food the kids get, but also try to cook something healthy and delicious. She goes on to explain with the following argument:} ‘They grow, don’t they, that’s why we put much effort into it.’

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The analysis of *uk* as an enimitive is corroborated by the fact that it is typically translated by European enimitives in the dictionaries, such as Russian *ved'*, German *ja* or Finnish *-han/-hän*. Zubova (2016: 448–449) provides a somewhat more detailed analysis of the subsenses of the Russian *ved'* available for *uk*.

At the level of information structure, *uk* has been described as a focus particle (Zubova 2016). Although it is most often adjacent to the focused predicate, it can also attach to unfocused predicates whose arguments or adjuncts are focused (2). This is one of the cross-linguistically widespread patterns for focus particles (König 2002: 16–20).

(2) Udmurt (Udmurt duñne, 25.10.2011)

*Udmurti-ijn 10 šurs-leś uno por kalijk ul-e=uk.*  
 Udmurtia-LOC 10 thousand-ABL many Mari people live-PRS.3SG=ENIM  
 {The interviewer asks what the reason was for the interviewee to create an  
 organization for the Mari people who live in Izhevsk. He starts responding,}  
 ‘[More than ten thousand]<sub>FOCUS</sub> Mari people live in Udmurtia, you know.’

*Uk* is encountered more often in less formal speech and in spoken language, and is about four times as frequent in dialogues as in monologues (Zubova 2019). In many Udmurt varieties, *uk* is actually one of the most frequent words in spoken conversations, e.g. it is the fifth most frequent word in the dialogues in the Beserman multimedia corpus.

My goal in this paper is to shed light on the diachronic developments that resulted in the appearance of Udmurt *uk* as we know it today. I look at the history of *uk* from two perspectives. From the Udmurt-internal perspective, my goal is to establish a reliable etymology for *uk* and clarify its connections to other items in Udmurt vocabulary. In doing so, I will critically review the existing theories (sometimes in excessive detail for a more typologically oriented reader). From the cross-linguistic perspective, I consider the history of *uk* as an example of a diachronic process that leads to the appearance of discourse particles, enimitives in particular. Following Onodera (2012), I am treating this process as an instance of grammaticalization, rather than pragmatization or mere lexicalization. Onodera (2012) argues that such an approach is justified under an “extended” view of grammaticalization. Unlike the original parameters of grammaticalization presented by Lehmann (2015: 129–188), this view allows for expansion, rather than narrowing, of the “structural scope” of the construction in question, i.e. “the structural size of the construction it helps to form” (Lehmann 2015: 152). However, we will see that the development of *uk* can be classified as grammaticalization even under a more conservative approach, since its scope decreased over time.

Most Udmurt discourse particles have reliable etymologies (see e.g. Maytinskaya 1982, Tarakanov 1982). However, *uk* is an exception to this trend. There are apparently no cognates of *uk* in Komi; at least, *uk* does not appear in the index of Udmurt cognates in the Komi etymological dictionary (Lytkin & Gulyaev 1970). Tarakanov

(1975: 185–186) briefly mentions the suffix *-ak*, presumably borrowed from Chuvash, as its origin, but he does not repeat that claim in his subsequent works on Turkic borrowings in Udmurt (Tarakanov 1982, Tarakanov 1993). Fedotov (1968: 99) makes the same claim, also providing no details as to the transition from *-ak* to *uk*. Csúcs (1990: 298) points out a problem with this etymology, additionally proposing that it be compared with the Tatar particle *uk*. Bartens (2000: 322–323) plainly states that the Udmurt *uk* is a direct Tatar borrowing, without providing any further evidence. None of those sources contain any attempt to prove the etymologies they offer.

As I will argue below, both proposed solutions are clearly incorrect, as there are significant mismatches between the phonological, syntactic, and semantic properties of *uk* and its proposed sources. Instead, I propose an etymology according to which *uk* was grammaticalized from native Udmurt material. I argue that the diachronic source of *uk* is the tag question construction, which consists of a negative verb *ug* and an interrogative clitic *=a*. There is unfortunately no diachronic data of sufficient depth where this process could have been captured. Nevertheless, a sufficient amount of indirect evidence can be found in dialectal and limited diachronic data. Specifically, I present several other reflexes of this tag question construction, which help me reconstruct the grammaticalization process.

Although Udmurt was standardized in the 1930s and has a written norm, as well as a common urban vernacular (Edygarova 2014), it has a number of dialects, which are quite alive today. Traditionally, they have been divided into Beserman, Northern, Central, and Southern supradialects, the latter further subdivided into Southern Proper and Southern Peripheral zones (see Kelmakov 1998 for an overview). Contacts with Tatar have been closest in the south of the Udmurt-speaking region, so that the level of Tatar influence on Udmurt increases from north to south. Although Beserman has recently been recognized as a separate language in Russia, it is actually rather close to, and easily mutually intelligible with, the Northern varieties, which is why comparing Beserman to Udmurt dialects still makes sense. Dialectal data proves to be of crucial importance in establishing the diachronic origins of *uk* and other discourse elements. I use published text collections, six corpora, and my own fieldwork materials as data sources. The latter were collected in 2021 (10 settlements in Udmurtia, Tatarstan, and Bashkortostan) and in 2022 (speakers of 13 local varieties in Tartu and Tallinn). The corpora I used include the following:<sup>2</sup>

- Corpus of Standard Udmurt (mostly contemporary online mass media);
- Corpus of Udmurt Social Media (Arkhangelskiy 2019);
- Udmurt National Corpus (literary works of the 20th century, mostly fiction);
- Corpus of Early Udmurt Newspapers (newspapers published in the 1920s and 1930s which are part of the Fenno-Ugrica collection; Hakkarainen 2014);
- Beserman Multimedia corpus (transcriptions);
- Corpus of Tatyshly Udmurt (transcriptions).

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2. The four Udmurt corpora developed by me or with my participation are accessible at <<http://udmurt.web-corpora.net>>. The Beserman corpus is accessible at <<http://multimedia-corpus.beserman.ru/search>>. The Udmurt National corpus is accessible at <<https://udmcorpus.udman.ru/home>>.

Next to each Udmurt example, I indicate its dialect/register and, if it was taken from a written source, its origin.

The paper is structured as follows. In Section 2, I explain in detail why the old proposals cannot possibly be correct. In Section 3, I propose a new etymology for *uk* that connects it with the negative verb. Section 4 concerns a number of other particles that are in some way connected to *uk*. This is followed by a conclusion.

## 2. Problems with the old etymologies

As explained earlier, there have been two proposals regarding the origin of Udmurt *uk*. The first one claims it to be an old Chuvash borrowing, the second, a relatively late Tatar one. I shall provide arguments against each of them separately first, and then outline a problem the two approaches have in common. My arguments concern implausible assumptions regarding diachronic phonology, as well as significant mismatches in syntax and semantics between *uk* and its tentative sources. In the latter two cases, I am mostly comparing properties of the corresponding particles in the modern languages, which could arguably diverge from the properties they had at the time of potential borrowing. Nevertheless, I believe the mismatches are too big to be explained away by post-borrowing development of the languages in question.

### 2.1. Chuvash origin

According to the Chuvash hypothesis, the Chuvash clitic *ax* was first borrowed into Udmurt as *ak* (Wichmann 1987: 4), which survived to this day in Udmurt as a derivational suffix, and *ak*, in turn, gave rise to *uk*.

To begin with, the idea that Udmurt *-ak* is indeed a borrowed Chuvash *ax* is not universally accepted (see e.g. Shibanov 2017: 94). Besides, those who accept this theory do not agree on the exact way it entered Udmurt. Tarakanov (1982: 48) believes it to be an indirect affix borrowing in terms of Seifart (2015). According to his hypothesis, *-ak* first entered into Udmurt as a part of a number of Chuvash loanwords borrowed together with the clitic *ax*, and later was reinterpreted as a separate suffix. Zakirova (2019: 30–31), on the other hand, argues that *-ak* must have been borrowed into Udmurt directly. Below, I will make the case for the proposal of Tarakanov (1982), adding some new arguments to the existing ones. Although the exact way in which *-ak* entered Udmurt may be tangential to the main plotline, it follows from my argument that *-ak* was never a clitic in Udmurt. This, in turn, makes it a poor candidate for the diachronic source of *uk*, as I will demonstrate.

The Chuvash clitic primarily plays the role of an emphatic identity marker. In one of its central senses, it focuses a constituent and implies that its referent coincides with some other referent mentioned earlier in the discourse (3). The Chuvash particle was inherited from the Old Turkic *ok* (4), apparently without any significant change in meaning (Zakirova 2019: 22–24).

## (3) Chuvash (Zakirova 2019: 6)

*Maša paxča-ra ešl-et', ača-sem-pe=te mašax lar-at'.*  
 M. garden-LOC work-NPST.3SG child-PL-INS=ADD M:ID sit-NPST.3SG  
 'Masha works in the garden, and she is also the one who does the babysitting.'

## (4) Old Turkic (Erdal 2004: 342, via Zakirova 2019: 51)

*maytri bodisavt ol=ok oron-ta olor-up ...*  
 Maitreya Bodhisattva that=ID place-LOC sit-CVB  
 'Bodhisattva Maitreya sat in the same place...'

In present-day Chuvash, this clitic has two harmonic variants: back (*ax*) and front (*ex*). Apparently, it was the latter form that was borrowed into Udmurt as *ik* (Wichmann 1903: 37). Unlike in the case of *-ak*, this borrowing is pretty uncontroversial, even if it is not entirely clear why Chuvash *e* corresponds to present-day Udmurt *i* here. Semantically, *ik* is an extremely close match. The example (5) illustrates one of the central contexts for Udmurt *ik*, the same one as in (3).

## (5) Udmurt (Standard; Zakirova 2019: 45)

*Bakča-ĵn Maša uža, nĵlpi-os-ĵn=no Maša=ik puk-e.*  
 garden-LOC M. work:PRS.3SG child-PL-INS=ADD M.=ID sit-PRS.3SG  
 'Masha works in the garden, and she is also the one who does the babysitting.'

As demonstrated by Zakirova (2019), the Old Turkic emphatic identity particle *ok* was retained in multiple contemporary Turkic languages and it was borrowed into two Uralic languages of the Volga-Kama area, Udmurt and Mari. Although there are some differences between the varieties, all contemporary descendants of *ok* in the Volga-Kama area, including the Udmurt *ik*, are actually remarkably similar in their semantics and syntactic properties. *Ak* is a completely different story, however. It is a derivational suffix of moderate productivity that attaches mainly, albeit not exclusively, to ideophones. That *-ak* is indeed a suffix, rather than a clitic, can be concluded based on its limited distribution and its low semantic compositionality. Munkácsi (1896: 1–2) lists 46 derivatives that contain *ak*, Wichmann (1987: 4) lists 45 (the two lists are mostly overlapping). A more comprehensive contemporary reverse dictionary of the Udmurt language (Nasibullin & Dudorov 1992: 44–46) has many more, probably between one and two hundred. Still, as the data of the Beserman dictionary shows, the suffix is far from being universally productive. While it attaches to some adverbs (6) and numerous ideophones (7), there are many words of those classes which are incompatible with *-ak* (8–9).

## (6) Beserman

*Ta kor bĵdesak ŗiřm-em=ni.*  
 this log completely rot-PST.EVID=already  
 'This log is completely rotten.'

## (7) Beserman

*Šâres-ez*            *zîrak*            *berečċk-e*            *pałlan*    *pala.*  
 road-3SG.POSS    abruptly.turn    turn-PRS.3SG    left            side:ILL  
 ‘The road abruptly turns to the left.’

## (8) Beserman

*So*    *tâbâŕ-a-m*            *guñ / \*guñak*            *šukk-i-z.*  
 that    back-ILL-1SG.POSS    so.that.one.cannot.breathe.for.some.time    hit-PST-3SG  
 ‘He punched me in the back so that I couldn’t breathe for some time.’

## (9) Beserman

*îap / \*îapak*    *kotm-i.*  
 soaked.through    become.wet-PST.1SG  
 ‘I got soaked through.’

The stress placement of *-ak* in Udmurt may look as one point of contention on the surface. Standard Udmurt words are stress-final in the vast majority of cases. All undisputed Udmurt enclitics, such as *=no* ‘and’ or *=ik* ‘emphatic identity marker’, are unstressed and do not affect the stress placement of their host word (Winkler 2011: 31).<sup>3</sup> However, according to the descriptive literature, e.g. Vakhrushev & Denisov (1992: 66), adverbs<sup>4</sup> ending in *-ak* allow for variable stress placement: [ʃogak] / [ʒo'gak] ‘quickly’; [šo'nerak] / [šo'ne'rak] ‘directly’. The acceptability of the initial stress sets these adverbs apart from most (although not all) Udmurt words. This can however hardly be interpreted as a remnant of a past stage in which *-ak* was a clitic. First, in certain varieties word-final stress is required or preferred in these items. For example, according to my data, adverbs and ideophones in *-ak* normally do not allow for word-initial stress in Beserman. Karpova (2013: 31) attests both variants in the Northern dialects, but notes that the word-final stress variant is the default option, while word-initial stress placement conveys “higher intensity”. Second, if *-ak* were a clitic here, the stress would fall on the penultimate syllable (\*[šo'nerak], cf. *šo'ner=no* [šo'něrno] ‘and directly’), rather than on the first one. My hypothesis is that the observed stress placement variability arose by analogy with other word-initial stress patterns available for ideophones. Optional initial stress is available for reduplicated ideophones: [č'alč'al] / [č'al'č'al] ‘very quietly’ (Vakhrushev & Denisov 1992: 65). A similar pattern is also available for ideophones with partial reduplication, at least in some varieties, e.g. Northern Udmurt [žukir:žakir] (Karpova 2013: 197) ‘creaking (door, teeth)’ or Beserman [č'ândâr:č'ândâr] ‘very thin’ (my own data).

3. The only possible exception is *=ges/=gem*, which is stressed. It is traditionally analyzed as a comparative suffix (Efremov & Selmeczy 2018), but it could better be treated as a clitic because it combines with virtually any host and is never followed by other morphemes, at least in the standard language (Cheremisinova 2022).

4. Judging by the examples, ideophones are subsumed under this category as well.

The suffix *-ak* affects the semantics of the item it attaches to in a not entirely compositional way, often changing or canceling some of its senses. In broad strokes, its semantic contribution can be reduced to describing something as either complete or abrupt (and, often, unexpected). If this was already part of the meaning of the underived word (as in (6), where *bâdes* already means ‘completely’), *-ak* widens that meaning along a contextual dimension, in terms of Kadmon & Landman (1993: 359–362). The difference between *bâdes* ‘completely’ and *bâdesak* ‘completely’ is thus that the latter does not tolerate exceptions that could be considered “minor” in the given context, which *bâdes* alone would tolerate. There are also ideophones that, judging by their semantics, clearly contain *-ak*, but do not exist without it (at least in contemporary language), e.g. standard Udmurt *kopak* ‘completely; exactly’.

Semantically, *-ak* resembles a certain, very narrow, subset of uses that Zakirova (2019) lists for Chuvash *ax/ex* and its cognates, namely modification of universal quantifiers such as ‘always’ (10) and scalar emphatic uses with adverbials (11). In both cases, the primary function of *=ak* is, or was at some point, semantic widening.

(10) Chuvash (Zakirova 2019: 56)

*εak arcin atean-a jalan=ax muxt-atεε.*  
 this man child-ACC always=ID praise-NPST.3PL  
 ‘This boy is always praised.’

(11) Chuvash (Zakirova 2019: 57)

*Unə-n pürte-ə skol sumente=ex lar-at’.*  
 s/he-GEN house-3.POSS school near=ID sit-NPST.3SG  
 ‘His/her house is right near the school.’

However, *-ak* does not reproduce even this narrow sense in Udmurt completely; in contexts with spatial PostPs like the one in (11), it exclusively uses *ik* and not *-ak* (12).

(12) Udmurt (Standard; original example taken from Idnakar 24.04.2015)

*Milam korka-mj śik dor-ĵn=ik / \*dor-ĵn-ak.*  
 we.EXCL:GEN house-1PL.POSS forest near-LOC=ID near-LOC-*ak*  
 ‘Our house is right near the forest.’

Let us summarize the evidence presented above. There is a Chuvash clitic *ax* (later *ax/ex*) with a broad range of meanings, the central one being emphatic identity. There is an Udmurt clitic *ik*, which has approximately the same range of meanings and, just like Chuvash *ax/ex*, can compositionally combine with a wide variety of hosts. There is also an Udmurt element *-ak*, which, unlike the first two, is a suffix and is lexically restricted. It corresponds to a narrow, and rather peripheral, subset of meanings of the Chuvash *ax*, and the combinations with its participation are not exactly compositional. If *-ak* is indeed a Chuvash borrowing, it must have been borrowed indirectly.

Otherwise, it would be hard to explain why it underwent such dramatic changes after borrowing while *ik* (as well as other Volga-Kama relatives of that particle) did not.

Fedotov (1968: 99, 104, 166) provides examples of several instances of Chuvash loanwords that either contain *ax/ex* or were borrowed in both forms, with and without the clitic (13).

(13)

Chuvash *šâpax* ~ Udmurt *čapak* ‘exactly (of quantity)’

Chuvash *šâp/šâpax* ~ Udmurt *šip/šipak* ‘quiet, quietly’

Chuvash *lâpax* ~ Udmurt *lapak* ‘become quiet’ (part of constructions with a light verb)<sup>5</sup>

Chuvash *vešex* ~ Northern Udmurt *vočak* ‘all’

Chuvash *vučax/vušax/vošax* ~ Northern Udmurt *vočak* ‘all’

Taking into account the regular sound correspondences between modern Chuvash words and their borrowed variants in Udmurt, Fedotov’s Udmurt correspondence for *vešex* ‘all’ should apparently be corrected to *vičak*, which is another Northern Udmurt word for ‘all’. Apart from that, the correspondences look quite reliable from the point of view of both their form and their semantics. The list provided by Fedotov is by no means exhaustive and only includes a handful of examples that illustrate the point. For example, *lâpax* was apparently borrowed into Udmurt in another sense as well (14).

(14)

Chuvash *lâpax* ~ Udmurt *lapak* ‘exactly (identical)’

Although a rather short list like that does not provide a definitive argument in favor of the Chuvash origin of *-ak*, a brief look at the Chuvash ideophones that attach *ax/ex* makes that argument much stronger. In all of them, *ax/ex* is used in the “widening” senses illustrated in (10–11), and many actually mean ‘completely’. This is compatible with the semantics of such Udmurt words as *bidesak* ‘completely’, *čapak* ‘exactly’, *čilkak* ‘completely’, or *čutrak* ‘completely, strongly (disagree)’. There is however a large group of Chuvash ideophones that combine with verbs expressing different kinds of movement, but have the same semantic component ‘quickly, abruptly’ (15).

(15) Chuvash

*jilt/jildax* ‘abruptly (get up)’

*vašt/vaštax* ‘quickly, abruptly (move)’

*pak/pagax* ‘of sound made when someone unexpectedly stumbles upon something’

*pjt/pjidx* ‘abruptly and completely (stop)’

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5. Another sense of *lapak*, ‘always; constantly’, is probably a distinct lexical item.



If some of them have been borrowed into Udmurt, that would explain why it picked up ‘abruptly’ or ‘unexpectedly’ as separate senses of *-ak*, alongside ‘completely’ and the general “widening” sense.

Zakirova (2019: 30–31) argues against indirect affix borrowing on the grounds that only a fraction of the words that contained *-ak* in the list by Wichmann (1987: 4) had reliable Chuvash etymologies. I have two objections to that argument. First, more comprehensive modern dictionaries show that the *-ak* derivative lists in the early dictionaries were far from complete, so there are probably other Chuvash borrowings among them. And second, since the borrowing took place many centuries ago, *-ak* had probably spread to a lot of native or Tatar-borrowed ideophones and adverbs by the late 19th century, so one should not necessarily expect a large amount of Chuvash loanwords among the words in the early lists.

We can conclude that *-ak* was indeed indirectly borrowed from Chuvash. However, the next step, turning *-ak* into *uk*, does not look realistic at all. First, no regular sound change that would transform *a* into *u* in this position has ever been attested in any Udmurt variety. The only case where a transformation of proto-Udmurt *\*a* into modern Udmurt *u*, through an intermediate labialized sound, has been hypothesized, concerns the first syllables of some 20 words. Moreover, the process is thought to have taken place before the 10th century (Lytkin 1964: 170–175) and could not have affected *-ak* anyway. Replacing *a* with *u* in such a context would thus be a sound change unique to this particle. While idiosyncratic sound changes occasionally happen to the most frequent items in the language – something Bybee (2010) calls a reducing effect of frequency – *-ak* is hardly frequent enough to qualify for it. Second, *uk* is a clitic: it is unstressed and can be separated from its host word by other clitics, as in (16). Since we established that *-ak* was a suffix in Udmurt right from the start, that would require debonding, in terms of Norde (2012), or turning a suffix back into a clitic. Cross-linguistically, however, degrammaticalization, including debonding, is a relatively rare phenomenon (Norde 2012: 487).

(16) Udmurt (Bagrash-Bigra, Central/Southern)

*Pojezd košk-i-z=djɪ=iŋi=uk.*

train leave-PST-3SG=probably=already=ENIM

‘The train has probably already left, hasn’t it?’

Third, *uk* has a very different distribution than *-ak*. It almost exclusively attaches to predicates and thus almost never co-occurs with adverbs and ideophones, which are the natural habitat for *-ak*. These non-overlapping sets of contexts are hardly reconcilable with the idea of a common origin. Finally, there is the mismatch in meaning: *-ak* has nothing in common with the enimitive meaning of *uk*.

The Chuvash etymology can thus be refuted with confidence.

## 2.2. Tatar origin

It turns out that the hypothesis of a Tatar origin for Udmurt *uk* has exactly the same semantic problems, since Tatar *uk/iik* is yet another descendant of the Old Turkic emphatic identity particle *ok*. While it is licensed in a reduced set of contexts compared to its cognates in Chuvash, Mari, and Udmurt, it semantically corresponds to the Udmurt *ik* whenever it is available (Zakirova 2019). Moreover, Tatar *uk/iik* does not attach to verbs, in stark contrast to the Udmurt *uk*.

Another strong argument against the Tatar etymology is the dialectal distribution of Udmurt *uk*. Out of all Udmurt varieties I worked with, the only two which apparently lack *uk* altogether are those spoken in the Tatyshly district of Bashkortostan<sup>6</sup> and the Bavly district of Tatarstan. Both belong to the Southern Peripheral supradialect, have ongoing contacts with Tatar, and have been strongly influenced by it. The former variety uses *eś*, which is a borrowed Tatar enimitive clitic *iś* (Maytinskaya 1982: 139), in the contexts where most other Udmurt dialects use *uk*. The latter variety may use Russian *ved'* (17–19). This is the exact opposite of a distribution that is normally observed with Tatar loanwords in Udmurt. If *uk* were a Tatar borrowing, we would expect it to be attested in these dialects, contrary to fact. Therefore, we conclude that the Tatar hypothesis can be definitely refuted as well.

### (17) Udmurt (Vavozh, Central)

<i>Mon</i>	<i>t̪iŋid</i>	<i>vera-j=uk=ini,</i>	<i>oźi</i>	<i>kar-iŋi</i>
I:NOM	you.SG:DAT	tell-PST.1SG=ENIM=already	so	do-INF
<i>ug</i>	<i>ɟara!</i>			
NEG.PRS.3	be.fine:CNG.SG			

‘I’ve already told you you cannot do that, haven’t I?’

### (18) Udmurt (Staryj Kyzyl-Yar, Tatyshly district, Southern Peripheral)

<i>Mon</i>	<i>t̪ânâd</i>	<i>vera-j=eś=ihi,</i>	<i>oźâ</i>	<i>kar-âŋâ</i>
I:NOM	you.SG:DAT	tell-PST.1SG=ENIM=already	so	do-INF
<i>uʔ</i>	<i>ʒ̣ara!</i>			
NEG.PRS.3	be.fine:CNG.SG			

‘I’ve already told you you cannot do that, haven’t I?’

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6. Baidoullina (2003: 113) mentions an enimitive *ugoj*, which is probably connected to *uk* (see Section 4). However, it is not attested in the corpus and did not show up in the translations of the Russian sentences I used to elicit enimitive particles. It therefore must be either very infrequent or limited to certain subdialects.

(19) Udmurt (Urustamak, Bavly district, Southern Peripheral)

*Mon=ved' tănâd vera-ĺĺa-j=ińi, oźâ kar-âńâ*  
 I:NOM=ENIM<sup>7</sup> you.SG:DAT tell-ITER-PST.1SG=already so do-INF  
*u<sup>2</sup> źara źuisa!*  
 NEG.PRS.3 be.fine:CNG.SG COMP  
 ‘I’ve already told you you cannot do that, haven’t I?’

It must be added that the Tatar emphatic identity particle *uk/úk* apparently has indeed infiltrated at least some of the Southern varieties, as can be seen from the example (20) (the only one of such kind in the Tatyshly corpus). However, when borrowed, it retains its syntax and semantics (cf. Tatar example 21), and is thus clearly distinct from the Udmurt enimitive *uk*. Note that, in (20), it is used simultaneously with its distant relative *ik*, which seems to have exactly the same meaning here.

(20) Udmurt (Staryj Kyzyl-Yar, Tatyshly district, Southern Peripheral)

*Kalmijar škola-jân=uk dâšet-sk-âku-m=ik, dor-e*  
 K. school-LOC=ID teach-DETR-CVB.SIM-1SG=ID near-ILL  
*ve<sup>2</sup>l-âsa, tuź=no kur-i-z u<sup>2</sup>mâs-eti das-eti*  
 walk-CVB very=ADD ask-PST-3SG nine-ORD ten-ORD  
*klas-e mân-âńâ.*  
 grade-ILL go-INF

{I first studied in the school in Kalmiyar, where I used to win skiing contests. Then I studied in the school in Biginey.} ‘Already when I was studying in the Kalmiyar school, [my trainer from Biginey] came to me and begged me to transfer [to the Biginey school] for the 9th and 10th grades.’

(21) Tatar (Standard; Tatar corpus Tugan Tel)

*Xäzer bala-nâ mäktäp-tä=ük eš-kä öjrat-ergä kiräk.*  
 now child-ACC school-LOC=ID work-DAT teach-INF is.needed  
 ‘Today you have to teach children to work already when they are in school.’

### 2.3. Common problem: the relationship between *uk* and *ug*

There is one additional argument against both etymologies, which will be crucial for the subsequent discussion. As noted by Csúcs (1990: 298), it is unclear how *uk* is related to the particle of apparently the same meaning represented by Munkácsi (1896: 83) as *ug*. Further analysis proves that Munkácsi’s *ug* is indeed the same particle as the contemporary standard Udmurt *uk*. All eight usage examples provided for *ug* (e.g. 22) are natural contexts for the standard contemporary *uk*. The Hungarian,

7. Two items of Russian origin are glossed as enimitives throughout the paper, *ved'* and *že*. Both are relatively recent borrowings, but they are not geographically restricted, unlike the Tatar *eš*. They mostly reproduce syntactic patterns of the donor language (e.g. here *ved'* is a second-position clitic) and are often used simultaneously with *uk*.

German, and Russian translation equivalents he provides for the headword and the examples also clearly indicate that *ug* is an enimitive particle.

(22) Udmurt (Staraya Yumya, Southern; Munkácsi 1896: 83)

*En sí, šu-em val=ug.*

PROH eat say-PST.EVID be:PST=ENIM

‘I told you, don’t eat, haven’t I?’ (original German translation: ‘Ich habe ja dir gesagt, du sollst nicht essen.’)

Wichmann (1987: 292), in a dictionary compiled at around the same time as Munkácsi’s, attests *ug* in all four dialectal areas he studied, but adds *uk* as its variant attested in the Northern (Glazov) area. The translations (Finnish *-han/-hän*, German *ja, wohl*) again indicate that we are dealing with the same particle here.

In the more modern dialectal data that I collected myself, as well as in the sources published in the second half of the 20th century, *uk* seems to be more widespread, but *ug* is also attested in multiple locations (23–25), playing exactly the same role as its voiceless counterpart.

(23) Udmurt (Vavozh, Central)

*Ma mįnam val=ug=in tatın pomidor-e,*

but I:GEN be:PST=ENIM=already here:LOC tomato-1SG.POSS

*kįtčį so pįr-i-z?*

where:ILL that enter-PST-3SG

‘Wait, but I already had a tomato here, where did it go?’

(24) Udmurt (Staraya Monya, Southern)

*Mar ton, ašme-en ambar-įn kįk-ez vań=ug=aj.*

what you.SG:NOM we.INCL-GEN barn-LOC two-3SG.POSS exist=ENIM=still

‘Come on, we still have two [sacks of pig feed] in the barn [, did you forget?].’

(25) Beserman

*Obed možno bęś-a-zê bašt-ânê=ug, asmes*

lunch is.possible following-ILL-3PL.POSS take-INF=ENIM we.INCL:NOM

*tiń bašt-iškom=uk.*

here take-PRS.1PL=ENIM

‘But you can bring your lunch [to work], we do that here, don’t we.’

In most of those examples, *ug* precedes a vowel or a voiced consonant. A preference for *ug* in certain positions seems to be individual and subject to interpersonal variation even within one variety. There are however two important details. First, there are speakers who consistently pronounce *ug* before voiced consonants, but do not replace word-final [k] with [g] in other words in the same position. Examples (26–28) were recorded from the same Beserman speaker.

## (26) Beserman

*Valantem vera-ško=ug, ben=a?*  
 incomprehensible speak-PRS.1SG=ENIM yes=Q  
 ‘You can’t understand what I’m saying, right?’

## (27) Beserman

*Ta kartošk-ed vekči=ug=ni.*  
 this potato-2SG.POSS thin=ENIM=already  
 ‘This potato of yours is [cut into pieces] small [enough] already.’

## (28) Beserman

*Tamak n̂ârom-i-z.*  
 tobacco get.wet-PST-3SG  
 ‘The tobacco got wet.’

Second, there are speakers who can optionally pronounce the particle with a voiced consonant even at the absolute end of a standalone sentence. Additionally, one of the Beserman speakers consistently spells the particle as *ug* (*ʏz* in Cyrillic) in any position (in spite of the standard Udmurt orthographic norm *uk*), thus believing it to be the underlying form.

The parallel existence of two semantically identical but phonetically different variants suggests that either *uk* developed from *ug* through final consonant devoicing, or *ug* developed from *uk* through final consonant voicing.

The latter option is rather improbable. First, this potential voicing does not seem to be a part of a regular phonological process, as the examples (26–28) suggest. Second, voicing of stem- or word-final voiceless consonants before suffixes or clitics that start with a vowel has only been attested in the varieties strongly influenced by Tatar and is thought to replicate the Tatar pattern (Tarakanov 1998: 53). The voiced variant *ug*, however, exists in various dialects, including those with no direct Tatar influence (23). Third, the final consonant in the phonologically similar emphatic identity clitic *ik* is never voiced; sentences like (29) feature the same form in all varieties surveyed. Munkácsi (1896) and Wichmann (1987) also only mention the unvoiced variant for *ik*.

## (29) Udmurt (Staraya Monya, Southern)

*Ta sumka-jez tatčj=ik=a pon-o-m?*  
 this bag-ACC here:ILL=ID=Q put-FUT-1SG.DELIB  
 ‘Shall I put this bag here as well?’

Optional or obligatory final devoicing, on the other hand, is widespread in Udmurt dialects (Tarakanov 1958: 224; Vakhrushev & Denisov 1992: 140), including Northern varieties and Beserman (according to my own data). Therefore, we may conclude that the original form of the enimitive particle is *ug*, which changed to *uk* because it

occurs most often in a position where it undergoes final devoicing. Comparing contemporary data with the older sources reveals that the devoiced variant spread across Udmurt dialects fairly recently, i.e. in the 20th century. The two dictionaries cited above, which are based on texts collected in the late 19th century, almost exclusively cite *ug*. In Udmurt-language newspapers published in the 1920s and 1930s, the spelling *uk* at the end of the sentence is about 2.4 times more frequent than *ug*.<sup>8</sup> Still, *ug* is also pretty frequent (30); besides, part of this disbalance is probably caused by the incipient spelling standardization, which prescribed the unvoiced consonant.

(30) Udmurt (Standard/Central; Stańja, 05.11.1935)

<i>Ben</i>	<i>kjžj</i>	<i>vunet-o-z,</i>	<i>piči</i>	<i>djrja-z</i>	<i>pudo</i>
but	how	forget-FUT-3SG	small	at.time-3SG.POSS	cattle
<i>intj-jn</i>	<i>ul-i-z=ug.</i>				
place-LOC	live-PST-3SG=ENIM				

{At 65, he still remembers the days of his childhood.} ‘How could he not remember, he was treated like an animal when he was a kid.’

Concluding this section, we can definitely refute both Turkic etymologies for *uk*. We have also established that the unvoiced consonant in *uk* is a recent innovation, and the original form of the particle in question is *ug*.

### 3. Enimitive as grammaticalized tag question

In this section, I am going to present evidence in favor of a theory according to which *uk* was grammaticalized from a tag question construction, which must have looked like *ug=a*. I will do so by examining the properties of two other particles that exist in the dialects: *uga* (Subsection 3.1) and *u<sup>2</sup>wa* (Subsection 3.2). By analyzing their properties, I claim that they are reflexes of the same process that led to the development of *uk*. I further support my claim by providing examples of the same grammaticalization in other languages (Subsection 3.3).

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8. The OCR quality in the corpus is rather low, so the results have to be taken with care. The search “*uk* at the end of the sentence” yielded 427 occurrences, and pretty much all of them were correct. The search “*ug* at the end of the sentence” returned 1023 hits. Manual verification of a random sample of 100 hits revealed that only about 17% actually represent the particle in question, while the rest mostly contained the negative verb *ug* and had incorrect sentence splitting due to OCR problems. Therefore, the expected number of real occurrences of the spelling *ug* is 174 (Wilson’s 90% confidence interval: [120, 246]).

### 3.1. Evidence from the particle *uga*

The key to determining the origin of *uk* is provided by another Udmurt discourse particle, *uga*. It is much less frequent in both the modern standard language (42 ipm in the Corpus of Standard Udmurt) and the older sources: only about 1 ipm in the newspapers of the 1920s and 1930s and no attestations in Munkácsi (1896). *Uga* is available only in certain dialects. It does not exist in Beserman and is not mentioned in the dictionary of the Middle Cheptsá dialect (Northern) by Karpova (2013). Still, the corpora of social media and early newspapers, as well as published dialectal texts, provide examples of *uga* in various dialects of the Central, Southern, and Southern Peripheral areas (31–32).

(31) Udmurt (Central, Nizhniy Tylovay; Kelmakov 1981: 151)

*Ažlo kađ evel=ni=uga ałi.*  
 earlier like NEG.EXIST=already=ENIM now  
 ‘Now, it’s not like back in the day anymore, is it?’

(32) Udmurt (Standard / Northern; Kommunaje šures 27.04.1936)

*Ežov-len kabińet-a-z partdokument ponna dırt-e=uga.*  
 E.-GEN office-ILL-3SG.POSS party.document for hurry-PRS.3SG=ENIM  
 {Zarif ran up the stairs without even noticing them.} ‘He was in a hurry to get a [Communist] Party document [which is important by definition] from Ezhov’s office.’

The translation of *uga* as Russian *že, ved’* in the dictionary (Kirillova 2008), as well as its attested usages in the corpora and other sources, suggest that it is an enimitive particle with the same meaning as *uk*. Compare the uses of *uga* in (31–32) to *uk* in (33–34).

(33) Udmurt (Standard; Udmurt duńe 30.08.2011)

*Vojna vakjt ałi evel=ni=uk.*  
 war time now NEG.EXIST=already=ENIM  
 {Do you not have enough bread or what?} ‘It’s not wartime now, is it?’

(34) Udmurt (Standard; Idnakar 05.06.2012)

*So-os pel-ın Vladımir=no, kwiń nıłpi-os-tı budet-ono=uk.*  
 that-PL among-LOC V.=ADD three child-PL-PL.ACC grow-DEB=ENIM  
 {Unemployment soared. Some of the men started working far away in months-long shifts.} ‘Vladimir was also among them; he had to provide for his three kids.’

In (31) and (33), *uga/uk* is used in a dialogue. The speaker expects that the proposition they make will be accepted as uncontroversial by the addressee. As such, it can be used as an argument that supports or explains another claim made in the preceding or in the following discourse. In (32) and (34), taken from written monologues, the narrator accepts the point of view of the subject and explains his actions by presenting the reader with a presumably uncontroversial argument that illustrates the motivation of the subject. Given that the two particles mean the same and look almost the same, they are probably related. Since the enimitive *uk* is incompatible with the only Udmurt enclitic that looks like *a*, namely the interrogative marker (Arkhangelskiy 2023: 115), it must have been *uga* that turned into *ug* after losing its final vowel rather than vice versa. This analysis is compatible with the fact that *ug* is the original form of the enimitive in Udmurt.

*Uga* in turn is most likely to have originated in a combination of a negative verb *ug* with the question clitic *a* – a point I will be proving in the remaining part of this section.

These two items combine compositionally in yes/no questions containing negation in all Udmurt dialects (35). In alternative questions where the alternatives are a predicate and its negation, the combination can appear without the main verb the second time (36).

(35) Udmurt (Standard; Matthew 5:46)

<i>Ožj=ik</i>	<i>vjt</i>	<i>bičá-ś-jos=no</i>	<i>ug=a</i>	<i>lešt-o?</i>
so=ID	tax	collect-PTCP.ACT-PL=ADD	NEG.PRS.3=Q	do-CNG.PRS.3PL

‘Do not even the tax collectors do the same?’

(36) Udmurt (Standard; Udmurt duńie 23.11.2011)

<i>Bigat-o=a,</i>	<i>ug=a,</i>	<i>žigar-zj</i>	<i>tjrm-e=a,</i>	<i>ug=a —</i>
can-PRS.3PL=Q	NEG.PRS.3=Q	force-3PL.POSS	suffice-PRS.3SG	NEG.PRS.3=Q

*jurtt-jnj*    *djrt-o.*  
 help-INF    hurry-PRS.3PL

‘Whether they can or not, whether they are strong enough or not, they hurry to help.’

It is clear that *uga* in examples (31–32) above cannot be synchronically taken as a compositional combination of *ug* and *a*. The latter is normally part of one of the two constructions represented in (35–36), neither of which is present in (31) or (32). Besides, it can only introduce a negative alternative to a non-negated predicate, which is not the case in (31). One could theoretically propose an analysis that would treat *uga* as a tag referring to a proposition, like in an English cleft tag “Mark wasn’t arrested that MONDAY, was it [that MONDAY that Mark was arrested]?” (Sailor 2009: 38).<sup>9</sup> However, Udmurt would require the negative auxiliary *evəl* in that case, which is

9. I thank the anonymous reviewer for bringing up this possibility.



historically a combination of a negative verb and an existential verb. *Ug* as an auxiliary is only available for non-existential predicates and therefore could not be a part of such a construction.

Nevertheless, there are several observations that prove that *uga* indeed has the combination *ug=a* as its diachronic source.

### 3.2. Evidence from the particle *u<sup>2</sup>wa*

An important piece of the puzzle is provided by the Tatyshly Udmurt variety (Southern Peripheral), which has a particle *u<sup>2</sup>wa*. This word is analyzed as a combination of the negative *ug* and the interrogative *a* and translated into Russian as ‘*da ved*’ [‘isn’t it’] by Baidoullina (2003: 112). How trustworthy is this analysis?

From a purely synchronic point of view, *u<sup>2</sup>wa* cannot be analyzed as a compositional combination of *ug* and *a*, either. Apart from the arguments listed above for *uga*, there are several other phonological and morphological obstacles. The interrogative clitic may have a prothetic *w* if preceded by a vowel in this dialect (37), but normally it does not if preceded by a consonant (38). (The fact that *g* is replaced with a glottal stop in front of another consonant is in line with Tatyshly Udmurt phonology.) Another argument is its morphology. Udmurt negative verbs conjugate for tense, person, and (partially) number of the subject. *Ug* is a polysemous item and can stand for negative forms of PRS.1SG, PRS.3SG, PRS.3PL, and FUT.1SG. Still, a tag question would require another negative verb in other forms (39). The particle *u<sup>2</sup>wa*, however, can be used in sentences with any tense and any subject (40). Finally, according to a consultant cited by Baidoullina (2003: 156), there are three villages where the back vowels in the particle were replaced with front ones, turning it into *u<sup>2</sup>wä*.<sup>10</sup>

(37) Udmurt (Tatyshly district; Southern Peripheral)

*Kibi-des daruwa-d̂=wa=iñi?*  
bug-2PL.POSS.ACC poison-PST.2PL=Q=already  
‘Have you already poisoned the bugs?’

(38) Udmurt (Tatyshly district; Southern Peripheral)

*Kijon, d̂šet-o-d=a?*  
wolf teach-FUT-2SG=Q  
‘Wolf, will you teach [me]?’

(39) Udmurt (Standard; Udmurt duñe 10.04.2009)

*Kjžj tod-ijnj lu-e: ul-o-z=a ta kjl, uz=a?*  
how know-INF be-PRS.3SG live-FUT-3SG=Q this language NEG.FUT.3=Q  
‘How can you tell if this language will live or not?’

10. Some Southern Peripheral dialects have developed vowel harmony under the influence of Tatar; most Udmurt dialects do not have it.

(40) Udmurt (Tatyshly district; Southern Peripheral)

*Vera-j u<sup>2</sup>wa, uža-lo óžət äďämi.*  
 tell-PST.1SG didn't.I work-PRS.3PL few person  
 'I told [you] already, few people work there.'

Still, the analysis of *u<sup>2</sup>wa* as a former combination of *ug* and *a* looks viable. The prothetic *w* in the question particle appears in Beserman and in various Udmurt dialects, such as Kukmor (Southern Peripheral) and Glazov (Northern). According to Tarakanov (1998: 138), if *wa* attaches to a word that ends with a vowel, that vowel is sometimes elided in the latter two dialects, which leads to a *Cw* sequence such as the one we see in *u<sup>2</sup>wa*. Karpova (2005: 80) provides Middle Cheptsä (Northern) forms *todiškod=wa?* 'do you know?' and *bəgatod=wa?* 'will you be able?', where *wa* attaches directly to a consonant-ending host word. It is therefore quite probable that the distribution of *a* and *wa* at an earlier stage allowed for forming a combination *u<sup>2</sup>wa*, which later became frozen. The fact that it was *ug* and not any other negative verb that became part of a frozen tag question construction is not at all surprising, since *ug* is the most frequently occurring of them all (78 occurrences in the Tatyshly corpus, while all the other negative verbs combined count 51 occurrences). The intonation also corroborates this analysis: in some (although not all) occurrences, *u<sup>2</sup>wa* features a pitch rise on the first syllable and fall on the second, exactly like a combination of a negative verb and the interrogative clitic.

*U<sup>2</sup>wa* has a range of meanings that resembles those of an English reverse-polarity tag question (e.g. *isn't it?*), which itself most frequently looks like a combination of a negated auxiliary and an interrogative construction. An English sentence with a tag like that ceases to be a full-fledged question, as the tag "merely seeks acknowledgment that the anchor [= the clause it attaches to] is true" (Huddleston & Pullum 2002: 891–895) and is "similar to a rhetorical question in its communicative effect" (Quirk et al. 1985: 1478). Similarly, the first speaker in (41) holds the proposition as highly likely and seeks verification from her interlocutor. The fact that she is a bit surprised with the answer shows that she expected it to be positive. Nevertheless, *u<sup>2</sup>wa* does not mark the utterance as uncontroversial and the question here is more than just a formality. Apparently, *šü*, which literally means 'say', conveys a similar meaning (i.e. that the speaker expects the addressee to answer positively); it co-occurs with *u<sup>2</sup>wa* in 4 out of its 30 occurrences in the corpus.

(41) Udmurt (Tatyshly district; Southern Peripheral)

[F1] *Ässijos nü-o-zə=iñi=šü u<sup>2</sup>wa.*  
 self.3PL:NOM carry-FUT-3PL=already=say:IMP.2SG don't.they  
 'They will drive [him] themselves, right?'

[F2] *Apok, Jula-jos nü-iškom, šü-o.*  
 sister Y.-PL carry-PRS.1PL say-PRS.3PL  
 'His sister, Yulya and her husband say they'll drive.'

[F1] *A, Jula-jos=a=pe ni-iškom?*  
 oh Y.-PL=Q=REP carry-PRS.1PL  
 ‘Oh, so it’s Yulya and her husband who will drive?’

In (42), *uʷwa* is used to change the subject. Formally, it invites a response of the addressee to a proposition that she will likely support. However, she is expected to elaborate on the topic rather than simply explicitly confirm or deny it.

(42) Udmurt (Tatyshly district; Southern Peripheral)

[F1] *Mʷm, ožâ ožâ...*  
 yeah so so  
 {The two speakers were talking about cows.} ‘Right, that’s right...’

*Viktorija daltâ-mte tuiwe uʷwa.*  
 strawberry grow-NEG.EVID this.year did.it  
 ‘Strawberries didn’t grow this year, right?’

The reply to this question (43) contains another instance of *uʷwa*. Here, it is clearly not intended to elicit a response, as suggested by the presence of *meda* ‘I wonder’, which is incompatible with information-seeking questions. Instead, this is an example of “retrospective solidarity” with the interlocutor, i.e. responding to a previous utterance in a supportive way. According to Wichmann (2007: 353), both indicating a topic shift (42) and showing retrospective solidarity (43) are among the most frequent functions of English non-response-eliciting tag questions.

(43) Udmurt (Tatyshly district; Southern Peripheral)

[F2] *Kâmm-i-z, total... totalte=no kežât ôz lü,*  
 freeze-PST-3SG in.winter=ADD cold NEG.PST.3 be:CNG.SG  
*kü=bon kâmm-em=meda so, uʷwa.*  
 when=well freeze-PST.EVID=I.wonder that right  
 ‘They were frozen, but even the winter was mild, so I wonder when they managed to get frozen, right?’

There are other cases where *uʷwa* does not elicit any response. In (44), the sole purpose of the particle is maintaining the attention of the addressee at a moment when the topic of the conversation has slightly shifted. And in (45), it is actually the affirmative replies that contain *uʷwa*, which is apparently another instance of “retrospective solidarity”.

(44) Udmurt (Tatyshly district; Southern Peripheral)

*Íli so udmurt=ke so u'wa, i udmurt šäin*  
 or that Udmurt=if that right and Udmurt in.manner  
*vera-nê kule=ke, udmurt šäin vera-sa keít-iškod.*  
 tell-INF need=if Udmurt in.manner tell-CVB leave-PRS.2SG

‘Or, if s/he is Udmurt, right, and you want to say something in Udmurt, then you’ll say it in Udmurt.’

(45) Udmurt (Tatyshly district; Southern Peripheral)

[F1] *Tatân už jevâl.*  
 here:LOC work NEG.EXIST  
 ‘There are no jobs here.’

[F2] *Tatân už jevâl u'wa. Tiñi ožâ.*  
 here:LOC work NEG.EXIST right here so  
 ‘There are no jobs here, right. That’s it.’

[F1] *Už=no jevâl, uža-z=ke=no, ukšo-jez=no*  
 work=ADD NEG.EXIST work-PST.3SG=if=ADD money-3SG.POSS=ADD  
*jevâl.*  
 NEG.EXIST  
 ‘No jobs, and even if you find one, there’s no money.’

[F2] *Uža-zê=ke, ukšo-jez jevâl=šü u'wa, ožâ.*  
 work-PST.3PL=if money-3SG.POSS NEG.EXIST=say:IMP.2SG right so  
 ‘If they worked, there’s no money, right? True.’

So we see that the Tatyshly Udmurt *u'wa* can indeed be reliably analyzed as a former combination of the PRS.3SG negative auxiliary with an interrogative particle, which was used in the function of a tag question. On the other hand, this combination underwent initial stages of grammaticalization and turned into a frozen particle. Unlike the “real” interrogative particle, *u'wa* is mostly used for purposes other than information seeking. Its polysemy resembles that of the English tag questions (Wichmann 2007), which have the same internal structure. Some of its senses seem like a good precursor to developing an enimitive meaning. In examples like (41), the speaker deems the proposition marked with *u'wa* highly likely and expects that the addressee evaluates it similarly. There is only one small step from this to judging the proposition to be uncontroversial. However, Tatyshly Udmurt differs from most other varieties in that it borrowed a Tatar enimitive *eś* (18), which has roughly the same range of functions as the contemporary standard Udmurt *uk*. Actually, *u'wa* is well compatible with *eś*, co-occurring with it in 4 examples out of 30 in the corpus. Still, Tatyshly *u'wa* did not grammaticalize further into an enimitive marker. The presence of *eś* explains why: there was no need for a new enimitive because there was already an old one. This was

not the case in most other dialects, which is why *uga* could have developed enimitive semantics elsewhere.

Another aspect that is consistent with the Tatyshly *u<sup>2</sup>wa* being a less grammaticalized version of *uga/uk* is its position in the sentence. Udmurt *uk* can only attach to the predicate (either a finite verb or a non-verbal predicate if it does not have an auxiliary). For example, an attempt to move *uk* to the second position, characteristic of the borrowed Russian enimitive *ved* (cf. 19) or the Udmurt reportative clitic *pe*, in the Beserman sentence (46) obligatorily changes its interpretation to a bi-clausal one (47). It can only be separated from the predicate by other clitics. Only in rare cases and under some very specific circumstances can highly focused arguments or adjuncts attach *uk* (Alexey Kozlov, p.c.).

(46) Beserman

*So pars gid-e pâr-i-z=uk.*  
 that pig pigsty-ILL enter-PST-3SG=ENIM  
 ‘That pig entered the pigsty, didn’t it.’

(47) Beserman

*So pars=uk gid-e pâr-i-z.*  
 that pig=ENIM pigsty-ILL enter-PST-3SG  
 ‘That is a pig, isn’t it, [that’s why] it entered the pigsty.’

The particle *uga* generally follows the same pattern. In each instance of *uga* in the corpus of newspapers of the 1920s and 1930s, in eight randomly selected examples of *uga* in the collection of published dialectal texts by Kelmakov (1981), and in 49 out of 50 random examples from the Udmurt National Corpus (literary works), it occupies the immediately postverbal position, sometimes following one or several other postverbal clitics or preceding them in a clitic cluster. The position of Tatyshly Udmurt *u<sup>2</sup>wa* is, on the other hand, clause-final; there is only one example in the Tatyshly corpus where it is located elsewhere in the clause. This is probably normal for a tag question; e.g. it is the same position as the Beserman/Northern tag question *ben=ved* ‘yes=ENIM’ (with interrogative intonation; in some dialects contracted to *benéi*) tends to have, with 85 out of 94 occurrences in the Beserman multimedia corpus (48).

(48) Beserman

*Kâšpu-os, nâkres tože bud-o=uk so-os, ben=ved.*  
 birch-PL concave also grow-PRS.3PL=ENIM that-PL yes=ENIM  
 ‘Birch trees, they also can grow concave, can’t they?’

However, due to the fact that Udmurt is an SOV language and the predicate occurs at the end of the clause more often than not, the clause-final position of *u<sup>2</sup>wa* is at the same time immediately postverbal in 19 out of 30 examples in the Tatyshly corpus. (In the rest of the examples, the predicate is not clause-final.) This explains how the

position of *uga* and, consequently, *ug/uk*, could have been reinterpreted as postverbal in the course of its further grammaticalization and cliticization, bringing it in line with several other frequent Udmurt clitics.

### 3.3. Evidence from other languages

The proposed grammaticalization path from a combination of a negative construction and an interrogative marker into an enimitive is by no means unique to Udmurt. First, the aforementioned English tag questions have much in common with the Udmurt enimitive. Crucially, they suggest that the speaker accepts the proposition they modify, which is an important part of the enimitive semantics. As Quirk et al. (1985: 1478–1479) note, tags in certain informal registers of English imply that the proposition has to be considered self-evident by the addressee, even if the addressee cannot possibly be expected to know beforehand if it is true. Note that English tag questions capture the enimitive semantics in examples like (17–19) quite well. A process whereby a formerly variable tag was replaced with an invariable PRS.3SG form *isn't it* – much like the Udmurt *ug=a* – has been described for certain varieties of English as well (Achiri-Taboh 2015).

Even more importantly, a similar grammaticalization has been described for the Samoyedic languages. In both Forest and Tundra Enets, a grammaticalized combination of a negative verb with an optional interrogative marker and an agreement suffix from a certain “contrastive” set (49) turns the sentence into an emphatically positive one (Shluinsky 2020: 679–680; Shluinsky 2010). This pattern has such typically enimitive functions as reminding the addressee of a fact already known to them, marking propositions as belonging to the common ground, or marking propositions as self-evidently true (Shluinsky 2010: 287–288).

(49) Forest Enets (Shluinsky 2010: 288)

<i>kuna-xoɔ</i>	<i>utʃitelʲ-uf</i>	<i>i-si-duʔ</i>	<i>mɔsara-ʔ</i>
when-INDF	teacher-TRANS	NEG-Q-2SG.S.CONT	work-CNG

‘You worked as a teacher at some point, didn’t you.’

A similar construction exists in Nganasan (Gusev 2015). There, one of the meanings of a combination of an interrogative particle with the negative construction is marking the proposition as “a priori true, following from the context, etc.,” as in (50).

(50) Nganasan (Gusev 2015)

<i>tati</i>	<i>ni-bi-m</i>	<i>munə-ʔ</i>	<i>dʼaɖə-tə,</i>	<i>ni-bi-m</i>	<i>munə-ʔ.</i>
that	NEG-Q.PST-1SG.S	say-CNG	to-2SG	NEG-Q.PST-1SG.S	say-CNG

<i>ni-ŋəə-ðə</i>	<i>sili-gəlʼitʼə</i>	<i>ŋəðü-ʔ.</i>
NEG-IMP-3SG.O	who-EMPH	see-CNG

‘I’ve told you, nobody should see her, haven’t I!’

#### 4. Related particles

In this section, I will consider a network of particles that have some relation to *uk* or its predecessors.

There is a group of words that have an obvious connection to *uk*, namely *ugo*, *ugoj*, and *ugoś*. All three of them found their way into the dictionary of Munkácsi (1896: 83–84). The translations of *ugoj* and *ugoś*, which he attested from the Mamadysh district (the western part of the Southern Peripheral dialect area), as well the fact that he equates *ugoj* to the Tatar enimitive *iś*, clearly indicate that they play exactly the same role as *ug/uk*. The position of these particles in all five of his examples, four of which are taken from dialectal texts, is postverbal (and, at the same time, clause-final). All three of his examples for *ugo*, on the other hand, come from published religious texts. In all of them, it is translated as ‘because’ (*bo* or *jako* in Church Slavonic translations) and placed in the second position. In all likelihood, this indicates that *ugo* was used as an artificial calque for Church Slavonic *bo* ‘because’ (second-position clitic) and/or its Greek equivalent *gar* ‘because’. On the one hand, it was common practice in the 19th century to translate religious texts very close to the original. On the other hand, second-position placement is not typical for Udmurt conjunctions and particles. The only items that are often placed in the second position in Udmurt are the reportative clitic *pe* and, in dialects where it exists, a self-reportative clitic (see Teptiuk 2019). But even for them, second position is interpreted as “attaching at the right edge (i.e. the head) of the first NP” if the clause starts with a NP. The “natural” second-position clitics do not break the NPs the way *ugo* does in (51).

(51) Udmurt (Munkácsi 1896: 83; Luke 2:30)

<i>mĭnam</i>	<i>ugo</i>	<i>śiĭm-j</i>	<i>adž'-i-z</i>	<i>tĭnĭštĭd</i>	<i>mozmĭt-em-de</i>
I.GEN	for	eye-1SG.POSS	see-PST-3SG	you.SG:ABL	save-NMLZ-P.2SG.ACC
‘for my eyes have seen your salvation...’					

In the modern standard language, only *ugo* and *ugoś* are prescribed as acceptable, *ugoj* being labeled as dialectal by Kirillova (2008). Both of them, especially *ugoś*, are very often used either sentence-initially or in the second position both in the contemporary press and in the modern Bible translation by Mikhail Atamanov (52–54). Kirillova (2008) provides the archaic Russian sentence-initial *ibo* ‘because’ as the first translation equivalent for *ugo*. All of this suggests that their usage in modern Standard Udmurt has been heavily influenced by Russian/Church Slavonic *bo* and *ibo*. As a result, the two Udmurt words copied the syntactic distribution of *bo* and *ibo* and at the same time became strongly associated with very formal register or religious texts. Cross-linguistically, it is common for translation-induced changes to first stabilize in ecclesiastic genres and then spread to the standard language (Khachatryan 2017).

(52) Udmurt (Standard; Udmurt duńé, 22.03.2013)

*Udmurt-se ugo kungož šer-ın*  
 Udmurt-3SG.POSS.ACC because border behind-LOC  
*uz vala-le.*  
 NEG.FUT.3 understand-CNG.PL

{We chose an international name for our new enterprise. If we send our milk to Europe one day, this will help us.} ‘They won’t understand Udmurt in other countries, you see.’

(53) Udmurt (Standard; Romans 13:1, modern translation by Mikhail Atamanov)

*Ugo koıkud-iz vlaš́ Inmar dor-ıš pot-e.*  
 because every-3SG.POSS power God at-EL come.out-PRS.3SG  
 ‘For there is no authority except from God.’

(54) Udmurt (Standard; Udmurt duńé, 13.10.2010)

*Ugoś sıče vakıt-e ližėčırn-jos čem.dırja labž-emın lu-o.*  
 because such time-ILL clavicle-PL often weaken-RES be-PRS.3PL  
 {Before you start doing any exercise after getting well, you should consult a doctor.} ‘Because the clavicles are often weakened in those periods.’

The fact that these particles (in their less conjunction-like and more enitive-like uses) are seen as synonyms with *uga*, e.g. by Kirillova (2008), may have led to the same patterns gradually becoming available for *uga* as well. For example, in the social media corpus *uga* is placed mostly post-verbally (78 out of 93 sentences), but also in the second position (12 examples), or elsewhere in the clause (3 examples). Out of the 12 second-position examples, however, half come from verse, and the other half clearly instantiate formal register, unlike most of the sentences where it occurred post-verbally.

The fact that *ugo*, *ugoj*, and *ugoś* were connected to *ug/uk* was clear for Munkácsi (1896) and Tarakanov (1975: 185–186). Those authors trace them to combinations of particles *o*, *oj*, and *oś* with *ug* (Munkácsi) or *uk* (Tarakanov).

*O* and *oś* are clitics that function as question particles of another kind than *a* (Munkácsi 1896: 59, 68). They attach to question words to produce what Panov (2020) calls a “wh-question with expected content”. In such sentences, the question is thought by the speaker to follow from the context and be expected by the addressee (55–57).

(55) Udmurt (Bagrash-Bigra, Central/Southern)

*Kıtin=o Peťa?*  
 where:LOC=Q P.

{We have been waiting for Petya for quite some time.} ‘Where is Petya?’



(56) Udmurt (Gozhnya, Southern)

*M̄nam=že val odig pomidor-e, k̄it̄c̄i=o so*  
 I:GEN=ENIM be:PST one tomato-1SG.POSS where:ILL=Q that

*medak lu-i-z?*

I.wonder be-PST-3SG

{The interlocutor hands the speaker a tomato for the salad.} ‘Wait, but I already had a tomato, where did it go?’

(57) Udmurt (Staraya Yumya, Southern; Munkácsi 1896: 68)

*Kin-e=oś burj-o-d=no?*

who-ACC=Q choose-FUT-2SG=ADD

‘So who are you going to choose then?’

*O* exists in many but not all dialects of modern Udmurt, as well as in the standard language. *Oś* and *oj* are considered dialectal or informal. For example, all 4 occurrences of *oś* in the Corpus of Standard Udmurt (mass media) occur inside direct speech, and there are no occurrences of it in the social media corpus. There are a handful of occurrences in the early newspaper corpus (58), but there as well, they occur either in direct speech or in very vivid and sarcastic texts.

(58) Udmurt (Standard; Vj̄l gurt, 04.08.1928)

*Ma k̄ž̄j̄=oś so j̄j̄r kur-em lu-o-z?*

but how=Q that head ask-PST.EVID be-FUT-3SG

{A district official asked a farmer to bring him the head of his dead cow as proof of death to receive an insurance certificate.} ‘But how is it that he is asking for a head?!’

*Oś* is thought by Tarakanov (1975: 186) to be the result of devoicing of *oź* ‘so; that way’, a connection also obvious for a native speaker whom I asked. *Oź* in turn is a variant of standard *oźj*. Along with other truncated deictic elements (such as *taź* ‘so; this way’ < *tažj*, *tiñ* ‘here’ < *tiñi*), it is characteristic of Northern (Karpova 1995: 199), Beserman, and some other dialects, as well as of informal speech. The fact that *oś* as a question particle is spelled with a voiceless consonant (*ocb* in Cyrillic), while etymologically voiced word-final consonants in words like *oź* ‘so; that way’ are not, demonstrates that the two are treated as different lexical entries, at least by some authors. Still, a synchronically transparent connection to an element perceived as substandard is probably one of the reasons why *oś* did not make it into the standard language.

The diachronic source of *oj* (which apparently has a very restricted dialectal distribution) is less evident. It may have originated from *oś* or, rather, from its source, *oźj*. Phonologically, that would make sense, because replacement of intervocalic consonants with *j* has been attested across Udmurt dialects (Kelmakov 1998: 110). Examples include *čukaže* ‘tomorrow’ > *šukaje* (Tatyshly, Southern Peripheral), *ali* ‘yet/still’ > *aji*, *aĺ* > *aj* (multiple dialects, e.g. in the Central area), or *odig* ‘one’ > *ojig*

(Beserman). Nevertheless, further research is needed to determine if that was indeed the case.

The etymology of *o* is unclear; it might have originated from *oj* or *oś*.

Given the parallelism in form and meaning between *uga*, *ugo*, *ugoj*, and *ugoś*, it seems safe to assume that the latter three are also historically combinations of the negative verb *ug* with the respective question particles. This presumption is supported by the claim of Baidoullina (2003: 113) that *ugoj* plays the role of enimitive particle in Tatyshly Udmurt: apparently, it went through the same grammaticalization path there as *uga* did in other dialects. Also, the Tatyshly *ugoj* may well be the source of the enimitive particle *goj* (59), which has been attested in nearby Kanly and further to the East, in Yuva (Nasibullin 1981).

(59) Udmurt (Yuva, Southern Peripheral; Nasibullin 1981: 175)

*Ul-em pot-e, žugit nal čarak žal=goj.*  
 live-NMLZ come.out-PRS.3SG bright day very pity=ENIM  
 ‘I want to live, it’s a shame [to part with] the light of day, isn’t it.’

One detail that is not clear in this scenario is why the three question clitics, which presumably attach only to question words in the modern language, combined with the negative verb in the first place. However, there are three examples in the social media corpus and one example in the Corpus of Standard Udmurt where *o* combines with the negative verbal complex (60). It remains for further research to find out when and why this happens, and what the distribution of those particles might have looked like in the past.<sup>11</sup>

(60) Udmurt (Standard informal; Social media corpus)

*Сырбезшур [Sırježšur] ug=o gožt-išk-j?*  
 S. NEG.PRS.3=Q write-DETR-CNG.SG  
 ‘Wait, isn’t it (the name of the village) spelled as Сырбезшур (i.e. with a ‘soft sign’ in the middle)?’

## 6. Conclusion

As I have argued in this paper, the two existing etymologies for the Udmurt enimitive *uk*, according to which it is a borrowing from either Chuvash or Tatar, are incorrect. Diachronic and dialectal data suggests that it was in fact grammaticalized from a reverse-polarity tag question construction, which involves a frozen PRS.3SG form of the negative verb and a question particle. This development is paralleled by enimitive

11. It is theoretically possible that these examples are mere typos. However, there are multiple examples like that, and one of them is in the “standard” corpus, where there are much fewer typos than in the social media one. Therefore, it is likely that at least some of these examples are real.

patterns in the Samoyedic languages, which are also based on a combination of the negative and interrogative constructions. English reverse-polarity tag questions, being structurally similar, also exhibit many of the properties of enimitives (e.g. marking the proposition as something that should be taken for granted), especially in some varieties. All of this constitutes an addition to the list of potential sources for the grammaticalization of enimitives provided by Panov (2020). Apart from that, I have discussed a number of other Udmurt particles connected to *uk* in some way, which apparently participated in similar processes.

A broader methodological takeaway from this discussion is that it is not enough to establish plausible phonological correspondences between discourse particles in contacting languages to prove that a particle in one of them was borrowed from the other. A borrowed particle in the recipient language must act like its source (in terms of its syntactic preferences) and have the same meaning. If it does not, there must be a plausible explanation as to what developments contributed to their diverging semantics or syntax. Discourse particles tend to be short, so there is a good chance that, for any given particle, there is a reasonably phonologically similar particle in a neighboring language that it actually has nothing in common with. If one does not take semantics and syntax into account as well, one risks obtaining wrong etymologies – which, as I have demonstrated, has been the case with the Udmurt particle *uk*.

## Abbreviations

The following abbreviations that are not included in the Leipzig glossing rules are used in the paper:

ACT	active (participle)	EVID	evidential past
ADD	additive particle	EXIST	existential verb
CNG	connegative converb	ID	particle of emphatic identity
CONT	contrastive	ILL	illative case
DEB	debitive mood	ITER	iterative derivation
DELIB	deliberative future form	ORD	ordinal
DETR	detransitive derivation	REP	reported speech marker
EMPH	emphatic particle	SIM	simultaneous (converb)
ENIM	enimitive particle	TRANS	translative case

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