

The discourse particle *no(h)* in non-initial position in Seto¹

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The discourse particle *no(h)* is common in Seto South Estonian and is widely attested also in the neighbouring Finnic languages (see Hennoste 2000, Keevallik 2016 for Estonian, Markus 2024 for Ingrian, Sorjonen & Vepsäläinen 2016 for Finnish, etc.) where it is thought to share a common Finnic ancestry (Keevallik 2016). The neighbouring languages Russian (Bolden 2016) and Latvian (see Tomingas 2022) feature a similar particle *nu*, which has also been borrowed to the minor Finnic languages, e.g., Livonian, Ingrian, and Seto, but not to Estonian and Finnish.

In the languages that feature NO, it is typically in the clause-initial or clause-internal position (Auer and Maschler 2016: 10), while other syntactic positions are less frequent. The focus of this talk is on the use of *no(h)* in Seto in the non-initial positions, i.e., 2nd, intermediate, and final position. Special attention will be given to 2nd position and clause-final uses of *no(h)*, since these two positions distinguish Seto not only from the contact language Russian² but from most of the Uralic languages – as a discourse particle, clause-final *no(h)* is found only in Seto, Estonian, and sporadically in Livonian, while 2nd position use is unique to only Seto (1).

- (1) *võta* *v-* *tütar* *eederit* (.) *võta* ***no*** *proovi*
take.IMP.2SG. t- daughter diethyl ether take.IMP.2SG. PAR try.IMP.2SG.
'have, daughter, some diethyl ether, have NO (and) try!'

In Seto, the NO-element appears mainly as *no* or *nob*, but one of the variants is also *noq* which is homonymous with the temporal adverb *noq* 'now'³. Seto also features *nu* as a Russian borrowing, at least in form, since by syntactic position, *nu* has a wider use in Seto than in Russian. The aim of this talk is thus to describe the distribution of *no*, *nob*, *nu*, and *noq* and their prosodic variants *noo*, *nuu*, *noob*, *nuub* in the non-initial syntactic positions, and to compare these findings with Estonian and Russian.

The data is from 39 recordings which are part of the Interdisciplinary Corpus of Seto (SetKo) and were made between 2010 and 2023, altogether 270000 words. Most of the data is from East Seto speakers who live in the Pechora district in Russia, i.e., those are speakers who live in a Russian-dominant environment, have a command of Russian themselves, and are less influenced by

¹ This research has been supported by the Estonian Research Council (PRG1290, Grammar of Discourse Particles in Uralic) and the Estonian Ministry of Education and Science (EKKD41, EKKD120, Interdisciplinary Corpus of Seto).

² Outside the Uralic family, clause-final use is found in Polish, Romani, Yiddish, and Hebrew (Auer and Maschler 2016: 30).

³ Auer and Maschler 2016 discusses the two distinct particles/elements *NU* and *NÄ* and their functions.

Estonian, while some recordings from North and South Seto (spoken on the Estonian side of Setomaa) are also included.

References

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SetKo = Interdistsiplinaarne seto korpus (Interdisciplinary Corpus of Seto); more information at: <https://setko.ut.ee/>; texts partially available at University of Tartu Corpus of Dialects (<https://murre.ut.ee/>)

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