

Western Mari conditionals and TAM clusters

Anastasia Gareyshina

Overview. In this presentation, my goal is to show that Western Mari counterfactuals of the Kuznetsovo dialect (< Mari < Uralic) show unusual Aspect and Tense properties within their verbal complexes. The relevant examples are drawn from own fieldwork data in the village of Kuznetsovo (Pëzäkñär), the republic of Mari El, in summer and fall of 2016. I demonstrate available strategies to put together a counterfactual and propose analysis much along the lines of (Iatridou 2000), which states that what is observed in counterfactuals cross-linguistically is rather fake Aspect than real. In doing so, I explore verbal clusters, TAM information they convey, and ways to compose them. I come to the conclusion that in Kuznetsovo Western Mari counterfactuals, a similar role is played by fake Tense that serves to make differences regarding Aspect. **Data.** Examples in (1)–(4) show ways in which counterfactuals can be composed. First, in example (1), there is a dedicated counterfactual verb form ‘älgecä’ (‘be-COND-PST1.3SG’), which is, however, perceived as frozen, in the absence of synthetic conditional verb forms. This form is invariable and occupies the final position in the sentence. Second, the aforementioned counterfactual verb form can be replaced with arguably interchangeable verb forms ‘äl’ä’/‘älän’ (‘be.NARR.3SG’/‘be.PST2.3SG’), obligatorily combined with the standard conditional conjunction ‘gän’(-ä) (‘if’) (cf. (2)). Other options for protasis, as listed in (Riese 1984), are largely unavailable, i.e. standard verb form in past or non-past tense alone lacks counterfactual conditional interpretation. Note that in their morphological make-up, Western Mari counterfactual conditions are void of any future tense. Third, apodosis has to take on the same two verb forms ‘äl’ä’/‘älän’, in addition to its verb, be it in past or non-past tense (examples (1)–(2) becoming immediately ungrammatical as counterfactuals in the absence of such marking in apodosis). Fourth, in (1), it can be observed that ‘äl’ä’ is less usual than ‘älän’, which can be attributed to differences in their root uses (cf. (Mordashova 2016)). Fifth, a parallelism in verb forms is strongly preferred, ‘äl’ä’ in protasis followed by ‘äl’ä’ in apodosis, the same symmetry holding for ‘älän’ (cf. (2)). Further, we show that present and past counterfactuals are due to combination of the tense feature on the lexical verb and the chosen ‘äl’ä’ / ‘älän’ verb form, only the combination of the past tense and ‘älän’ invariably resulting in interpreting a counterfactual as the past counterfactual (cf. example (3)). Examples in (4) show the contrast between a non-past form of a lexical verb and a past one, actually being the difference between an imperfective and a perfective aspect, respectively. **Analysis.** Based on usage of adverbials in counterfactuals and continuations as suggested in (Iatridou 2000), we show that protasis is truly future-oriented, and this is due to the counterfactual ‘auxiliaries’, i.e. ‘älgecä’/‘äl’ä’/‘älän’. And we analyze Western Mari conditionals as in (Iatridou 2000), that is, “the topic worlds [the ones we are talking about] exclude the actual world [the world of the speaker]” – only with modification so as to incorporate the intuition that non-past lexical verb morphology encodes imperfective, whereas its past morphology conveys perfective. I.e. in the case of Kuznetsovo Western Mari counterfactuals, it is not aspect that is fake, but it is tense that obscures aspectual meaning.

Examples.

(1)	män’	ves	xala-škê	vanž-än-äm	äl-gec-ä,	
	INOM	another	town-ILL	relocate-PST2-1SG	be-COND-PST1.3SG	
	u	täng-vlä-m		voj-en-äm	^{OK} älän/ ^{OK} äl’ä.	
	new	friend-PL-ACC		find-PST2-1SG	be.PST2.3SG/be.NARR.3SG	
						‘If I relocated to another town, I would find new friends.’
(2)	a. män’	ves	xala-škê	vanž-än-äm	äl’ä	*(gän’),
	INOM	another	town-ILL	relocate-PST2-1SG	be.NARR.3SG	if
	u	täng-vlä-m		voj-en-äm	^{OK} älän/ ^{OK} äl’ä.	
	new	friend-PL-ACC		find-PST2-1SG	be.PST2.3SG/be.NARR.3SG	
	b. män’	ves	xala-škê	vanž-än-äm	älän	*(gän’),
	INOM	another	town-ILL	relocate-PST2-1SG	be.PST2.3SG	if
	u	täng-vlä-m		voj-en-äm	^{OK} älän/ ^{OK} äl’ä.	
	new	friend-PL-ACC		find-PST2-1SG	be.PST2.3SG/be.NARR.3SG	

- Intended: ‘If I relocated to another town, I would find new friends.’
- (3) a. *mən’ ves xala-škê vanž-ən-äm ôl’ô
 INOM another town-ILL relocate-PST2-1SG be.NARR.3SG
 gən’, u täng-vlä-m voj-en-äm ôl’ô.
 if new friend-PL-ACC find-PST2-1SG be.NARR.3SG
- b. %mən’ ves xala-škê vanž-ən-äm ôl’ô
 INOM another town-ILL relocate-PST2-1SG be.NARR.3SG
 gən’, u täng-vlä-m voj-en-äm ôlôn.
 if new friend-PL-ACC find-PST2-1SG be.PST2.3SG
- c. %mən’ ves xala-škê vanž-ən-äm ôlôn
 INOM another town-ILL relocate-PST2-1SG be.PST2.3SG
 gən’, u täng-vlä-m voj-en-äm ôl’ô.
 if new friend-PL-ACC find-PST2-1SG be.NARR.3SG
- d. ^{OK}mən’ ves xala-škê vanž-ən-äm ôlôn
 INOM another town-ILL relocate-PST2-1SG be.PST2.3SG
 gən’, u täng-vlä-m voj-en-äm ôlôn.
 if new friend-PL-ACC find-PST2-1SG be.PST2.3SG
- Intended: ‘If I had relocated to another town, I would have found new friends.’
- (4) a. mən’ ekzämen-eš jämdel-ält-äm ôl-gec-ä,
 INOM exam-LAT prepare-REFL-NPST.1SG be-COND-PST1.3SG
 kn’igä läd-mê godäm a.m amal-ô ôlôn.
 book read-PRTCP.ACT while AUX.NEG.PRS.1SG sleep-CN be.PST2.3SG
 ‘If I **had been studying** for an exam, I would not have fallen asleep reading a book.’
- b. mən’ ekzämen-eš jažo-n jamdel-ält-en-äm
 INOM exam-LAT good-ADV prepare-REFL-PST2-1SG
 ôl-gec-ä, mən’ täm.d-âšô dokê pâr-aš
 be-COND-PST1.3SG INOM learn.CAUS-PRTCP.ACT to come.in-INF
 a.m lüd ôlôn.
 AUX.NEG.PRS.1SG fear-CN be.PST2.3SG
 ‘If I **had studied** for the exam well, I would not be afraid of coming to the teacher.’

References.

- Alhoniemi, A. 1993. *Grammatik der tscheremissischen (Mari) Sprache*, Hamburg: Helmut Buske Verlag.
- Bhatt, R. and R. Pancheva. 2006. Conditionals. In: Everaert, M. and H. van Riemsdijk (eds.). *The Blackwell Companion to Syntax, Vol. 1*. Blackwell: 638-687.
- Collinder, B. 1960. *Comparative Grammar of the Uralic Languages*. Stockholm: Almqvist & Wiksell.
- Iatridou, S. 1994. On the contribution of conditional *then*. In: *Natural Language Semantics*, Vol. 2, 171-200.
- Iatridou, S. 2000. The Grammatical Ingredients of Counterfactuality. In: *Linguistic Inquiry*, Vol. 31, No. 2, 231-270.
- Kratzer, A. 1986. Conditionals. In: Farley A.M., Farley P.T., and K.-E. McCullough. (eds.). *CLS (Chicago Linguistic Society) 22: Papers from the Parasession on Pragmatics and Grammatical Theory*. Chicago: University of Chicago, 1-15.
- Mordashova, D. 2016. *Evidentiality and analytic forms “ôl’ô”/“ôlôn” in Hill Mari*. Ms., Lomonosov Moscow State University.
- Savatkova, A.A. 2002. *Gornoe narečie marijskogo jazyka [The Hill dialect of the Mari language]*. *Biblioteca ceremissica, Vol. V*. Szombathely: Savariae.
- Riese, T. 1984. The Conditional Sentence in the Ugrian, Permian and Volgaic Languages. In: Rédei, K. (ed.). *Studia Uralica. Veröffentlichungen des Instituts für Finno-Ugristik der Universität Wien, Band 3*. Wien: Verband der wissenschaftlichen Gesellschaften Österreichs (VWGÖ).