

Past progressive and past habitual evidential forms in Udmurt

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In my presentation, I aim to study the aspectual role of Udmurt unwitnessed past tenses, paying special attention to the notion of progressivity and habituality in the past domain.

In Permic languages, evidential meanings have been grammaticalized. In Udmurt, e.g., there are two non-compound past tenses: one of them (henceforth PST1) is regarded as being “witnessed” (with no specification of the source of information and the way the reception of the event is realised) and the other one (henceforth PST2) as being “unwitnessed” or “indirective”. Indirective past is used, e.g., when the speaker has not witnessed the situation but knows it from hearsay (reportive uses) or by making an inference (inferential uses), or when the speaker would like to emphasize that he/she was not directly involved in it. The use of the PST1 or PST2 forms depends, however, on the choices of the speaker: it is possible to decide, whether he/she wishes to express the source of the information or not. That is, in general, both simple tenses are possible to use in the case of inferred or reported information. (Leinonen & Vilkuna 2000)

In Udmurt, evidentiality can not be used in future and present tenses: evidentiality is restricted to the past, which is not uncommon cross-linguistically (see, e.g. Aikhenvald 2004: 263–264). Past tense copulas also have PST1 and PST2 forms, therefore all compound past tenses (consisting of a conjugated verb and a past tense copula *val/vilem*) have a possible evidential counterpart, too. Most of the Udmurt compound tenses play a significant role in expressing aspectual meanings, too: e.g., progressivity is always expressed grammatically by a compound tense called “durative preterite” that consists of a present form of a conjugated verb and a copula in the past. It is said to „give a continuous background to other events with short durations in the past” (Kelmakov & Hännikäinen 2008: 270, translation by me), and is the only dedicated grammatical mean to express progressivity in the past in Udmurt:

(1) Kelmakov 1981: 129

<i>[кya кыз]</i>	<i>азбар-амы</i>	<i>лэчк-и-з.</i>
[spirit pine]	courtyard-ILLAT.1PL	descend-1PST-3SG
<i>Му шуд-ис'к-ом вал.</i>		
we	play-PRS-1PL	COP.PST1

‘[the pine spirit] descended into our courtyard. We were playing.’

Although progressive aspect can not be expressed by other grammatical means, durative preterite can convey other imperfective meanings, too, e.g., habituality (Horváth 2013: 117–118). Therefore, durative preterite seems to be linked with the imperfective aspect generally, and is not an exclusively progressive gram (for general imperfectives, see Dahl 1985: 88). Habitual events in the past domain can be expressed grammatically in three different ways in addition to the durative preterite: by the 1. frequentative suffix added to the verb in the simple past (PST1/PST2) tense 2. compound tense „frequentative preterite” (rare) 3. durative preterite with a frequentative suffix added to the conjugated verb.

At least in the Southern dialects, however, PST2 without a frequentative suffix can also be used for expressing habituality. This simple past tense may be considered aspectually neutral, as it can express e.g. habitual (3) and other imperfective but also perfective (2) aspectual meanings:

(2) Southern (Kelmakov 2006: 226)

<i>арн'а</i>	<i>орччы-са</i>	<i>мун'чо-зы</i>	<i>жсуа-м.</i>
week	pass-CVB	sauna-3PL	burn.down-PST2.3SG

'After a week, their sauna burned down.'

(3) Periph.Southern (Kelmakov 2006: 244)

<i>соин</i>	<i>ик</i>	<i>сырйас'</i>	<i>инты</i>	<i>шуи-л'л'ам.</i>
therefore	PCL	swamp	place	call-PST2.3PL

'Therefore they used to call it „swamp place”.'

In my presentation, I plan to discuss the aspectual role of these evidential forms relying on examples taken from semi-structured interviews, blog texts and dialectal texts. I aim to pay special attention to the aspectual role of the simple tense PST2 and the aspectual values habituality and progressivity.

Literature

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