

HANDOUT
Conference on the Syntax Of Uralic Languages

On the mirative semantic feature of Udmurt evidentiality

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1. Introduction

- *mirativity* is related to unprepared mind, new information, speaker's surprise (DeLancey 1997)
- the speaker's mind is not prepared to process the information, "feel distanced from the situation they describe. (Slobin & Aksu 1982: 198)
- grammatical category; intersects both grammatically and paradigmatically with evidential systems (DeLancey 2001: 370)
- range of mirative meanings (Aikhenvald 2012:437):
 - sudden discovery, revelation, realization
 - surprise
 - unprepared mind
 - counter expectation
 - new information

- Udmurt distinguishes grammatical evidentiality in past tense: firsthand – non firsthand evidential (Aikhenvald 2004: 28)
- *non-firsthand evidential forms* (aka 2nd past forms) cover the semantic feature of *mirativity* (Winkler 2001, Siegl 2004)
- since Udmurt has a small evidential system with two choices evidential forms cover several semantic parameters (Aikhenvald 2004: 154)
- Udmurt non-firsthand evidential form covers parameters related to the information source such as *reportative* and *inferential*, and also has other functions that are not related to source of information: '*token*' of *genre*, *mirativity*, *expressing of non-volitionality* (Winkler 2001, Siegl 2004, Kubitsch 2017)
- *questions of this research*: how mirative semantic feature is expressed through non-firsthand evidential forms in Udmurt and what could be the source of mirative usage regarding these forms

2. Materials and methods

- material for research was taken from blogs written by Udmurt native speakers (150 texts)
- texts from blogs are selected as their language is closer to the spoken varieties of Udmurt
- in this research the mirative usage of non-firsthand evidential forms was in focus
- based on this corpora the mirative semantic feature is expressed frequently in compare of the other functions of Udmurt second past (i.e. diagram of Distribution of functions of non-firsthand evidential forms)
- based on these data mirativity is the most common semantic feature of non-firsthand evidential forms in such functions when the primary meaning of the second past form is not related to the information source

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3. Results

- the 44 instances of mirative usage in the corpora can be divided into *two subgroups based on the source of surprising effect*
- *new, unexpected* information for the speaker
- speaker's *deferred realization* on the situation: full information on the situation was obtained and fully interpreted post factum, no matter whether the speaker saw it or not. (Aikhenvald 2004: 202)
- these two subgroups correspond to the range of mirative meanings established by Aikhenvald
- the Distribution of instances for mirative usage shows that the non-firsthand evidential forms are used more often in case of new or unexpected information but instances for deferred realization are also occurs in high number

Examples

New, unexpected information

1) vuflower.blogspot.ru, 17 October 2014

situation: the writer was surprised because not only the dresses but the dancers were also beautiful

Sjče jarkjt, čeber diš -jos -sj! Aśseos no ben kječ čeber-eś vjl -em!
So bright nice dress PL POSS.3PL themselves too really such nice PL to be 2PST.3SG
'Their so bright, nice dresses! They themselves were really nice too!'

(2) marjamoll.blogspot.ru, 24 February 2015

situation: the writer visited the town Debes and she had thought that it is a poor small village, but when she arrived, she realized that it was not like that

Uj paljos -jś ogšorj čerkogurt, malpa -j mon soku, -
north ELA simple village think.1PST 1SG I then

kuańer, načar no piči. Ožj vjlj -mte.
poor pauper and small So to be NEG.2PST.3SG
'A simple northern village, I had thought then – poor and pauper. It was not that.'

(3) tubat.blogspot.ru, 28 August 2014

situation: the writer is surprised because the dormitory was further from the university building as she assumed

Nu, jaram, kječ ke ožj vu -i -m obšežitije dorj
so okay somehow so arrive 1PST 1PL dormitory PP

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(kǐdókǐn -ges ik vǐl -em uníversítet -leś)

far COMP PTC to be 2PST.3SG university DAT

'So okay, somehow we arrived to the dormitory (it was further from the university).'

(4) krestyaninova.blogspot.ru, 10. January 2014

situation: the writer is surprised because it was easy to read the Udmurt edition of the Bible, sometimes the newspaper's language is more complicated

Lǐžžǐnjǐ kapci vǐl -em, kuddǐrja gázet -ez śekǐt -ges lǐžžǐnjǐ.

to read easy to be 2PST.3SG sometimes newspaper ACC hard COMP to read

'It was easy to read, sometimes the newspaper is harder to read.'

Deferred realization:

(5) udmurto4ka.blogspot.ru; 5 November 2014

situation: the writer is visited by her auntie and when the auntie arrived, she realized that during her way thistles had stuck to her trousers

Tińi uk kopak ługǐ łakiśk -em bord -am!

here PTC all thistle stick 2PST.3SG side ILL.POSS.1SG

'Here all the thistles stuck to my side!'

(6) marjamoll.blogspot.ru, 5 April 2015

situation: the writer read the new edition of a journal – as she was reading the newer issues she realized how better used to be the older editions

Oglaśań zek -ges no vǐl -em, material -jos -jz

on one hand thick COMP and to be 2PST.3SG material PL POSS.3SG

no tros pumo tema -jo vǐli -ĺĺa -m.

too lot kind topic ADJ to be 3PL 2PST

'On the one hand it was thicker and contained more varied topics.'

(7) udmurto4ka.blogspot.ru, 5 November 2014

situation: the writer was talking on the phone with a friend of her, and the friend asked: did you cheer on yesterday? First the writer did not understand what is in question but after a minute she realizes that a Russian music festival had been held the day before

Elkunoviđenije śariś so oźǐ vera vǐl -em.

Eurovision PP s/he so talk.PRS.3SG to be 2PST.3SG

'He was talking about the Eurovision.'

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(8) kepics.tumblr.com

situation: the writer found a book and she realized, remembered that the book had been given by her teacher in the primary school (she has already forgot it)

Ta -ze kniġa-jez Marija Martiġnovna niŕiś klass-jos-ġn dišetis -e śot -em.
this ACC book ACC Marija Martinovna first class PL INN teacher POSS.1SGgive 2PST.3SG
'This book was given by Marija Martinovna, my teacher in the first classes.'

Instances with deferred realization have '*dual nature*', because they cannot be totally separated from inferentiality: post-factum realization might be considered as a subtype of inferentiality as well. (Aikhenvald 2004: 102)

4. Conclusion

- instances of deferred realization might illustrate the emergence of mirative overtone of Udmurt non-firsthand evidential forms
- deferred realization is a common semantic nuance of inferred evidentials and it is a part of mirative meanings in systems where mirativity is associated with inference (Aikhenvald 2004: 102; 209)
- based on the connection between *inferentiality* and *deferred realization* it could be assumed that the *mirative overtone has emerged from the inferential function of non-firsthand evidential forms*

A possible semantic path (Aikhenvald 2012: 471)

Deferred realization: speaker sees or learns the result but interprets it post factum → the newly understood result is unexpected and thus surprising

- using non-firsthand evidential forms with direct information source relating to deferred realization could be the 'first step' in the emergency of mirative overtone (examples 5-8)
- this type of usage could grant the possibility of using non-firsthand evidential forms in such situations where inference is not included (examples 1-4)

5. Literature cited

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