

The resultative spiral in Udmurt

We propose that in Udmurt (Uralic; Russia), a resultative spiral is taking place (in the sense of von der Gabelentz 1901).

Cross-linguistically, resultative constructions may develop into indirect evidentials or into past tenses following, respectively, the grammaticalization paths in (1) and (2), cf. Bybee et al. (1994):

(1) resultative > perfect > inferential > indirect evidential

(2) resultative > perfect > past tense

We use the terms “resultative” and “perfect” as defined by Bybee et al. (1994), i.e. resultatives “signal that a state exists as a result of a past action”, while perfects denote that the situation occurs prior to, and is relevant to the situation at reference time (1994: 54).

We argue that path (1) has historically taken place, while path (2) is currently taking place in Udmurt.

Path (1) concerns forms composed of a verbal base and the suffix *-(e)m*. In contemporary Udmurt, *-(e)m* is a polyfunctional suffix: nominalizer, marker of perfect participles (3), and of indirect evidentials (4):

(3) *likt-em* *kišnomurt*
come-PTCP.PRF woman
'a woman that has arrived'

(4) Context: The history of the foundation of a village narrated by a speaker
Kema *mjn-em*, *mjn-em* *no* *žad'em*.
for_long go-EV.PST.3SG go-EV.PST.3SG and get_tired-EV.PST.3SG
'He walked and walked for a long time, and he got tired.'

We suggest that the original function of *-(e)m* was the expression of resultativity, and it formed participles that had both an attributive and a predicative use (*resultative₁* constructions). Later, the original semantic content of *-(e)m* bleached and, following the path in (1), predicative participles in *-(e)m* were eventually reanalysed as past indirect evidential forms (4), i.e., finite verbal forms, parts of the tense system.

We propose that the grammaticalization process above left space for renewal, i.e. for the evolution of a new resultative construction in Udmurt. *Resultative₂* constructions are based on a predicative participle ending in *-(e)myn* (which is itself composed of *-(e)m* and the inessive case suffix):

(5) *So* *adž-e*, *žök* *viljn* *žag* *šuiša* *kel't-em-jn*.
3SG see-3SG table on trash that leave-PTCP.PRF-INE
'(S)he sees that some trash has been left on the table.' (elicited)

The *-(e)myn* construction is traditionally referred to in the literature as a resultative construction. Corpus data and consultations with native speakers, however, suggest that in the contemporary language, its categorization as a resultative is not in every case adequate anymore: some of its instances rather express a perfect meaning (6), yet in other cases, the question arises whether some of its instances can be analysed as past tense forms (7).

- (6) *Emilija kwiń pol otći - tatći loba-m-jn ni.*
 Emily three time here.ILL there.ILL fly-PTCP.PRF-INE already
 ‘Emily has already flown three times here and there.’ (Udmurt corpus)
- (7) *Ta – Rossi-ǰś nǰriśeti-os-ǰz pöl-ǰś niłkǰšno ximik,*
 this Russia-ELA first-PL-DET among-ELA woman chemist
ul-em-jn 1867-ti – 1896-ti ar-jos-ǰ.
 live-PTCP.PRF-INE 1867-ORD 1896-ORD year-PL-ILL
 ‘She is one of the first women chemists from Russia, she lived between 1867 and 1896.’
 (Udmurt corpus)

We suggest that *-(e)myn*-constructions are currently undergoing the grammaticalization path in (2).

References

- Bybee et al. 1994 = Bybee, Joan L. and Perkins, Revere and Pagliuca, William. 1994. *The evolution of grammar: Tense, aspect and modality in the languages of the world*. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press.
- Gabelentz, Georg von der. [1901] 1972. *Die Sprachwissenschaft : Ihre Aufgaben, Methoden und bisherigen Ergebnisse*. Tübingen: Narr.
- Udmurt corpus = http://udmurt.web-corpora.net/udmurt_corpus/search (Last accessed: 16.04.2023)