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Progressive aspect in Dobrudja Tatar

Among his other interests, Professor Edward Tryjarski paid great attention to the study of the Turkic population of Dobrudja. Here I will only refer the reader to his latest two publications, Tryjarski 1987, 1990. "Rocznik Orientalistyczny" had also published valuable papers on this topic by other authors, e.g. Kowalski 1938; Călin (Kelin) 1973, 1975; Mollova 1973. Therefore, I decided to contribute to the present Festschrift with an article devoted to this field.

Certainly, such a short study cannot settle all the questions of aspect in a language. Recall that Johnson's so far most detailed study on aspect in Turcological literature resulted in a separate monograph, Johnson 1971. Schönig's book on some functions of auxiliary verbs in Tatar contains over three hundred pages, Schönig 1984.

1. Introductory remarks

In the present paper, following (Lyons 1977: 705), no specific distinction is drawn between aspect and actionality (Aktionsart). Broadly speaking, aspect is a set of sub-categories marking the dynamic, static, temporal or linear type of situations denoted by the verb. In the overall linguistics, aspect is regarded as a category pertinent to verbal morphology, Bynoe 1985, yet lexical aspect may be found even in nouns, cf. such well-known examples as English glance and rest, Polish jedzenie 'meal; eating' and z Jedzenie 'eating up'. However, a detailed discussion of aspect shall take account not only of other verb categories, such as tense and mood, but also of related syntactic categories, textual cohesion etc., as seen throughout Johnson's monograph. Another essential point of the study is the semantics of particular verbs, Lyons, ibid.
1. Aspect vs. tense

Temporal dimensions such as past, present and future underline relations between the speech point and reference. The relations between the event and reference form the category of taxis. Therefore, some linguists distinguish between the situation-aspect and viewpoint-aspect. In another approach, tense is the relation that holds between the time of a situation described to the temporal zero-point of the deictic context. The relationship between aspect and tense may be relevant to the discussion of Turkic aspect in so far as some languages do not possess unsuspected present, such as the past — *di*, cf. Aksu-Koç, 1982: 18.

1.2. Static and dynamic verbs

The verbs are static (stative), including qualitative and dynamic. Most verbs in world’s languages are dynamic. Lyon’s (1977: 706) remarked that only a minority of verbs are static.2 As he (ibid. 483) emphasizes, there is no satisfactory term for states that would contrast them with events, processes and actions. An event controlled by an agent is an act and a process under the control of an agent is an activity, ibid. Normally, progressive aspect is marked in verbs denoting lasting situations, that is processes and activities. Events and acts may be characterized by a kind of aspect that we may term punctual.3

1.3. Progressive aspect

Any theoretical discussion of this question that has an abundant literature must fall outside the scope of the present study. I will confine myself to some general remarks. Firstly, no aspect notwithstanding its grammaticalization in a language may be applicable to every kind of described situation. This entails that if each kind of situation (event, process, act etc.) is marked by one and the same marker, this marker must have more meanings. This fact causes a diversity in linguistic interpretation and, among other factors, is particularly confusing in Turkic studies.

2. Aspect in Turkic languages

2.1. Static and dynamic verbs

The verbs that inherently mark both the state and action or function as progressive auxiliaries are *cat-*yat- ‘to lie’ and ‘lie down’; *atur-* ‘to sit’ and ‘sit down’; *tur-* ‘to stand’ and ‘stand up’ cf. section 1.2. Johanson calls them initial transformative, as being a sub-class of non-fnal-transformative verbs, ibid. 214, which correspond to Lyon’s (1977: 712) achievement-denoting verbs. This is roughly the same as Russian *predel*’ye vs. *nepredel*’ye, see Nedjalkov 1983: 6 and footnote 2, i.e. terminative vs. non-terminative, Majewicz 1985: 76-7. The verbs pertinent to this sub-class, Johanson finds out, have two phases, desinent and non-desinent (resultative).4 However, the majority of non-final transformative verbs do not have the first phase. According to Johanson, the non-final-transformative verbs fit the pattern below:

*x-di mi?*

Evet, *x-di, ve de hâlâ x-iyor.*

**Johanson** provides then a short list of verbs that cannot be used in the situation as above and are, therefore, final-transformative: *al-, bildir-, getir-, kalk-, kapat-, kur-, ol-*, ver-, yak-, yirt-, p. 197. I have adapted this pattern to Dobrudja Tatar (*x-di mi?* Ya, *x-di de tax x-a*) and tested then a number of verbs with my informant. The verbs that could not be used there were *ašla-, bi-, bildir-, buyr al- ‘to lead; carry out’, *başla-, eşt-, kapat- (kapris cap-), oşça- ‘to resemble’, *ol-, tokta- ‘to stop’, *toy- ‘to have enough (of food, drink etc.)’, *pâr- ‘to finish sth’ as well as *gideren, tâbiktan tur- ‘to stand up from a place, bed’. However, a range of verbs from Johanson’s list does fit the pattern. They are the following: *al-, kel-, apket- (corresponding to getir-), ber-, ekk-, (yak-), Curtis- (yirt-), plus dynamically unspecified verbs.

2.2. Aspect in Turkic languages

Because of limited space, it is not possible to give a survey of the works on aspect and actionality in Turkic studies. In Turkish, Johanson made a distinction between two basic aspectual sub-categories which in his terminology are called **intraterminality and pregrenancy**, Johanson 1971: 88f; 118f. The former points to an event within the temporal limits of starting and final point, p. 101, as opposed to an unmarked event and is principally indicated by the opposition *-iorda: -di*. The latter is exemplified by the gradual opposition between *-iyor: -mekle: -r.*

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1. I do not discuss the verbs of this sub-group here, as they are not typical of Dobrudja Tatar. Qualitative meaning may be expressed by compound verbs like *cg yol-‘be young’, kart yol- ‘be old’, ay yol- ‘be white’. However, they usually have dynamic counterparts in verbs denoting processes *cgça- ‘to grow young’, kartça- ‘to grow old’, ajça- ‘to turn white’.

2. However, Nedjalkov (1983: 11) argues that verbs denoting state and action occur in many languages. They are non-terminative and terminative, respectively. He calls them, therefore, neutral (in this respect).


4. According to Lyon’s (1977: 711), states and processes are characterized by ‘indeinitely many temporal phases’ between the beginning and the end of a situation.
What I am dealing with in the following and what appears to be essential in non-Oghuzic languages like Dobrudja Tatar is actonicity, (Aktionsart) as put by Johnsson. Russian Turcological literature refers to this category in a more general sense, terming it aspect (вид). Aspect in the majority of Turkic languages is expressed by auxiliary verbs. Although the principal auxiliary verbs may also be found in South-Western Turkish languages and are listed by more comprehensive grammars, see for instance -1 yer-, -A dur-, -A kol-, -A gır-, -A gel-, -A gız- in Bang ógl 1986: 490–93, they do not occur very frequently and are more like ‘lexical modifiers’, Johnsson 1971: 194. These auxiliary verbs did not occur frequently and their usage was not obligatory in Old Anatolian Turkish either, yet their grammatical status is doubtable, Gazev 1988: 8–9.

As in earlier English literature and traditional practical grammars, progressive (continuous) aspect is not always clearly distinguished from tense. For instance, according to Baskakov 1963: 551, the Noghai form -A yatır is ‘present tense of a given moment’. A similar treatment is found in Dykanov’s Kirghiz grammar (present), Dykanov 1999: 284 and Moldabekov’s Kazakh textbook (present proper), Moldabekov 1992: 68, in contrast to Akmurov 1958: 777, Abdullaev et alii 1987: 225 and others who prefer the right term aspect.

3. Marking progressive aspect in Dobrudja Tatar

In the corpus analyzed, the progressive aspect is denoted by the following formations: -A Yatır, -p tur, -p çır- and rarely -p otır.\(^\text{5}\)

3.1. The marker -A Yatır

1. With the verbs denoting activity, consisting of several phases, it indicates that a given activity is still in progress, that the last phase is not attained yet.

(1) Narık, sen nişlîgatsım? BC ÇB 74 ‘What are you doing, Narık?’

(2) It is even compatible with the verb cet-/yet- ~ Yetiş- ‘attain; reach’.

(2) Borakay cuwusuș yetişgatyar. (sic!) R2 61 ‘Borakay, running, is catching (me)’.

5 Some of them became morphological suffixes, e.g. Kirghiz — Ata, Turkish -por.
6 Ambiguous statements can be found in aspectual literature, e.g. -fjA dur- and -fjA jor- which mostly occur in the texts as basis of present proper in indicative paradigms, technically and semantically also belong to aspectual means of the investigated language. Gazev 1988: 6.
7 This auxiliary verb has in Kirghiz the form -fat-, albeit already Batmanov observed, referring to Radloff, that Southen Kirghiz dialects frequently employs the form -fjA şatir, too. Batmanov 1940: 56.
8 There are at least three alphabets adapted to Dobrudja Tatar, and three transliteration systems more. Since this present paper focuses principally on Tatar publications, I attempted to adopt the most recent orthography, which is very similar to Turkish.

3.2. The marker -p tur-

1. It is employed similarly to -A Yatır with the verbs that denote activity

(11) Kogan balas bolarni ezikten soñ, yuwusunda atlap tur. AKB 250 ‘The small rabbit, after hearing that, sprang from his home’.

and occurs in the past

(12) Tülki koyunnı söziş trilap turda. . . R2 221 ‘The fox listened to what the rabbit had said and...’

\(^{\text{9}}\) Attention to the alternative use of -A and -p şatir in Kazakh was already drawn by Radloff 1911: 45.
2. It also marks processes

(13) Coldap burl ber-ça-şan ki-şin buğ-üz bolap turgap turgam kőre. BC (EB) 16
    'He sees a dried, white skull rolling on the road'.
3. And states

(14) yuklap turgap cemvuraça R 2 219 'a sleeping runner'.
(15) O burl mi-üz-sap-soglam bolap catap turap BC (EB) 30 'he is lying fairly
    well and sound'.

Remarks:

(a) The form discussed also combines with deictic adverbials, e.g. (16) Bolar [...]
    ašen csagap turapar. R 3 135 'They are ringing at present'.
(b) If denied, it denotes a situation that did not last any long time (17)
    Csagap burl kőp tüşünip turapar. BT 374 'Tsagap burl has not pondered
    any long'.
(c) It does not express duration, to express it, it takes an adverbial indicating
    that a process or action lasts, (18) Sen meni danadan dünja cemvurap şuğardanlı, kerk
    kőn beslep turapal. AKB 44 'You have taken me from the stable to the sunlight
    and fed for forty days'.
(d) In the modal form, this auxiliary, following the verb stem on -A denotes
    principally a situation that precedes another one or simply marks modality and
    has nothing to do with aspect, e.g. (19) Albaši apakapa kepa turapam, Kutlakapaya
    kauvul nałma ašap [...]. şalmanap başlap. BC (EB) 25 'When only his wife
    has gone, Kutlakapaya took the flate and started playing'. Occasionally, though,
    it appears to be a variant of -p tur-, (20) Balapana o pürlerce menins arašman
    menisap, usp burla turgap edap. AKB 44 'your father sat on my back and rushed
    along to those places', the more as it is compatible with such adverbials as her vašap 'all
    the time', see R 3 136.

3.3. The marker -p cür-

1. In all kinds of texts it is basically employed with the verbs of motion unmarked
    directionally and verbs referring to activities conceived as an occupation
    bounded to movement. Here there are some examples: adašap cür- 'stray';
    aš, ašap cür- 'hunt'; akeap cür- 'limp; hobble'; coldap cür- 'swim'; cemvurašap cür-
    'run to and fro'; gešip cür- 'walk'; (koyun, mallarn) košap/bašap cür- 'pasture
    (sheep, livestock); köšap cür- 'migrate'; ašap cür- 'graze'; ašašap cür-
    'graze' (livestock); šapap cür- 'run; rush'; usp cür- 'fly'.

    In these cases, the auxiliary cür- is used instead of — Yat(s)/r and -tur. It is
    worth nothing that the verbs of motion take kel- 'come' and keš- 'go' to express
    direction, e.g.
4. Conclusion

1. The marking of aspect is in Dobrudzja Tatar often optional, as in some other Turkic languages, see Guzev's inference, cited above, and is style-, dialect- and idiolect-dependent. To test this supposition, I have selected three texts at random and counted the percentage of aspectual auxiliaries in relation to all verbs, with restriction to finite verbs on both sides. In Cenin Bolat's Calsun (R 2 61-64, written in Noghai dialect) it amounted to 8% (109 vs. 14), in Bir kolektiv cice kalmaras (OK 49-51, a reading for school children, standardized language) to 6% (28 vs. 0), in Kozkarev men Bugnasu (BC 227-36, a folk tale) to 8% (236, the verb dig, as an element of narration, was excluded vs. 14).

2. A comparison of variants of these texts shows interchangeability of the following forms:

   -p tur -p otr. e.g. karap turdalar and karap otrgalarnin kere, cf. ICB 9 resp, BC (CIB) 79;

   -p tur -p aytar, e.g. bolap turganda and bolayturganda, cf. ideam 8; 76, respectively.

   Therefore, implicitly, all the three auxiliaries above may be substituted for each other.

3. The forms examined do not mark duration. It is obvious from the sentences such as (30) setenece tardum R 1 53 ‘I’ve lived (there) for years’; (31) pixin kece cýrýgen 3 64 ‘He walked all the night’; (32) Atta ay tao col cire. Kete kete. AKB 43 ‘He walked six months more, went and went’.

4. The auxiliaries that denote progressive aspect, except for çair, are the verbs indifferent with respect to static and dynamic characteristics. Used as auxiliaries, they impose their stativity on phase verbs and emphasize the non-final stage of the latter.

5. Progressive aspect is one of the best grammaticalized aspects in Kipchak languages. If one accepts the theory of linguistic change affected by frequency, the reduction of the Kazakh auxiliary verbs ter (<tur), çär (<çaire), olir (<olir), probably most frequently used, accounts for this claim.

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