#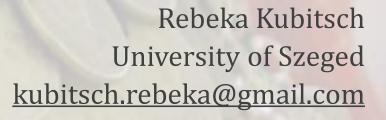 The role of indirect evidentiality to mark epistemic primacy, epistemic authority and intersubjective distribution in Udmurt

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26/06/2024

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# Outline

1. The past tense system of Udmurt and connections to evidentiality
2. Key concepts – Dimensions of knowledge & intersubjective distribution
3. Second past tense forms to signal epistemic status and distribution of knowledge
4. Complementary functions of first past tense forms

# Data

- Corpus data (Arkhangelskiy 2019)
- Interviews with native consultants
  - Semi-structured interviews (May 2019 and March 2020)
    - Interpretation of the 2nd past tense (de-contextualized sentences)
    - Differences between the 1st and 2nd past tense (minimal pairs)
- Press and Vkontakte entries not implemented in the corpora
- Occasional consultations with native speakers

- Primarily 2nd person forms

# The past tense system & Evidentiality

# Synthetic tenses in Udmurt

- Present
- 1st past
- 2nd past
- Future

| Tense | Example 'to go' 3SG indicative |
|---|---|
| Present | *myn-e* <br> go-PRS.3SG |
| 1st past | *myn-i-z* <br> go-PST1-3SG |
| 2nd past | *myn-em* <br> go-PST2[3SG] |
| Future | *myn-o-z* <br> go-FUT-3SG |

# The past tense system of Udmurt

- Synthetic and analytic past tenses
- Two synthetic past tenses (1st past & 2nd past)
  - 1st past tense: *-i* past tense marker
  - 2nd past tense: *-m* marker – perfect participle
- Four analytic past tenses
  - verb in the present, future, 1st past, 2nd past + *val* or *vylem*

# Analytic past tenses in Udmurt

- *val* – 1st past tense form (historically 3rd person singular)
- *vylem* – 2nd past tense, 3rd person singular form of the 'be' verb

- *val* and *vylem* have several discourse-interactional and other non-temporal uses (cf. Saraheimo – Kubitsch 2023)
  - pragmaticalization
  - reanalysis of the compound past tenses

# The past tense system of Udmurt

| | Form | Example | Core Functions |
|---|---|---|---|
| **1ˢᵗ past** | PST1 | *myn-i-z*<br>go-PST1-3SG | default past tense<br>can be associated with direct evidence and related notions |
| **2ⁿᵈ past** | PST2 | *myn-em*<br>go-PST2[3SG] | indirect evidential past tense<br>mirative<br>perfect/resultative |
| **1ˢᵗ Pluperfect (Remote Past)** | PST1 + *val/(vylem)* | *myn-i-z val*<br>go-PST1-3SG be.PST1 | pluperfect, general remote past<br>future counter-factuality<br>non-evidential |
| **2ⁿᵈ Pluperfect (Remote Past)** | PST2 + *val/vylem* | *myn-em val // vyl-em*<br>go-PST2[3SG] be.PST1 be-PST2[3SG] | pluperfect, general remote past<br>indirect evidential |
| **Durative past (Continuous)** | PRS + *val/vylem* | *myn-e val // vyl-em*<br>go-PRS.3SG be.PST1 be-PST2[3SG] | antecedent, frame of an already ongoing event |
| **Habitual past (Frequentative)** | FUT + *val/vylem* | *myn-o-z val // vyl-em*<br>go-FUT-3SG be.PST1 be-PST2[3SG] | regular activity in the past |

Kelmakov – Hännikäinen (1999: 244–246), Kozmács (2002: 86) and Tarakanov (2011: 195–201), Saraheimo (2022: 199–200)

# Evidential specification through the past tenses

- The 2ⁿᵈ past tense is a non-differentiated indirect evidential (non-witnessed, inferred, reported evidence) (Leinonen – Vilkuna 2000, Siegl 2004)

(1) *Eš-e*                *Moskva-je*        **myn-em**.
      friend-POSS.1SG    Moscow-ILL    **leave-PST2[3SG]**
      'My friend left to Moscow.'


- In the analytic past tenses, tenses formed with *vylem* can convey indirect evidence


(2) *Eš-e*                        *Moskva-yn*            **ule**            **vyl-em**.
      friend-POSS.1SG          Moscow-INE        **live.PRS.3SG**    **be-PST2[3SG]**
      'My friend lived in Moscow.' (durative past tense)

# Interpretations of second past tense forms

- Other functions/interpretations which are not strictly evidential but frequently associated with evidential markers (cf. Aikhenvald 2004, 2018, Brugman & Macaulay 2015)
  - Mirativity (non-assimilated knowledge, high degree of informativity) – especially for *vylem* (Serebrennikov 1960, Leinonen – Vilkuna 2000, Siegl 2004, Winkler 2011)
  - Lack of control (1$^{st}$ person) (Leinonen – Vilkuna 2000, Siegl 2004)
  - Other ranges of use (Kubitsch 2023)
    - Lower degree of certainty
    - Lower degree of responsibility for the credibility of the information

- **The interpretation and the application of the 2$^{nd}$ past tense is context sensitive and goes beyond the mere marking of information source**

# Interpretations of second past tense forms Mirative

(3) *Soly*      *40*      *ares*      **vyl-em**      *ńi!*
     s/he-DAT 40      age      **be-PST2[3SG]**      already
     'S/he's already 40 years old!' (speaker expected them to be younger)

(4) *Al'i*    *valany*    *kutski-śkod,*    *ta*    *kar-yn*    *tros kalyk*    **ule**    **vyl-em**.
     now   realize   start-PRS.2SG   this   city-INE   lot    people   **live.PRS.3SG**   **be-PST2[3SG]**

Two possible interpretations:
1. *ule vylem* 'lived' as a durative past tense:
     'Now you start to realize that many people lived in this city.' (e.g., seeing the abandoned houses)
2. *ule* 'live' as a present tense verb and *vylem* as marking mirativity:
     'Now you start to realize that many people live here.' (counter-expectation)
     ← reanalysis of the durative past tense

# Differentiation between the past tenses

| 2nd past tense | 1st past tense |
|---|---|
| indirect evidence | direct evidence |
| lower degree of involvement in the events | higher degree of involvement in the events |
| distant events | closer events |
| less accurate, reliable information | accurate, reliable information |
| non-assimilated knowledge | assimilated knowledge |
| emotional value | no emotional value |
| lower degree of commitment | higher degree of commitment |
| lower degree of responsibility for the information | higher degree of responsibility for the information |
| no difference ||

- Kubitsch (2023)

# Dimensions of knowledge & Intersubjective distribution

# Dimensions of knowledge

- Stivers et al. (2011), Grzech (2020)
- epistemic access
  - knowing vs. not knowing/types of evidence/degree of certainty
  - relationship between the origo and the proposition
- epistemic primacy
  - relative right to know/claim authority of knowledge
- epistemic responsibility
  - obligations/rights to have information
  - it correlates with epistemic primacy

# Epistemic authority

- Right to know, to claim ownership of knowledge (Bergqvist – Grzech 2023: 20)
- Often used interchangeably with epistemic primacy
    - Epistemic authority is gradable (one can know more or less) (Grzech 2020: 29)
    - Epistemic primacy is binary and relative – tied to the knowledge status of discourse participants (Stivers et al. 2011: 13–14)

- Having epistemic primacy/authority often roots in having the best possible type of evidence but it is not necessarily roots in direct evidence (Grzech 2020)

# Territory of information

- Kamio (1997: 17-18)
  - Information "closer" to the speaker is in the speaker's territory of information
  - Information "closer" to the hearer is in the hearer's territory of information

Information within one's territory:

- speaker's/hearer's internal direct experience (e.g., emotions, memory, belief)
- detailed knowledge which falls into the range of the speaker's/hearer's professional or other expertise
- speaker's/hearer's external direct experience including information verbally conveyed to the speaker/hearer by others which they consider reliable
- persons, objects, events and facts close to the speaker/hearer including such information about the speaker/hearer themself (i.e., personal data).

# Intersubjective distribution

Bergqvist – Kittilä (2020), Evans et al. (2018: 110–113)

- epistemic perspective of the speech-act participants
- distribution of attention or knowledge
- In terms of accessibility – the event or state of affairs is shared or exclusive to one of the speech-act participants (perceptual, cognitive, epistemic)

Types of intersubjective distribution (Bergqvist – Knuchel 2019: 654)

- Speaker non-shared (the speaker has access that is non-shared with the addressee)
- Speaker-Addressee shared
- Addressee non-shared (the addressee has access that is non-shared with the speaker)
- Speaker-Addressee non-shared

- Intersubjective distribution targets epistemic authority and primacy (Bergqvist – Knuchel 2019: 656)

# Connections to evidentiality

- Evidentials can be used to make assumptions about the epistemic perspective of the addressee (Bergqvist 2017)

- The use of evidentials is derived from how the speaker situates their knowledge against the interlocutor's (Bergqvist – Grzech 2023: 11)

- Indirect evidentials indicate the lack of the speaker's perceptual-cognitive access by default
  - the explicit marking (or posing as if) a talk-about event as inaccessible can be a tool of disclaiming epistemic primacy and epistemic authority (cf. Mushin 2001)

# Lack of epistemic primacy and disclaiming authority

# Disclaiming the speaker's epistemic primacy and authority

- (5) *jangyš* **gožti-ľľam-dy**
  mistake **write-PST2-2PL**
  'you made a mistake'

- Lack of epistemic primacy
  - Claims about the original intention of the writer (i.e., they wanted to write something else, hence, they made a mistake) can be viewed as trespassing to the other person's territory of information
- An Udmurt native commented to a non-native
  - The mistake was clear
  - In questions connected to the Udmurt language, a native has the epistemic primacy
  - But not in connection with the other party's intentions
- Lack of epistemic primacy does not mean that the access of the speaker is worse than the interlocutors (Grzech 2020: 45)

# Disclaiming the speaker's epistemic primacy and authority

(6) Interviewer: *Kyleme vań: ton, Rašit, školayn dyšetskykud,* **L'eońid Il'jič Brežńevly no gožtet ystemed**. *Val-a syče učyr? Val ke, kyźy diśtid badźym kivaltiśly vaźiśkyny?*

Interviewee: *«Moskva. Kreml'. Brežńevu, Podgornomu, Kosyginu» – oźy gožtysa leźi val. Vuiz-a so otćy, ug todiśky.*

Interviewer: 'I heard: you, Rashit, when you were studying at school, **you even sent a letter to Leonid Ilyich Brezhnev**. Did it really happen? If so, how did you have the courage to turn to the great leader.'

Interviewee: '"Moscow, Kremlin. To Brezhnev, Podgorny, Kosygin" – that is how I had sent it. Whether it arrived, I don't know.'

# Disclaiming the speaker's epistemic primacy and authority

(6a) *L'eońid Il'jič Brežńevly no*      *gožtet*      **yst-em-ed.**

     PN      PN    PN      PTC     letter      **send-PST2-2SG**

     'You even sent a letter to Leonid Ilyich Brezhnev.'

- The interviewer highlights that they have only hearsay information (*kyleme vań* 'I heard')
- The strength of evidence is weaker and the speaker is not sure about its credibility
- They do not have the authority to claim knowledge

# Disclaiming the speaker's epistemic primacy and authority

(7) Interviewer: *З́uč kylyn no kńiga **pečatlad**.*
     Interviewee: *Ma, kytyś ton vańze todiśkod*?

     Interviewer: **You published** a book in Russian, too.
     Interviewee: What, how do you know everything?


(7a) *З́uč        kylyn              no  kńiga   **pečatla-d**.*
     Russian language-INE PTC book    **print[PST1]-2SG**

     'You published a book in Russian, too.'

# First person forms

- Lack of control, post-factum realization of unintentional actions (Leinonen – Vilkuna 2000, Siegl 2004: 138; Kozmács 2008: 176; Kubitsch 2019)
- Downgrading epistemic responsibility
  - Disclaiming authority speaking about one's own actions

(8) *Oj,     a     mon     öžytak  **ʒega-śkem***
    EXCL  and   I        bit      **be.late-PST2.1SG**

   *– ńekogda  šutetsk-on     nunal-e Kontakt-yn     puky-ny...*
   never        relax-NMLZ      day-ILL  PN-INE          sit-INF

   *Vordiśk-em-eny-dy                      til'edyz!*
   be.born-NMLZ-INST-POSS.2PL        you.PL.ACC
   'Oh, I am a bit late – I never use VKontakte at the weekend…Happy birthday to you!'

# First person forms

- The verb *vunetyny* 'to forget' is quite typical in the 1st person, 2nd past tense (*vunetiśkem)*

- According to an anecdote, an Udmurt professor always scolded students using this form when they had forgotten to do their homework, had left something at home

(9) *Kin*     *vunet-i-z?*        ***Vunet-i***         *šu-e!*

     who     forget-PST1-3SG     **forget-PST1[1SG]**     say-IMP.2PL

     'Who did forget? Say, I forgot.'

- ← the 1st past tense form is appropriate because forgetting their obligations is the students' responsibility

# Intersubjective distribution

# Knowledge asymmetry (non-shared) Addressee non-shared

- Hand in hand with disclaiming epistemic primacy
- Attested in questions

(10) Interviewer: *Zoja Lukjanovna, ti gubi* **baśtiśkody val** *kalykleś. Oźyjen, tros ad'amijen kusyp* **voźiśkody vylem**?

Interviewee: *Tuž tros murtjosyn todmo val. Jagan kotyryn gubi uno - soin ik šumpotysa vajo pinaljos, penśije potemjos, berlo arjosy - užtek kyl'emjos no.*

Interviewer: Zoya Lukyanovna, **you bought** mushrooms from the people. So, did **you have connections** with a lot of people?

Interviewee: I got acquainted with a lot of people. Around Jagan, there are lots of mushrooms, so children, pensioners, elders happily brought them to me – even unemployed people too.'

# Knowledge asymmetry (non-shared)
## Addressee non-shared

(10a) *Oźy-jen, tros*     *ad'ami-jen*     *kusyp*     ***voźi-śko-dy***    ***vyl-em***?
       SO-INST   lot       people-INST      relationship    **keep-PRS-2PL**   **be-PST2[3SG]**
       'So, did you have connections with a lot of people?

- It is shared knowledge between the participants that Z.L. gathered mushrooms.
- The question targets the other interlocutor's territory of information (relationship with other people)
- The questioner does not have direct access to neither piece of information
  - Highlighting the speaker's lack of access in the question shows that the addressee is the one who primarily has access, they have epistemic primacy over the piece of information
- Relative authority does not go hand in hand with actual knowledge
  - This is an interview, it can be assumed that there were some sort of prior discussions about its content

# Knowledge asymmetry (non-shared) Addressee non-shared

(11) Lead-in:      *Kyźy Svetlana Kibaṛd'ina tače areskaz nọ pinaḷ kadʼ kariśkyny bygate?* **Šajan vylem-a so piči dyrjaz***?*

  Interviewee (S.K.): *Köškemyt šajan.*

  Lead-in:      How can Svetlana Kibardina at this age still behave like a child? **Was she mischievous as a little child**?

  Interviewee (S.K.): Dreadfully mischievous.

(11a) *Šajan*     ***vyl-em=a***       *so*   *piči*   *dyr-ja-z?*
  mischievous   be-PST2[3SG]=Q    s/he   small   time-INE-POSS.3SG
  'Was she mischievous as a little child?'

# Knowledge asymmetry (non-shared) Addressee non-shared

- Earlier, I claimed that in interrogatives evidentials keep the speaker's perspective (Kubitsch 2021)
  - This is still true from the point of view of information source
  - Need to re-evaluate from the point of view of intersubjective distribution and epistemic primacy
  - Yes-no question – the speaker does not know the answer
    - Strictly from the point of view of information source, it is redundant to highlight indirect evidence because if the speaker had direct evidence, requesting information would be unnecessary
    - Assigning access and epistemic primacy to the addressee could be a reason

# Knowledge asymmetry (non-shared) Speaker non-shared

(12)  Speaker A: *Zacvel na prazdńik Blagovešševije*)
Speaker B: *Zamiokuľkas śaśkajaśke-a mar-a?* 😲
Speaker A: *oźy, **śaśkajaśke vylem**!!!!! Ačim no pajmi*))))
Speaker C: *Śaśkaosyd čebereś.*
Speaker A: *Tau)))*
Speaker D: *Uχ ty!!!! Mon nyryśse adźiśko taleś śaśkajaśkemze*😄👍👍👍👍
Speaker A: ***Čeber vylem śaśkajez***)


Speaker A: 'It bloomed for the day of Feast of the Annunciation'
Speaker B: 'Zanzibar gems bloom or what?'
Speaker A: 'Yes, **they bloom indeed**! I was surprised, too'
Speaker C: 'Your flowers are nice.'
Speaker A: 'Thank you'
Speaker D: 'Wow! This is the first time I see the flower of this plant.'
Speaker A: '**Its flower is really beautiful**.'

# Knowledge asymmetry (non-shared) Speaker non-shared

(12a) *oźy,* **śaśkajaśke** **vyle-m***!!!!!* *Ačim no pajm-i* ))))

    so     **bloom.PRS.3SG** **be-PST2SG**     myself too     be.suprised-PST1[1SG]

    'Yes, they bloom indeed! I was surprised, too'

- In the case of the mirative use of the second past tense
- The piece of information was highly informative for the speaker but at the moment of speech it is not anymore
- The information is clearly highly informative, new to other discourse participants (*=a mar=a* 'or what', 'I see it for the first time', use of emojis)
- "It was new to me and I assume, it will be new for you too"

# Knowledge asymmetry (non-shared)
# Speaker non-shared

(13) Speaker A:  *Čytyr-kotyr gožmasa, šur byźe - izvivajaś, bežit rečka*

Speaker B:  *kyryž-maryž šuo na*

Speaker C:  *tińi kytyś noš ik beśermanlen kyryž-mAryž kylzy!))). udmurt kyryž-mEryž šue)*

Speaker B:  *besermanjoslen (ö, ÿ) kuaraossy vań-a?*

Speaker C:  *ÿ kuarazy val, no tabere övöl ńi, y kuarajez kukmorjos kad' ik ymtyroskazy veralo, oźy ik glazov no jukamensk udmurtjoslen*

Speaker B:  **Alnaš paljos no (y) kuarazes kukmorjos kad' veralo vylem**. *Kylzemdy vań , dyr, Raźinleś. Mynam tuž pel'am kyl'iz solen kuarajez.*

Speaker C:  *todiśko. Kavot'kytyn ik oźy ug veraśko - Agryz palan ul'iśjosyz, oźy ik Kijasa rajonyn. (...)*

Speaker A:  The river flows in criss-cross

Speaker B:  They also say *kyryž-maryž*

Speaker C:  Here, that is where Besermans *kyryž-mAryž* word is from. An Udmurt says *kyryž-mEryž*

Speaker B:  Do Besermans have *ÿ* and *ö* sounds?

Speaker C:  They had *ÿ*, but not anymore, and they pronounce the *y* sound with full mouth like people from Kukmor, also Glazov and Yukamensk Udmurts.

Speaker B:  **Also around Alnash they say the *y* sound like in Kukmor.** You can maybe hear it from Razin. His sound really hurts my ear.

Speaker C:  I know. But not everywhere they speak like that - people around Agryz, and in the Kiyasa region. (...)

# Speaker non-shared

(13a) *Alnaš pal-jos*    *no*    *(y) kuara-zes*        *kukmor-jos*   *kad'*    ***vera-lo***      ***vyl-em*.**

     PN    side-PL   PTC    <y> sound-ACC.POSS.3PL    PN-PL       like    **say-PRS.3PL**    **be-PST2[3SG**]

     'Also around Alnash they say the <y> sound like in Kukmor.'

- This piece of information is not highly informative from the speaker's perspective
- The information is new in the discussion and assumed to be highly informative to the other participants
- Reanalysis of the durative past tense (Saraheimo – Kubitsch 2023: 144-145)

- This type of use of the 2ⁿᵈ past can clearly be observed for *vylem* but the change of perspective (i.e., the information is assumed to be new to the addressee) can be observed with other 2ⁿᵈ past tense forms

Complementary functions of first past tense forms
Some contrastive examples

# Claiming epistemic primacy and authority

(14) *Mama*    *mon-e*    *2-ti*    *kurs-yn*    *dyšetsky-ku-z*    ***vord-i-z.***
      mother    I-ACC    2-ORD    course-INE    study-CVB.SIM-POSS.3SG    **give.birth-PST1-3SG**
      'My mother gave birth to me when she way studying in the second course.'

- Strictly speaking, the speaker has direct evidence, nevertheless, they were not a conscious participant of the events → we can assume an indirect source of information
- 1st past tense – if the speaker is in the focus of discussion
- 2nd past tense – if the mother is in the focus of discussion
- If the speaker is in focus, they have epistemic primacy
- If the mother, the speaker does not have the authority to claim knowledge

# Claiming epistemic primacy and authority

(15) *Kylem*    *ar*    *kuspyn*    *Rossi-yn*    *uliś-jos*
    last    year  PP    Russia-INE  inhabitant-PL

    *8 miĺĺiard*    *l'itr*  *sur*    **ju-i-zy**.
    8 billion    litre  beer    **drink-PST1-3PL**
    'During last year Russian inhabitants drank 8 billion litres of beer.'

• The actual information source is indirect → it is not lifelike to assume direct evidence (although 2 consultants rejected this verb form)

• The speaker themself conducted the research, they work in a bureau of statistics, they analyzed the data → they have credible epistemic access → they have the authority to claim knowledge

# Claiming epistemic primacy and authority

(16) *60-ti*     *ar-jos-y*     *kolχoz-jos*     *vorsa-śky-ny*     **kutsk-i-zy**
     60-ORD     year-PL-INE     kolhkoz-PL     close-FRQ-INE     **start-PST1-3PL**

     *noš*  *gurt*     *kalyk*     *muket*     *aź-e*     **košk-i-z.**
     and  village     people     different     area-ILL     **leave-PST1-3SG**

     'In the 60s, they started to close down the collective farms and the townsfolk left to different regions.'

- The 1st past tense form is appropriate
  - If someone actually experienced this
  - If someone lived in the 60's - this does not necessarily mean direct evidence/experience but such people are more knowledgeable about the events than people who have not yet been alive then
  - If someone has done research on the topic
- ← such people can claim authority of knowledge

# Knowledge symmetry

- 1ˢᵗ past tense forms are used to express assimilated knowledge, factuality

(17) *Kalasnikov*      **kul-i-z**.
     PN                      **die-PST-3SG**
     'Kalasnikov died.'

- When it is still news, the 2ⁿᵈ past tense is preferred
- The 1ˢᵗ past tense indicates that it is an already known piece of information for everyone

# Summary

Considering epistemic primacy and authority

- The 2nd past tense can signal the speaker's lack of epistemic primacy, can disclaim epistemic authority

Considering intersubjective distribution

- Emphasizing the asymmetry of knowledge between the discourse participants
  - Addressee non-shared in questions
  - Speaker non-shared with mirative
- Complementary functions of the first past tense can be observed when contrasting the two tenses
  - Claiming epistemic primacy and authority
  - Knowledge symmetry

# Summary

- Better understanding about the use of the past tenses in actual speech situations and in interaction
- They are sensitive to the knowledge status of the discourse participants
- The interpretation of the tenses is context-sensitive and dynamic
  - They seem to be connected strongly to epistemic primacy/authority and to the territory of information
- Possibly not unique to Udmurt
  - Possible factor in all languages where evidentiality is not an obligatory grammatical category but it is the speaker's decision whether they mark it or not

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