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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 (Kèlin) 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 Johanson's so far most detailed study on aspect in Turcological literature resulted in a separate monograph, Johanson 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, Bybee 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 *zjedzenie* '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 Johanson's monograph. Another essential point of the study is the semantics of particular verbs, Lyons, *ibid.*

1.1. 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 unaspectual present, such as the past — *di*, cf. A k s u - K o ç, 1982: 18.

1.2. Static and dynamic verbs

The verbs are static (stative), including qualitative¹ and dynamic. Most verbs in world's languages are dynamic. L y o n 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.

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 *caş bol-* 'be young'; *kart bol-* 'be old'; *aq bol-* 'be white'. However, they usually have dynamic counterparts in verbs denoting processes *caşar-* 'to grow young'; *kartay-* 'to grow old'; *ağar-* 'to turn white'.

² However, N e d j a l k o v (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).

³ B y b e e (1985: 142) consider punctual a term alternative to perfective; L y o n s (1977: 707) contrasts it with non-punctual.

2. Situation in Turkic languages

2.1. Static and dynamic verbs

The verbs that inherently mark both the state and action and function as progressive auxiliaries are *cat-/yat-* 'to lie' and 'lie down'; *otur-* '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-final-transformative verbs, *ibid.* 214, which correspond to Lyons's (1977: 712) achievement-denoting verbs. This is roughly the same as Russian *predel'nye* vs. *nepredel'nye*, 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-*, *gel-*, *getir-*, *kalk-*, *kapat-*, *kır-*, *öl-*, *ver-*, *yak-*, *yırt-*, p. 197. I have adapted this pattern to Dobrudja Tatar (*x-di mi? Ya, x-di de taa x-a*) and tested then a number of verbs with my informant. The verbs that could not be used there were *añla-*, *bıl-*, *bıldır-*, *barıp al-* 'to lead; carry out', *başla-*, *eşit-*, *kapat-* (*kapını cap-*), *oxşa-* 'to resemble', *öl-*, *tokta-* 'to stop', *toy-* 'to have enough (of food, drink etc.)', *pıtır-* 'to finish sth' as well as *yerden, töşekten 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-*, *cak-*, (*yak-*), *cırt-* (*yırt-*), 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 *pregnancy*, Johanson 1971: 88ff; 118ff. 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 *-iyordu: -di*. The latter is exemplified by the gradual opposition between *-iyor: -mekte: -r*.

⁴ According to Lyons (1977: 711), states and processes are characterized by 'indefinitely 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 actionality, (Aktionsart) as put by Johanson. Russian Turcological literature refers to this category in a more general sense, terming it aspect (*vid*). Aspect in the majority of Turkic languages is expressed by auxiliary verbs.⁵ Although the principal auxiliary verbs may also be found in South-Western Turkic languages and are listed by more comprehensive grammars, see for instance *-I ver-*; *-A dur-*; *-A kal-*; *-A gör-*; *-A gel-*; *-A yaz-* in Banguoğlu (1986: 490–93), they do not occur very frequently and are more like ‘lexical modifiers’, Johanson (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 doubtless, Guzev (1988: 8–9).

As in earlier English literature and traditional practical grammars, progressive (continuous) aspect is not always clearly distinguished from tense.⁶ 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 grammar⁷ (present), Dykanov (1990: 284) and Moldabekov’s Kazakh textbook (present proper), Moldabekov (1992: 68), in contrast to Axmerov (1958: 777), Abdulbaev 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 Yat(ır)*, *-p tur-*, *-p cür-* and rarely *-p otır*.⁸

3.1. The marker *-A Yat(ır)*

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 nişliyatırsın?* BC(ÇB) 74 ‘What are you doing, Narık?’.

It is even compatible with the verb *cet-/yet-* ~ *-yetiş-* ‘attain; reach’

(2) *Borakay cuwurıp yetişiýatri.* (sic!) R2 61 ‘Borakay, running, is catching (me)’.

⁵ Some of them became morphological suffixes, e.g. Kirghiz — *Ata*, Turkish *-yor*.

⁶ Ambiguous statements can be found even in aspectual literature, e.g. ‘*-(j)A dur-* and *-(j)A jory-* 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’. Guzev (1988: 6).

⁷ This auxiliary verb has in Kirghiz the form *žat-*, albeit already Batmanov observed, referring to Radloff, that Southern Kirghiz dialects frequently employs the form *(-A) žatır*, too, Batmanov (1940: 54).

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) *Colda, ketip barayatıranda [...] bir cılarınñ [...] yuwasına kirecek bolganın köreler.* BC (EB) 44 'While they were walking, they saw on the road a snake that was crawling into its nest'.

(4) *Tablaga kretaman yazayatırğan kolı cogarda kımıldamay* R 2 63 'His hand, writing upon the blackboard, does not move upwards'.

As can be seen, these verbs may denote motion and be intransitive (monovalent), e.g. *bar-* 'go'; *kel-* 'come'; *ket-* 'leave; go' or action and be transitive (polivalent), e.g. *nışle-* 'what to do'; *cükle-* 'load'; *yaz-* 'write'.

2. With verbs denoting a process this form also points to the non-final stage.

(5) *kızınñ toyı bolayatıranda...* BC (ÇB) 70 'while there was the girl's wedding feast...'.
(6) *Cüre cüre akşam bolayadır.* R 1 62 'During the walk the night (evening) was (started) falling'.

3. With verbs denoting events, the auxiliary marks a stage around, near accomplishment, but not finished as yet

(7) *öliyatırman, insan balası.* BC (EB) 27 'I am dying, (being) man'.

Remarks:

(a) Sentences marked progressively, as non-deictic, combine with time e.g. *şimdi* 'now'; *tam* 'just' and other adverbials, e.g. *yavaş yavaş* 'slowly'.

(b) With the main verb on *-p*, the form *Yat-* denotes normally a state, e.g. (8) *kök yüzünde cayrap catkan bütin yıldızlar* R 1 224 'stars spread over the firmament' or a process (activity) enduring for some time, e.g. (9) *bır äkñ kündän bärñ aşıp işip žatirmiz* İÇB 7 'we have been eating and drinking for two days or so'. Rarely, this form is used alternatively to *-A Yat(ır)*.⁹ Also, it may denote its lexical meaning (10) *Borakay ayatta uwurılıp catırı.* R 2 63 'Borakay is lying in the hall' (the corps of the dead man lay there).

(c) The form *-A Yat(ır)* does not occur in past tenses and is never negated.

3.2. The marker *-p tur-*

1. It is employed similarly to *-A Yat(ır)* with the verbs that denote activity

(11) *Koyan balası bolarnı eşitken soñ, yuwasından atlap tura.* AKB 250 'The small rabbit, after hearing that, sprang from his home'.

and occurs in the past

(12) *Tülki koyannınñ sözín tıñlap turdı da...* R 2 221 'The fox listened to what the rabbit had said and...'

⁹ Attention to the alternative use of *-A* and *-p ğatır* in Kazakh was already drawn by Radloff (1911: 45).

2. It also marks processes

(13) *Colda bîr kuru başnîñ bim-biyaz bolıp tıgırıp turganın köre.* BC (EB) 16 'He sees a dried, white skull rolling on the road'.

3. And states

(14) *yuklap turgan cuwıruwçı* R 2 219 'a sleeping runner'.

(15) *O bîr mînsîz sap-saglam bolıp catıp tura* BC (EB) 30 'he is lying fairly well and sound'.

Remarks:

(a) The form discussed also combines with deictic adverbials, e.g. (16) *Bolar [...]* *alen cangırıp turalar.* R 3 135 'They are ringing at present'.

(b) If denied, it denotes a situation that did not last any long time (17) *Ursacıgar batır köp tüşünip turmagan.* BT 374 'Ursacıgar batır 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 menî damdan dünya carıgına şıgardıñ, kırk kün beslep turdıñ.* 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) *Albastı apakayı kete tursın, Kutlıkaya kawalın kolına alıp [...]* *şalmaga başlay.* BC (EB) 25 'When only his wife witch has gone, Kutlıkaya took the flute and started playing'. Occasionally, though, it appears to be a variant of -p tur-, (20) *Babañ o yerlerge menim arkama mînıp, uşıp bara turgan edi.* 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 vakıt* 'all the time', see R 3 136.

3.3. The marker -p cür-

1. In all kind of texts it is basically employed with the verbs of motion unmarked directionally and verbs referring to activities conceived as an occupation bound to movement. Here there are some examples: *adaşıp cür-* 'stray'; *aw awlap cür-* 'hunt'; *aksap cür-* 'limp; hobble'; *caldap cür-* 'swim'; *cuwurıklap cür-* 'run to and fro'; *gezıp cür-* 'walk'; (*koynı, mallarnı*) *karap/bagıp cür-* 'pasture (sheep, livestock); *köşıp cür-* 'migrate'; *otlap cür-* 'graze'; *otlatıp cür-* 'graze' (livestock); *şabıp cür-* 'run; rush'; *uşıp cür-* 'fly'.

In these cases, the auxiliary *cür-* is used instead of — *Yat(ır)* and *-tur*. It is worth nothing that the verbs of motion take *kel-* 'come' and *ket-* 'go' to express direction, e.g.

caldap kel- 'come swimming; swim here': *caldap ket-* 'swim away'

köşip kel- 'immigrate': *köşip ket-* 'emigrate' etc. including the verb *cür-* in the non-auxiliary usage. e.g. *Ormanga taban cüríp kete* AKB 248 '(he) is walking toward the forest'.¹⁰

2. Concerning other verbs, it appears that *-p cür-* is used alternatively to *-A Yat(ır)*

(21) *eşki bek balaban bir padişa bolıp cürgende* R 2 217 'when the goat was a great sovereign'

and is style-dependent. This auxiliary, by virtue of its lexical meaning, may suggest more dynamic activity

(22) *Kamır [...] eşki balları man oynap cüre eken.* idem. 'Kamir is playing with young goats'.

(23) *Sen bonday etíp ne atıp cüresin?* R 3 218 'what are you shooting so?' (the addressee performed an action marked by the auxiliary *-tur-*, he was *ok kadap turgan kışı* 'a man shooting arrows').

3. Lastly, this verb may suggest an action just indifferent to direction, not necessarily progressive

(24) *oman qayagman g'ezíp ğürdik, n'ettik, son men üigeçittim* K71 'We floated a boat with him, then I came home'.

3.4. The marker *-p otır-*

1. It was rarely encountered in the texts looked at. In addition, only in several instances was I able to decide that this verb stands for the auxiliary and not for what is its lexical characteristics

(25) *Arba sesí esítkende coldan erek saklanıp oturgan.* R 2 63 'Whenever he heard the sound of a chart, he hid far away from the road' (this man was in a walk).

(26) *Ne üşin cılap otırasın?* AKB 52 'Why are you weeping' (speaking to a horse).

2. Beyond this, *-otır-*, like in *catıp tur-*, denotes progressive aspect with the verb *cat-* 'lie'¹¹

¹⁰ The case of *şık-* 'go out; go up' is complicated and demands a separate analysis.

¹¹ In principle, *yat(ır)* combines with all the auxiliaries examined, including 'itself', i.e. *yatay-atır*, *tur-* was not evidences with *otır* and *cür-*, the segment *turıp tura*, according to my informant, means '(s/he) is standing and standing; is doing nothing', more restricted in usage is *otır-* which normally does not occur but with *yat-*. Finally, *cür-*, as a verb of motion, cannot occur with static verbs.

(27) *Bırkaş aylık balasıknıñ beşikte catıp otırğanın köz aldına ketireyik.* R 3 131 'Let us look upon (consider) a little baby of several months who is lying in the cradle'.

3. In all the other sentences, this form indicated the same as the forms discussed above, but while the subject or agent was sitting.

(2) *beklep otırğan aksakallı kartlar* BC (EB) 18 'waiting old men'

(2) *Bo işke karap otırğan halk bİR awuzdan bakırıp alkışlaganda cer-kök titregen* BT 374 'When people looking at this roared their approval, the earth and sky shook'.

4. Conclusion

1. The marking of aspect is in Dobrudja 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 Cenani Bolat's *Calsın* (R 2 61–64, written in Noghai dialect) it amounted to 8% (169 vs. 14), in *BİR kolektīv çifçi korantası* (OK 49–51, a reading for school children, standardized language) to 0% (28 vs. 0), in *Kozıkörpeş men Bayansılıw* (BC 227–36, a folk tale) to 8% (236, the verb *diy*, as an element of narration, was excluded vs. 14).

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

-p *tur-* ~ -p *otur*, e.g. *karap turalar* and *karap otırğanların köre*, cf. IČB 9 resp. BC (ÇB) 79;

-p *tur-* ~ -A *yatır*, e.g. *bolıp turganda* and *bolayatırğanda*, cf. idem 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) *senelerce turdım* R 1 53 'I've lived (there) for years'; (31) *pütün keşe cürgen* R 3 64 'He walked all the night'; (32) *Altı ay taa col cüre. Kete kete.* AKB 43 'He walked six months more, went and went'.

4. The auxiliaries that denote progressive aspect, except for *cür-*, 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 *tur* (<*turar*), *žür* (<*žürer*), *otır* (<*otırır*), probably most frequently used, accounts for this claim.

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