

Subjectivity in Tyvan narration

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1. Introduction

The present paper is devoted to the study of specific grammatical features and the correlation of two past tense markers *-GAn* and *-Dĭ* in Tyvan and their use in narration. The narrative as the linguistic structure allows us to study a range of phenomena in one language in a natural way. Since November 2020 we have recorded various narratives in Tyvan as a part of the JSPS Invitational Fellowship project: “A new collaborative approach with Russia to the documentation and studies on Altaic languages”, and in this work we are mainly dealing with the retelling of past events.

2. Evidentiality

The study of various past tense markers in Turkic languages has a long history. It is known that there are languages which use *-mĩš* or *-GAn* markers opposed to *-Dĩ*: the differences in their meaning and functions in certain languages was broadly described in several works by Johanson (2003), Isxakova et al. (2007), and in several series of articles by Aikhenvald (2003), Aikhenvald and Dixon (2014) in the studies of evidentiality.

Tuvan belongs to *-GAn* languages in expressing perfectivity and postterminality (Johanson 2003: 277). It is a neutral marker of past events, and is widely used in fiction, scientific literature, official and colloquial speech, media and correspondence (Oorzhak 2014: 96).

Thus, general narration of the past events in Tuvan is as follows (1-2):

- 1) mana-ar de-eš mana-p tur-gan bis
to.wait-PTCP.PST to.say-CV3 to.wait-CV2 to.stand-PTCP.PST 1.PL
'We had been waiting.' [JSPS_001_13]

-GAn is a neutral past, it also indicates a remote past and is used in all kinds of narration, describing past events:

- 2) oon ün-dür-üp-ken soo-nda men-i
then to.go.out-CAUS-PRF-PTCP.PST end.POSS.3-LOC 1.SG-ACC
ež-im utku-p al-gan
friend-POSS.1.SG to.meet-CV2 to.take-PTCP.PST
'After I was let go, my colleague met me' [JSPS_001_55]

The opposition of *-mĩš/-GAn* and *-Dĩ* as the markers of indirect and direct evidentiality is well known (Slobin&Aksu 1982: 186; Isxakova et al. 2007:

472), L. Johanson in his generalizing work on Turkic evidentiality underlines that marked evidential forms are in opposition to unmarked ones, where *-GAn* is the marked indirective and *-Dĭ* is an unmarked one (Johanson 2003: 275–276, 280).

Here are some examples of presenting these forms. When the speaker saw the action himself:

- 3) Ava-zĭ ber-di
 mother-POSS.3 to.give-PST
 ‘His mother gave’ (Someone’s mother gave something to someone)

When the speaker was told, heard someone telling the event, or concluded on the base of existing evidences and common sense:

- 4) Ava-zĭ ber-gen
 mother-POSS.3 to.give-PTCP.PST
 ‘His mother gave’ (as far as someone saw or was told)

However the next sentence (5) shows that the *-GAn* form can not be described only within the framework of evidentiality, and it confirms the idea of a neutral past mentioned in B. Oorzhak (2014). This exemplary sentence describes the events which took place 30 years ago, when a group of Tyvan throat-singers went to see the whales during their tour in the United States, and Alaska. In this whales’ story we have two rather identical, corresponding endings. First the speaker uses *-Dĭ* and then repeats it in *-GAn*, the event time is the same, but the choice of the markers shows the attitude of the speaker to the event:

- 5) šuut ol oina-p tur-gan čer-i-nge
 well that to.play-CV2 to.stand-PTCP.PST place-POSS.3-DAT

čed-e ber-gen ulus diin bis čanında aan
 to.reach-CV1 to.give-PTCP.PST people PTCL 1PL near PTCL
 oon kažan = na ulug če¹ ün-üp
 3SG.ABL when = PTCL big thing to.come_out-CV2
 ke-er ijin de-p inča-p
 to.come-PTCP.NPST PTCL to.say-CV2 to.do.like_that-CV2
 tur-uvus-ta šinap = la bol-za = daa ulug če
 to.stay-1PL-LOC right = PTCL to.be-COND = PTCL big thing
ün-dü ijin köör-üvüs-ke bol-za = daa ulug
 to.go_out-PST PTCL to.look-1.PL-DAT be-COND = PTCL big
 če ün-üp **kel-gen**
 thing to.go_out-CV2 to.come-PTCP.PST

‘We reached that exact place, where they played, and while we had
 been waiting, wondering when a big whale comes out, a really big
 thing **came out**. We watched and a very big thing **came out**.’ [Insta-
 gram 2020, 1a]

Here, the event, described by both *-GAn* and *-Dĭ* markers, is the same, it was
 seen and experienced by the speaker, however in a certain moment the
 speaker chooses *-Dĭ* over *-GAn*. The notion of firsthand or non-firsthand ev-
 identiality is not applicable to this example, because the speaker attended
 the event. The distance between the time of the event and the time of the
 speech also can not be taken into consideration, because the speaker is de-
 scribing the same event. In this case the example (4) can also be used when
 the speaker saw the described event himself, but without any reference to
 the source of information.

Thus, the main goal of this article is to understand the difference in
 using *-GAn* and *-Dĭ* forms in spontaneous narratives, and in this case we

¹ če is the colloquial contracted from *čüve* ‘thing’.

assume that the best framework for this study is the subjectivity, therefore egophoricity.

3. Subjectivity

To study the subjectivity in Tyvan narration, we follow the definition of subjectivity in (Benveniste 1971/1958: 226–227) as the “speaker’s presence” in language and language use. Subjectivity in narration leads to the shift of perspective. Expression of the speaker’s personal knowledge, experience or involvement of a conscious self is defined by the notion of egophoricity (San Roque et al. 2018). Egophoric forms (EGO) describe the speaker’s internal experience (internal thoughts and feelings), while non-egophoric forms (non-EGO) can not express such internal experience. In this case the speaker can take the perspective of other people who are involved in the narration.

In the following example we show that *-GAn* can be used not only in general narration, self-narration, third person narration, but in fairy tales too, as it was mentioned in B. Oorzhak (2014):

- 6) Čoorgan-nī ažiđ-īp okta-pt-ar-ga
 blanket-ACC to.open-CV2 to.throw-PRF-PTCP.NPST-DAT
 ool-dar-ī-nīj borbak baš-tar-ī čugl-up
 son-PL-POSS.3-GEN round head-PL-POSS.3 to.roll-CV2
 čit-kan
 to.lay-PTCP.PST
 ‘When (she) opened the blanket, her sons’ heads had been rolling there.’ [JSPS_002]

While in our data *-GAn* is an unmarked past, which is employed in narration of past events as the main tense marker, occasional occurrence of the recent

past *-Dİ* is found. Here again we have a nice combination of markers in another story about the events the speaker went through almost 30 years ago. It shows the difference between the two forms introduced above. Both markers describe the events the speaker saw and did long time ago: general narration is in *-GAn*, while *-Dİ* is used to underline what the speaker has experienced:

7) Ol bulut kīri-vīs-ka kel-gen-in
 that cloud up-POSS.1.PL-DAT come-PTCP.PST-POSS.3.ACC
 çerle esker-be-en bis. Men-i
 in_general notice-NEG-PTCP.PST 1PL 1SG-ACC
 ojna-pt-ar-ga, baž-īm-dan tura
 play-PRF-PTCP.PST-DAT head-POSS.1.SG-ABL from
 but-tar-īm-ga čedir silgi-p-silgi-p ködür-geš,
 foot-PL-POSS.1.SG-DAT until to.shake-CV2 lift-CV3
 okta-p-kan. Dop-doraan tur-a halī-dī-m.
 throw-PRF-PTCP.PST RDPL-right_away to.stand-CV1 to.run-PST-1SG
 ‘We haven’t noticed at all how that cloud came above us. When it
 (the lightning) played with me: shook from head till feet, lifted and
 threw (to the ground). I stood up right away (and went to check on
 others).’ [Instagram 2020, 1b].

Here the *-GAn* marker could have also been possible, however the speaker chose to express his actions with *-Dİ*, from what we define the following:

- GAn*: What “I” saw and what “I” did (experienced) (Neutral)
- Dİ*: What I did (experienced) (Egophoric)

Compared to revised and refined belles-lettres texts, fairy tales and other published materials, recordings of spontaneously narrated fairy tales is a good source of subjectivity analysis.

- 8) “Adir ool-dar-īm, men mündig bičii ool
 wait boy-PL-POSS.1.SG 1.SG such little boy
 ekkel-di-m, oonj = bile kadī
 to.bring-PST-1.SG 3.SG.GEN = with together
 ojna-ar siler” – de-eš barba-zin
 to.play-PTCP.NPST 2.PL to.say-CV3 bag-POSS.3.ACC
 ažid-ipt-ar-ga, kurug bol-gan.
 to.open-PRF-PTCP.NPST-DAT empty to.be-PTCP.PST
 ‘ “Wait, my sons, I brought this little boy, you will play with him” –
 she said and opened her bag, the bag was empty.’

Our fairy tales’ data shows that the recent past marker *-Dĩ* appears only in direct speech in an embedded clause, but the main clause is occupied by *-GAN*. However, the use of *-Dĩ* marker is also possible, and depends on the story teller. We interpret it as follows: in fairy tales the narrator does not belong to the “story world” (Zubin et al. 1995: 132–133), which is why he/she can not use *-Dĩ* marker. The character of the story world can describe its past actions and past events in the story world through his/her interpretation using *-Dĩ*, if the character wants to assert his/her own actions or the events he/she went through, or *-GAN* – if he/she wants to take a neutral stance. The time the narrator uses *-Dĩ* form, when telling the story, means the following: the narrator shifts himself into the story world and becomes the so called observer of all the events and actions in the story. Same goes to the self-narrations and third person narrations.

- 9) Belek sad-öp al-ir bol-zu-m-za,
 present to.buy-CV2 to.take-PTCP.NPST to.be-COND-1.SG-COND
 ol kil kövüde-j be-er bol-za, artik
 that weight to.increase-CV1 to.give-PTCP.NPST to.be-COND extra

neme-j oon = daa aar bod-um-nuŋ sad-ïp
 to.add-CV1 3.SG.ABL = PTCL heavy self-POSS.1.SG-GEN to.buy-CV2
 al-gan biled-im ortee-nden bezin aar
 to.take-PTCP.PST ticket-POSS.1.SG price.POSS.3-ABL even heavy
 apa-ar bol-gaš, čü'g-üm čü'k,
 to.become-PTCP.PST to.be-CV3 luggage-POSS.1.SG luggage
 nemelde čü'k sad-ïp šida-vajn
 additional luggage to.buy-CV2 to.be.able-NEG.CV
 bar-dï-m
 to.go-PTCP.PST-1.SG

'If I buy a present, if the weight of my luggage becomes heavy, because the weight of my luggage will exceed the limit of my ticket rate, I could not buy additional things.' [JSPS_003]

This self-narration was told mostly with -GAn forms in main clauses, but some passages has -Dĭ forms to underline the speaker's involvement. The same goes with (10), where the speaker is not an actor, but the receiver:

10) oon aŋaa kir-e be-er-im-ge
 that.ABL that.DAT to.enter-CV1 give-PTCP.NPST-1.SG-DAT
 baza meŋee moči, čaa čil-diŋ moči
 also 1.SG.DAT rice_cake new year-GEN rice_cake
 dalgan-ïn ber-di.
 flour-POSS.3.ACC to.give-PST
 'And then when I entered, I was also given a new year's rice cake.'
 [JSPS_003]

The presence of the hearer, who also participated in the described event in the past, increases the usage of -Dĭ which not only describes the recent past, but also asserts that the speaker and the hearer had experienced the events

himself, and in this very example the colloquial particle *čop* strengthens the speaker's involvement – the speaker here reminds the information already known to the hearer (Syuryun 2017: 68):

- 11) *iji dugaar telefon čok, am arta ĩnda ol čaa batareja*
 two number telephone no now even there that new battery
sad-ĭp al-dĭ-vĭs čop
 to.buy-CV2 to.take-PST-1PL PTCL
 'There is no second phone, moreover, we have bought a new battery.' [JSPS_003]

As it was described above, there are three possibilities to tell these narrations: from the speaker's perspective, the observer's perspective and the actor (character)'s perspective. The speaker is the person who tells the story and can be called as the narrator. The observer is also the narrator, however he is the person who observed the events in reality or as if in reality (for example, in fairy tales). The actor is the person who is the character of the narration be it a self-narration, the third person narration or a fairy tale. Our angle of analysis describes the speaker's choice of involvement: the speaker himself chooses will he be involved or stay neutral presenting the experienced event. The next example is the extract from an attempt to tell a story as a third person narration. In some parts of the recorded narration a so-called speaker uses *-Dĭ* to show that the message was directly delivered by the third person to the speaker:

- 12) *Čüge di-ze ĩjadĭnčĭg čüve ije*
 why to.say-COND shameful thing yes
aŋdar-ĭl-gan-ĭ aŋdar-ĭl-gan, am
 to.drop-PASS-PTCP.PST-POSS.3 to.drop-PASS-PTCP.PST now
ĩnčal-za = daa, bir eves üjen = dajan ol jubka dĭka

to.do.so-COND=PTCL one not messy that skirt very
 korgunčug or-l-up ka-an bol-za,
 terrible to.tear-PASS-CV2 to.put-PTCP.PST to.be-COND
 taa kanča-p čan-ar men” – de-p
 PTCL to.do.how-CV2 to.go.home-PTCP.NPST 1.SG to.say-CV2
 boda-p tur-gan men’ – de-p
 to.think-CV2 to.stand-PTCP.PST 1.SG to.say-CV2
 damčit-ti mejee.
 to.relay-PST 1.SG.DAT
 ‘She told me: ‘I thought that “Yes, I have fallen down, it is a shame-
 ful fact, however, if the skirt was awfully ripped, I have no idea
 how I would have gone home”.’ [JSPS_006_32]

The usage of *-Dĩ* marker could indicate that the event was recent, although the concept of recentness can be questioned. Especially if there are adverbial modifiers of time to tag recently happened events (just, just now, recently, etc.), *-GAn* marker can not occur. In fact, the story was already recorded as a self-narration, and in first person narration all the main clauses were in *-GAn*. The *-Dĩ* marker in Tyvan can not be used if the event was not seen or experienced by the speaker directly. In this narration the speaker acts as if he/she took part in that event, which means taking the observer’s perspective.

4. Conclusion

In the Tyvan language both *-GAn* and *-Dĭ* forms occur in narration: general narration, self-narration, third person narration, fairy tales. As it was shown above the directivity and indirectivity analysis is not sufficient in this case. We should put aside the distinction of the source of information, was the information obtained directly or indirectly; but how the speaker describes the event: subjectively (egophoric) or objectively (neutral). The default choice should be objective description, however in some cases the speaker can choose the subjective description. It is attested by the usage of these two forms in narrative texts and the differences in the self-narration and third-person narration.

Abbreviations

1	first person	LOC	locative
3	third person	NEG	negative
ABL	ablative	NPST	non-past
ACC	accusative	PASS	passive
CAUS	causative	PL	plural
COND	conditional	POSS	possessive
CV	converb	PRF	perfect
CV1	converb 1 (simultaneous)	PST	past
CV2	converb 2 (perfective)	PTCL	particle
CV3	converb 3 (sequential)	PTCP	participle
GEN	genitive	SG	singular

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ABSTRACT

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The study of difference in meaning and functions of various past tense markers in Turkic languages has a long history. The everlasting discussion is inexhaustibly carried out on the distinction of *-mĩš/-GAn* and *-Dĩ* in many detailed descriptions of these two markers in various Turkic languages by Johanson (2003), Isxakova et al. (2007), and in several series of articles by Aikhenvald (2003), Aikhenvald and Dixon (2014) in the studies of evidentiality.

This presentation is devoted to the specific features of the correlation of the markers *-GAn* and *-Dĩ* in Tyvan and their use in narration. Tyvan lacks the *-mĩš* marker. The remote past is expressed by *-GAn*, while the recent past - by *-Dĩ*. Tyvan *-GAn* is a neutral marker of the past events, and is widely used in fiction, scientific literature, official and colloquial speech, media and correspondence (Oorzhak 2014).

However, while *-GAn* is an unmarked past, which is employed in narration of past events as the main tense, occasional occurrence of the direct past *-Dĩ* is witnessed. The past marker *-Dĩ* in our studies is used not only as the marker of the actions the speaker did (1SG), but also witnessed (3SG). Although the *-GAn* form does express the events, which the narrator could experience himself, the use of *-Dĩ* form indicates the subjective feature of the

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statement, thus, *-GAn* form, being a neutral marker, expresses objectivity in narration in Tyvan. This observation very well fits the identification of egophoricity in a certain language (San Roque et al. 2018), when the prospective of the narration shifts from the past event and centers on the speech time and place. Thus, this is the first time, when the Tyvan tense markers are described in the framework of egophoricity.