Hill Mari verbal constructions on âl'ə̂ / ə̂lə̂n: discontinuous past and beyond

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Introduction

➢ **What:**
verbal clitics *âl'ə̂ / âlə̂n* – "frozen" forms of *to be* in 3SG.AOR / 3SG.PRF respectively;
combine with verbs in NPST and PRF;
clitics are often, although not always, interchangeable; the distribution of clitics needs further investigation

➢ **Where & When:**
Uralic languages > Finno-Ugric > Mari > Hill Mari
Field trip to the Gornomari district of Mari El, Russia, 2016

➢ **Method:**
mainly elicitation

Theoretical background

âl'ə̂ / âlə̂n – "discontinuous past" markers, or "retrospective shift" markers [Plungian, van der Auwera 2006], [Sitchinava 2013]
Function: **change the default temporal interpretation** of the verbal form they apply to, **"move" the situation backwards** on the pivot of time.

(1) mən' škol-ə̂škə̂ **kej-em**.
    I   school-ILL   go-NPST.1SG
'I **go** to school.'

(2) mən' škol-ə̂škə̂ **kej-em** âl'ə̂ / âlə̂n.
    I   school-ILL go-NPST.1SG RETR1 / RETR2
'I **went** to school.'

Intragenetic typology
[Tsypanov 2005], [Sitchinava 2013]
Verb + be.PST.3SG

❑ **Udmurt: *val***

PST + *val*	discontinuous past proper, anti-resultative
PRS + *val* ➡	past progressive
FUT + *val*	past habitual

❑ **Komi-Zyrian: *völi***

PRS + *völi* ➡	past progressive, discontinuous past proper
PRF + *völi*	pluperfect

❑ **Meadow Mari: *əle***

Similar to Komi-Zyrian

PRS + *əle* ➡	past progressive, discontinuous past proper
PRF + *əle*	pluperfect

❑ **Moksha: *-əl'* (suffix)**

luv-əms 'read-INF' – *luv-əl'* 'read-PQP'
    ➡ past progressive, past habitual

Semantics of the construction

NPST + âl'ə̂ / âlə̂n	PF + âl'ə̂ / âlə̂n

<u>Past Progressive</u>
(3) kânam män'ə̂ pə̂r-ə̂š-ə̂m   vas'a
    when I   come-AOR-1SG Vas'a
    knigä-m **lə̂d-eš** **âl'ə̂** /??**âlə̂n**.
    book-ACC read-NPST.3SG RETR1 / RETR2
'When I came, Vas'a **was reading** a book.'
	<u>Pluperfect</u>
	(5) kânam mä tol-ə̂n-na, kečə̂ uže
	    when we come-PRF-1PL sun already
	    šə̂nz-ə̂n **âl'ə̂** / **âlə̂n**.
	    sit.down-PRF.3SG RETR1 / RETR2
	'When we came, the sun **had** already **gone down**.'

<u>Past Habitual</u>
(4) Pet'a izi-žə̂   godə̂m každə̂j kečə̂-n
    Pet'a small-POSS.3SG during every   day-GEN
    lem-äm **kačk-eš** **âl'ə̂ / âlə̂n**.
    soup-ACC eat-NPST.3SG RETR1 / RETR2
'Pet'a **ate** soup every day in his childhood.'
	<u>Discontinuous past proper</u> (the action is no longer occurring in the present)
	(6) šukerdä pervi ivan groznâj **əl-en**
	    ago earlier Ivan the.Terrible live-PRF.3SG
	    âlə̂n /??**âl'ə̂**.
	    RETR2 / RETR1
	'Ivan the Terrible lived long ago.'

<u>Mirativity</u> (situation is viewed as surprising / unexpectable for the speaker [DeLancey 1997]); with a reference to the present moment),
see (8)
	<u>"Cancelled" result</u>, or "anti-resultative" [Plungian 2001] (non-existence of consequent state or result of an action at the moment of speech)
	(7) Van'a šərgə̂-štə̂ **jam-ə̂n** **âl'ə̂** / **âlə̂n**,
	    Van'a forest-IN get.lost-PRF.3SG RETR1 / RETR2
	    vara tädə̂-m mo-n-ə̂t.
	    then he-ACC find-PRF-3PL
	'Van'a **got lost** in the forest, but was found then.'

	<u>Mirativity</u> (provided lack of agentive control), see (9)-(10)

Shedding light on mirativity

Reference to the present

(8) A: van'a, tən' ma piš sə̂lə̂k âl-at?
    Van'a you what very sad   be-NPST.2SG
'Van'a, why are you so sad?'
    B: dä anž-et   gən', pet'a zabor-âm
    well look-NPST.2SG PTCL Pet'a fence-ACC
    čiält-ä **âlə̂n** /??**âl'ə̂**! A vet män' äške
    paint-NPST.3SG RETR2 / RETR1 but PTCL I   self
    čiält-ə̂n-em âl'ə̂.
    paint-OPT-1SG RETR1
'Well, look, Pet'a **is painting** the fence! But I wanted to do it myself.'

Reference to the past

(9) män' tengečə̂ omə̂n-ə̂stə̂ **kašt-ə̂n-am**
    I   yesterday sleep-IN   walk-PRF-1SG
    âl'ə̂ / **âlə̂n**.
    RETR1 / RETR2
'It turned out that I **walked** while sleeping yesterday.'
vs.
(10) män' tengečə̂ lapka-š **kašt-ə̂n-am**
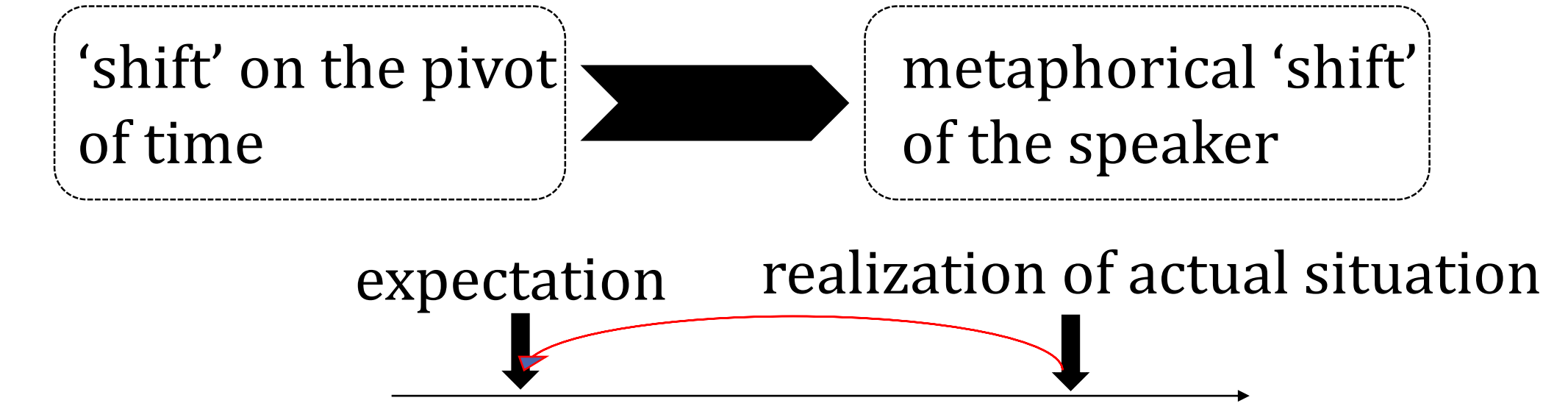   I   yesterday shop-ILL walk-PRF-1SG
    (***âl'ə̂** / ***âlə̂n**).
    RETR1 / RETR2
'I **went** to the shop yesterday.'

Hypothesis 1: Diachronic approach to mirativity as an extension of evidentiality

✓ Hill Mari Perfect – an old evidential form (formerly marking non-firsthand evidence, while Aorist marked firsthand evidence [Savatkova 2002])
✓ *âlə̂n* – "frozen" Perfect form, more preferable in mirative contexts referring to present
✓ development of evidentiality into mirativity is widely typologically attested [Aikhenvald 2004]
Arguments contra: - no strict constraints on the use of the old firsthand form *âl'ə̂* are found;
    - the old firsthand form *âl'ə̂* is compatible with the mirative meaning as well

Hypothesis 2: mirativity as development of the discontinuous past marker

❖ concept of **distance**:
  o <u>discontinuous past</u> markers – introduce a **temporal or notional break** between the **point of reference** and the **situation**: metaphorical "detachment" or "shift" on the pivot of time
  o <u>mirativity</u> – introduces a **notional break** between the **speaker's expectations** and **her realization of an actual situation**; provides '**self-distancing** of the speaker from the situation, about which a surprise is being expressed' [Chirikba 2003]

'shift' on the pivot of time ➡ metaphorical 'shift' of the speaker

expectation   realization of actual situation

Conclusion

✓ *âl'ə̂ / âlə̂n* – markers with a **discontinuous past vs. mirative polysemy**
✓ while the expression of meanings from the domain of discontinuous past is typologically wide-spread, the **mirative "extension"** has **not yet** been **described** in closely related languages
✓ we consider **mirativity** as a **metaphorical extension of discontinuous past** based on the notion of **distance**

Abbreviations
1, 2, 3 – 1, 2, 3 person, ACC – accusative, AOR – aorist, GEN – genitive, ILL – illative, IN – inessive, INF – infinitive, NPST – non-past tense, OPT – optative, PRF – perfect, PL – plural, POSS – possessive, PQP – pluperfect, PST – past, PTCL – particle, RETR1, 2 – "retrospective shift" / discontinuous past marker, SG – singular

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