

On the Uses of So-called Evidential Form in Archi¹

In this paper I will discuss finite uses of the verbal form in -li in Archi basing on the new field data. In such uses, the form in -li is characterized by Kibrik 1977 as evidential, and distinguished from non-finite uses of the same surface form, which functions like a converb of precedence:

1. jarχul ʃonnol daqIali, tor ʃanna došmirak erq'is aru
sister-in-law come-LI that woman to.sister bring.PFV

The sister-in-law came and [she = "that woman"] brought me to the sister.

The form in -li can indeed have evidential reading:

2. ʃonnol bəsa orqa? – ʃanɿi orqa-li,
woman when go.PFV yesterday go-LI

When did the wife go away? – She went yesterday. (as they say)

as opposed to the unmarked past perfective form:

3. ʃonnol bəsa orqa? – ʃanɿi orqa
woman when go.PFV yesterday go.PFV

When did the wife go away? – She went yesterday.

However, the independent uses of the li-form go far beyond the expression of evidentiality. Examples of li-forms that can not be analyzed as conveying evidential meaning have been cited by Kibrik 1977; however, there has been proposed no convincing analysis of such cases.

First, independent li-forms can have resulting state reading, thus competing with the analytical resultative form (li-form + copula; Kibrik 1977 calls this construction "Perfect"):

4. k'ob eχni-li (i) k'arlit
clothes hang-LI COP on.tree

Clothes are hanging on the tree.

Remark that in such contexts the li-form can indeed denote a state, and can be combined with an aspectual adverb like 'still':

5. ʃonnol jonsaw arχu-li (di)
woman still lie-LI COP

The woman is still sleeping.

It can be suggested, basing on such examples, that the li-form is derived from the resultative construction through the omission of copula. However, in many examples the copula can not be inserted:

6. zari č'an obqu
I sheep sell.PFV

I sold the sheep.

7. zari č'an obqu-li
I sheep sell-LI

I have sold the sheep.

8. #zari č'an obqu-li bi
I sheep sell-LI COP

#The sheep is in state of having been sold by me.

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In such uses the li-form may convey neither evidential nor stative semantics, but rather Perfect, often invoking recent past time reference:

9. un han kunne-li?
 thou what eat-LI

What have you eaten? (recently)

As a Perfect, the li-form is opposed to the regular perfective form, which can refer to any given point in the past, and does not imply the relevance of the action for the present moment:

10. un han kunne?
 thou what eat.PFV

What did you eat? (at a given moment in the past)

11. ʃanna gelgəč'o čučə bos orqa
 woman dishes to.wash go.PFV

The woman went to wash the dishes. (at a given moment in the past)

12. ʃanna gelgəč'o čučə bos orqa-li
 woman dishes to.wash go-LI

[A: *Where is the woman?* – B:] *The woman has gone to wash the dishes.*

One formal property that distinguishes the perfect li-form from the perfective form is, like in English, the ability to co-occur with temporal adverbials:

13. un šanxi han kunne?
 thou yesterday what eat.PFV

What did you eat yesterday?

14. #un šanxi han kunne-li?
 thou yesterday what eat-LI

#What have you eaten yesterday?

The li-form co-occurring with a temporal adverb can only be interpreted in a very marked context, emphasizing both the recentness of the action and the relevance of its result for the present moment :

15. zari šanxi ʃonnol orqa
 I yesterday woman take.PFV

I got married yesterday.

16. zari šanxi ʃonnol orqa-li
 I yesterday woman take-LI

[A: *Give us some money.* B:] *I got married just yesterday. [So I have nothing to give you now]*

In the perfect reading the li-form implies that the result of the action is still lasting:

17. zarak k_i qa-li?
 to.me who come-LI

Who has come to me? (#not appropriate if s/he who came has already gone)

18. kanana zon q_a-li
 here I come-LI

Here I am (lit. Here have I come).

Yet another reading that the form in -li can convey is the remote past, as in the following example:

19. zari nol' aw
I house build.PFV

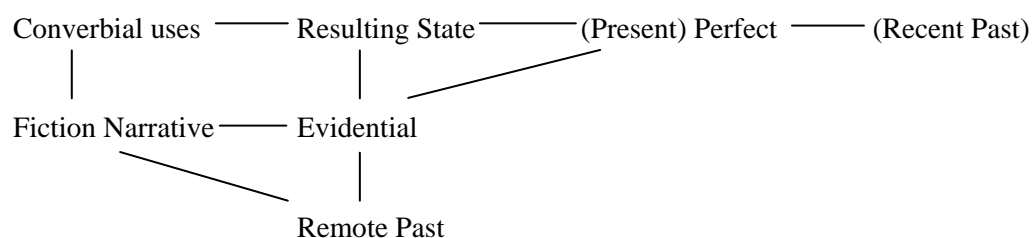
I built a house.

20. zari nol' aw-li
I house build-LI

I built a house (long ago).

The form in -li is also the default verbal form in certain types of narratives, namely those where the story-teller doesn't engage for the truthfulness of the story; such are all fairy tales, anecdotes, legends etc. The perfective is used by default in the stories about the teller's own experience or if the teller indicates clearly that s/he is telling a true story (such is the text #1 in Kibrik et al. 1977 Archi texts collection; the story-teller apparently wasn't an eyewitness of what she told, but introduced it as a "thing that happened" that supports her generalizations about the past). This "Fiction" narrative type of use might have been derived from converbial uses through clause-chaining.

The range of uses of the li-form and conjecturable connections between them can be represented by the following scheme:



References

- A. E. Kibrik 1977: Opyt strukturnogo opisaniia archinskogo iazyka. T. 2. Moscow.
 A. E. Kibrik, S. V. Kodzasov, I. P. Oloviannikova, D. S. Samedov 1977: Archinskii iazyk: teksty I slovari. Moscow.