

The Distribution of Adyghe Potential Marker: from Modality to Non-finiteness

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The paper examines the semantics of the second future in *-n* in Adyghe. Reference grammars treat the future in *-n* as a ‘future with a hint of necessity’ (Rogava, Kerasheva 1966: 198), ‘the future of necessity or intention’ (Kumakhov 1971: 214). I show that the distribution of Adyghe second future is not limited to the semantics of intention or necessity, and suggest another interpretation of this form. I base my analysis on spoken Adyghe data collected in the village Hakurinoahable in Shovgen district.

As a ‘future of necessity’ the form in *-n* develops a number of meanings typical for the modal markers of necessity (see Bybee e.a. 1994, Van der Auwera, Plungian 1998), as:

- A. Arranged future;
- B. Imperative;

However, the distribution of the *n*-form in independent clauses is not limited to the semantic patterns listed above. It has a range of meanings that are not characteristic for the modal markers of necessity, e.g.:

C. A spontaneously taken decision, cf. (a) and (b):

- (1) a. *njewəš' ž'ew səqətež'əš't.* b. *njewəš' ž'ew səqətež'əŋ.*
{We have arranged to go to the museum I will get up early tomorrow (I've just
tomorrow.} I am going to get up early. decided to do so).

D. Possibility, both agent-oriented (2) and epistemic (3):

- (2) *azamat njewəš' školəm k_wenep əšəpχ_w jəž'eg_wəš.*
Azamat won't be able to go to school tomorrow. His sister is getting married.
- (3) *pčəhašhe weš'x qeš'xəŋ.*
It may rain this evening. (Rogava, Kerasheva 1966: 199)

- E. Advice (i.e. the speaker asking the addressee for advice);
- F. Threat.

Hence, the question arises about the semantics of the *n*-form: what meaning is common for all the interpretations enumerated above. I argue that the semantics of the marker *-n* can be clarified if another class of Adyghe constructions is taken into consideration, namely, complement clauses with the masdar in *-n* (which Kumakhov (1989: 188) considers as a diachronic source of the second future in *-n*). The masdar appears as head of complement clauses with matrix verbs of intention, volition, or desire (4) and in context of mental verbs (5), when the speaker is uncertain whether the situation encoded by the complement clause would take place.

- (4) *tjane qebarər qətfjə_wətənew zjəbəhazərə.*
Mother is going (is planning to) tell us a tale.
- (5) *sjeneg_wəje azamat njepə ekzamenər ətənew.*
I think Azamat will pass the exam today (he hasn't taken the exam yet).

I show that the *n*-forms in complement clauses have the following interpretation: they denote (a) a potential event (b) of mediate epistemic value, (c) that is object of the speaker's attitude, introducing an intensional context. I suggest that these semantic components are crucial for the interpretation of the second future in *-n*. In particular, the condition (c) requires presence of an implicit operator (of intention (A, C, and F), persuasion (B), or opinion (D and E)), which indicates the speaker's attitude and introduces an intensional context. This operator can be chosen differently depending on the pragmatic context. Hence, a wide range of meanings observed in A-F above.

To sum up, the *n*-form in independent sentences requires for an intensional context, which is either expressed in the matrix verb, or is implicit. In that case the *n*-form can express the meanings illustrated in A-F. Such characteristics are typologically common for non-finite forms,

see Kalinina 2001. This claim is validated by Kumakhov 1989 analysis of the diachronic source of 'second future' in *-n* as a non-finite form.

References

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