Strategies to mark actional modification
Uralic and Turkic languages apply different strategies to mark actional modification. De-
verbal derivation is usual in Uralic, e.g. Khanty äy̞ət- ‘cuts’ vs. frequentative äy̞ət-l- ‘cuts
into many pieces’, keeywar- ‘(water) boils’ vs. inchoative keeywar-am- ‘(water) begins to
boil’, kuul- ‘rises’ vs. momentaneous keel-ay̞- ‘gets up for a little while’ (Abondolo 1998: 381).
Turkic languages, on the other hand, make use of so-called postverbal constructions. The
functions of the postverbal constructions largely correspond to those of Indo-European pre-
verbal constructions, where a preverb (prèverbe, Präverbium, preverbio) modifies a follow-
ing verbal lexeme and ultimately undergoes univerbation with it, e.g. German ausgehen ‘to go
out’ (gehen ‘to go’, aus ‘out’). The use of preverbs is an areal phenomenon, characteristic also
of Hungarian, e.g. meggy ‘goes’ vs. the preverbal form ki-meggy ‘go out’, specifying spatial
orientation.

Morphological properties
Turkic languages have developed systems of postverbal constructions, consisting of a lexical
verb in converbal form followed by an auxiliary verb of a restricted class (Johanson 2002:
91–97). The auxiliary verbs are actional operators, serving the expression of actionality (ak-
tionsart), operating on various types of verbs and actional phrases and modifying their in-
trinsic actional values, describing the manner of action in qualitative and quantitative terms
more accurately than is possible with single lexical verbs. They may convey highly differenti-
ated shades of meaning.
The constructions are based on limited sets of auxiliary verbs with strongly generalized gram-
matical meanings. The lexical source verbs are motion verbs meaning ‘to go’, ‘to come’, ‘to
go away’, ‘to go out’, ‘to proceed’, postural verbs meaning ‘to stand’, ‘to remain’, ‘to sit’, ‘to
lie’, phasal verbs such as ‘to begin’, ‘to finish’, and verbs denoting various activities such as
‘to do’, ‘to put’, ‘to place’, ‘to hold’, ‘to throw’, ‘to send’, ‘to give’, ‘to take’, ‘to see’ (Csató
& Johanson 2014).
The grammatical functions of the constructions are mostly not predictable from the lexical
meanings of the source verbs. The individual languages often employ different auxiliaries to
express one and the same actional notion, and one and the same lexical verb has been gram-
maticized to convey different actional meanings. Thus, constructions with her- ‘to give’ are
transformativizers and also express continued, sudden, or unintentional action, objective
version, etc. Nonetheless, many similarities are found across the various systems. A number
of constructions show identical patterns in the different branches of the Turkic language fam-
ily.
The Turkic auxiliaries are mostly free forms, not yet incorporated into their preceding lexical
hosts. However, the constructions represent various degrees of agglutination. In the course of
the grammaticization processes, their shapes have sometimes been significantly reduced. In
a few cases, they are already suffixes, mostly subject to sound harmony, e.g. Turkish yaz-a-
dur- [write-CONVERB STAND.AUXILIARY] ‘to continue writing’. The convertible suffix has some-
times fused with the auxiliary verb into one grammatical suffix, e.g. Turkish gir-iver- [enter-
IVER] ‘to enter suddenly’. The suffix -(y)Iver- goes back to iːδ-u ber- [send-CONVERB
GIVE.AUXILIARY] ‘to send away, to release’.
In some cases, the converb marker and the auxiliary verb have fused into a single, synchroni-
cally unanalyserable lexeme, e.g. akːal- ‘to bring’ < al-îp kâl- [take-CONVERB COME.AUXIL-
IARY].
The converb suffix is sometimes dropped so that the auxiliary verb is attached directly to the
verb stem. In Khakas, the converb marker is maintained after vocalic stems, but mostly
reduced to zero after consonantal stems, e.g. *pas sal- [write-SET-FREE.AUXILIARY] ‘to write down’ < *bas-ip sal- [write-CONVERB AUXILIARY].

**Phase specification**

Postverbal constructions are used for phase specification, highlighting an inherent phase of the meaning of the actional phrase, specifying it qualitatively or quantitatively. The basic classificatory criterion is transformativity. An actional content is transformative or non-transformative. Postverbal constructions can recategorize the internal phase structure, specifying one inherent phase of the action (Johanson 2000: 66–76). Connotations of durativity, continuity, intensity, suddenness, involuntary or unintentional action, etc., are often effects of these functions. In the talk, postverbal constructions of different types including transformatizing and non-transformatizing constructions, constructions expressing version based on verbs meaning ‘to give’ and ‘to take’, constructions expressing potentiality, constructions expressing spatial orientation based on motion verbs meaning ‘to come’ and ‘to go away’ will be presented.

**Postverbal constructions grammaticalized as viewpoint-aspect markers**

In the last part of the talk further grammaticalization of certain postverbal constructions as viewpoint aspect markers will be illustrated. A few postverbal constructions expressing actionality have developed into viewpoint-aspect markers. These items originally expressed high degrees of focality, focusing on the orientation point in the sense of progressives (‘X is just now doing’). They eventually turned into items of lower focality, simple presents and imperfects.

Constructions with (b) tur-ur developed into viewpoint-aspect operators renewing the expression of postterminality (resultatives, perfects, constatives), e.g. *Yaz-ıb tur-ur [write-CONVERB STAND.AUXILIARY-AORIST] ‘X stands having written’. They underwent phonetic erosion, fusion of the converb marker with the auxiliary and partial or total loss of tur-ur, e.g. Azeri Gäl-ıb-sän [come-CONVERB-2SG] ‘You have come’. The constructions originally expressed high degrees of focality in the sense of resultatives (‘X is in the state of having’), but later turned into items of lower focality, which led to further renewals of high focality by means of yat- ‘to lie’, e.g. Khakas Uzu-p-čat-χan [sleep-CONVERB LIE.AUXILIARY-POSTTERMINAL] ‘X has slept’.

**References**


