In this talk I deal with habitual past tenses and their relatedness to the future tense from synchronic and diachronic perspectives by taking a closer look at the habitual past tense in Udmurt (Finno-Ugric; Permic). I present a synchronic analysis of its use (based on corpus data), and discuss the diachronic changes in the tense system of Udmurt. The diachronic issues addressed here are related to the grammaticalization of habitual past tenses as well as the change of a present tense marker into a future tense marker.

Udmurt has the following synthetic tenses: present, future, past and evidential past tense (EVID.PST). The analytical tenses are formed by combining a synthetic verb form with the morphologically invariant past copula *val* or its evidential counterpart *vi lem*. According to Winkler (2001) and Kel’makov & Hännikäinen (1999), the ‘FUT + val/vilem’ analytic tense expresses an iterative/habitual action in the past, as shown in (1).

(1) (Udmurt Corpus: Удмурт дунне, 2012.04.24)

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{Tolalte} & \quad \text{žïtjosj} & \quad \text{mi} & \quad \text{dorj} & \quad 3-4 & \quad \text{kuža} & \quad \text{pereś-jos} \\
\text{in.winter} & \quad \text{in.the.evenings} & \quad 1\text{PL} & \quad \text{to} & \quad 3-4 & \quad \text{PSP} & \quad \text{old-PL} \\
\text{kut} & \quad \text{kutan-en} & \quad \text{puki}̈nj & \quad \text{lïkt-o-z̄} & \quad \text{val}. \\
\text{bast.shoe} & \quad \text{braiding-INS} & \quad \text{to.sit} & \quad \text{come-FUT-3PL} & \quad \text{PST}
\end{align*}
\]

‘In winter, a couple of elderly people used to come to our place in the evenings to braid bast shoes.’

Kel’makov & Hännikäinen (1999: 246–247) present a full paradigm (1/2/3 person SG/PL), but provide only third person examples. Winkler (2001: 48) explicitly states that this tense can be used only in the third person. Based on the Udmurt Corpus\(^1\), I show that these verb forms occur only in 3PL (as in (1)), 3SG or 2SG, cf. (2) below.

(2) (Udmurt Corpus: Иднакар, 2012.03.08)

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{Ažlo} & \quad \text{vuž} & \quad \text{jurt-in} & \quad \text{kiñm̄-sa} & \quad \text{bir-o-d} & \quad \text{val}. \\
\text{before} & \quad \text{old} & \quad \text{building-INE} & \quad \text{freeze-CVB} & \quad \text{die-FUT-2SG} & \quad \text{PST}
\end{align*}
\]

‘You’d freeze to death in the old building before.’

Thus, it is disputable whether we are dealing with a “tense” since this past habitual construction is not attested in all person/number combinations. Note that in (2), the subject is a generic you, and in (1), it is an indefinite NP. Additionally, many of the 3PL examples from the corpus have a non-referential 3PL subject. The fact that this construction expresses generic statements about non-referential subjects explains why 2SG and 3PL forms are attested (which otherwise do not form a natural class).

As far as the diachronic development of habitual past tenses is concerned, Bybee et al. (1994: 153–158) argue that one possible diachronic path is the change of a future tense marker into a habitual past tense marker, and give three examples: the habitual use of English would, the Udmurt habitual past and the future tense marker in Inuit. Haspelmath (1998) explains the link between future tense and habitual past tense as a side-effect of a diachronic change: in several unrelated languages, new present tense markers have developed from progressive aspect forms, and consequently, the old present tense has become a future marker. One of the languages discussed by Haspelmath (1998) is Udmurt. Furthermore, Haspelmath (1998) argues that the habitual past tense forms should be viewed as ‘PRS + copula’.

The change of the Udmurt present tense marker to future tense marker is undisputable, but Haspelmath’s (1998) analysis is built on (reconstructed) paradigms (based on Serebrennikov 1963), and not on texts. I investigate Udmurt texts from the 19th century (Munkácsi 1887), and

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\(^1\) The Udmurt Corpus is available online at: [http://web-corpora.net/UdmurtCorpus/search/](http://web-corpora.net/UdmurtCorpus/search/). Currently, it contains 7.3 million tokens.
shed light on the functions of the present and future tenses as well as on the usage of the habitual past tense.

Firstly, some of the narrative folklore texts in Munkácsi (1887) are set in the evidential past tense, but then, they switch to future and narrate predominately in the future (historical present use of the future), with the present tense being used only as a progressive. This tense use is not characteristic of the newer folklore texts that are narrated exclusively in the evidential past (Siegl 2004). In Munkácsi’s (1887) narrative texts, the future verbs forms encode a sequence of actions, but crucially, do not express habitual events. In the same time, the dialogs in Munkácsi’s (1887) texts show that the use of the future and present tense resembles their current use in Udmurt, namely to convey future and present events. Hence, I argue that although the future tense forms in Munkácsi’s texts do not have same functions as in modern Udmurt, they cannot be easily accounted for as “old present forms”. I propose that the historical present use of the future tense in the old narrative texts stands closer to the epistemic use of will (That will be the milkman, Sarkar 1998 a.o.). This epistemic modal use can be explained with the fact that the storyteller presents a narrative folklore text, i.e. speculates about what the characters might or would do rather than makes predictions about their actions. This also nicely explains why future forms are used with the evidential past tense: both express epistemic modality. Turning to the use of the ‘FUT + val/vilem’ forms in Munkácsi (1887), it can be observed that they can have a habitual meaning, while the synthetic future tense does not. These forms, however, are ambiguous between the habitual reading (‘used to’) and the modal one (i.e. ‘could’, cf. the capability/generic use of will: Nitric acid will dissolve zinc, Sarkar 1998). The latter meaning is related to the modal function of the synthetic future in the 19th century narrative texts.

To conclude, synchronically, the Udmurt ‘FUT + val/vilem’ verb forms typically express generic statements and do not occur in all person/number combinations. Diachronically, it would be an oversimplification to state that the habitual past can be explained as a residual property reflecting the change of the present tense into a future tense marker. Based on diachronic data, it seems that the link between the future and habitual lies in their modal functions.

References
•Munkácsi, Bernát 1887. Votják népköltészeti hagyományok. Budapest: MTA.