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# Renewal of focal intraterminal aspect-tense forms in Shor dialects

## Irina Nevskaya & Olga Šalamaj

Turkic languages have constantly revived the opposition of focal aspect-tense forms and non-focal ones. This paper deals with Shor intraterminal aspect-tense forms (understood as envisaging the event within its limits). As we will show, literary Shor has lost the opposition of focal and non-focal intraterminal forms. In Shor dialects, this opposition has been restored thanks to the grammaticalization of certain actional (Aktionsart) forms. As for the literary Shor, the non-transformative actional forms with existential auxiliary verbs (*-p odur/tur/čör*) and the present tense marker *-(p)ča* render focal intraterminality, but they still preserve their actional semantics of non-intensive/intensive action. Whether one of these complexes will merge into a new focal intraterminal form is not certain.

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## 1. Introduction

A permanent renewal of focal aspect-tense forms is found in all Turkic languages. In particular, Turkic languages have constantly revived the opposition of focal intraterminal (or, in other terminology, continuous, actual present) forms and non-focal (indefinite, non-actual present) ones (Johanson 1971; 1990; 1993; 1994; 1996; 1998a; 1998b). Actional postverbal constructions with existential (like *exist*, *live*) or positional (like *stand, lie, sit*) verbs serve as a reservoir for developing focal intraterminal forms in all Turkic languages.

This paper deals with aspect-tense forms found in Shor, an endangered Turkic language spoken in Mountainous Shoria, which is part of South Siberia. A grammatical description of the Shor language is complicated by dialect distance: Shor has always had a rich system of rather distant dialects and subdialects. The main dialects are the Mras and the Kondoma ones. The absence of super-dialect literary norms in the unwritten period (1942–1985), the mobility of the language system itself (espe-

cially of the verb), and rapid processes of contraction at morpheme junctions (differ-
ent in the two dialects) resulted in a rapid divergence of dialects in the second half of
the twentieth century.

A preliminary description of the Shor aspect-tense system can be found in the
only Shor grammar, written in 1941 by Nadežda Dyrenkova (Dyrenkova 1941). Due
to rapid changes registered in all language subsystems in the second half of the
twentieth and in the beginning of the twenty-first century, this grammar book can
already be regarded as a historical source. A general overview of Shor tense forms is
found in Babuškin & Donidze 1966; Čispijakov 1992; Tenišev 2002. Further re-
search on Shor postverbial constructions and intraterminal aspect-tense forms going
back to such constructions was conducted by Nadežda Kurpeško and Natalia Ši-
robokova (Kurpeško & Širobokova 1991). However, they primarily described the
literary variety of the Shor language, which is based on the Mras dialect. Our field
research has shown that the Kondoma dialect and the Upper-Mras varieties of the
Mras dialect differ considerably in this respect.

## 2. Intraterminal verb forms in Shor

Determining viewpoint operators in language grammar systems, Lars Johanson
(1971; 1990; 1993; 1994; 1996; 1998a; 1998b) distinguishes the following aspect
characteristics of actions rendered by aspect-tense verb forms: *intraterminality* un-
derstood as envisaging the event within its limit, *postterminality,* envisaging the
event after the transgression of its relevant limit, *adterminality,* envisaging the event
in the attainment of its relevant limit (apparently encountered primarily in Slavic
languages), and *prospectivity,* envisaging the event before its initial limit. Verb
forms can also relate an event to the past, present or future tenses. Turkic languages
are characterized by the opposition of past and non-past tenses. Future tenses have
not yet been formed from prospective forms: they are immature and combine future
tense reference with other meanings. We will refer to the corresponding Shor forms
as prospective ones (Nevskaya 2005; in print; Šalamaj 2008).

### 2.1. The aspect-tense form -*(A)r*

This is the only synthetic form that we cannot etymologize as a former analytical
actional (Aktionsart) construction, at least not today. It is present in all Turkic lan-
guages and fulfills intraterminal functions. However, it is a non-focal form at pre-
sent; in this function it was replaced by younger focal intraterminal forms in modern
Turkic languages (like -*yor* in Turkish). In most Siberian languages, it functions as a
prospective one, sometimes combining habitual and prospective aspectual seman-
tics.

In Shor, this form has developed future tense semantics expressing predictions
about forthcoming situations rather than pure prospectivity (Comrie 1976; Nevskaya
2005): *Ol par-ar* [s/he go-FUT] 'He will go'. Nevertheless, this form preserves traces
of its intraterminality: it can also express atemporal situations such as formulations

of the laws of nature or general statements: *Pir de pir iygi pol-ar* 'One and one is two'; it also expresses the dynamic modal semantics of capability: *Ol čaqšï ürgen-er* 'He can/will study well'.

## 2.2. The aspectual form -*čAŋ*

This form is found only in Siberian Turkic. As far as its semantics is concerned, it is the only intraterminal form that does not combine the aspectual semantics with the temporal one, as the rest of the described forms do. Shor grammar descriptions often mistakenly define this form as a past tense form. It can express habituality in the past and present, and prospectivity, something that non-focal intraterminal forms often tend to do: *par-čaŋ čol* 'the road that people went, that they go, and that they will go'; *Ol par-čaŋ* 'He went [there], he goes there and he will go; he should go'.

## 2.3. The form based on the postverbial construction with the verb *čat-* 'lie, live'

In combination with various tense markers and other actional constructions, this postverbial construction has been synthesized in Shor resulting in a number of intraterminal forms. In fact, it does not exist in Shor as an actional form anymore. We find only remnants of this non-transformative progressive actional marker, e.g. in combination with the conditional form: *aŋna-p čat-sa* [hunt-CONV lie.aux-COND] 'if he is hunting'. The lexical verb has the converb form -*(X)p* here. The converb affix is often omitted after stems ending in consonants.

## 2.3.1. The present tense form -*(p)ča*

This form has developed from the postverbial construction -*(X)p čat-* combined with the aorist marker -*(X)r*: *aŋnap čadïr* < *aŋnapčat* < *aŋnapčït* < *aŋnapča* 'S/he is hunting /S/he hunts'. In the Kondum dialect, the contraction was incomplete; thus,we find the formant -*(p)čït* or -*(p)čïr* for the 3rd person, and the formant -*(p)čat* for the 1st and 2nd person. This form expresses an action taking place at the moment of speaking, or taking place usually. It is defined as an intraective, progressive present tense form by other scholars (Dyrenkova, 1941; Kurpeško & Širobokova 1991). In our opinion, this is an intraterminal verb form with a prominent temporal component in its meaning. It is used in both focal and non-focal intraterminal contexts; see example (1) for its focal semantics and (2) for its non-focal usage.

(1)  *Pir      tiyin       aġaš-taŋ aġaš-qa  os-ča.*
      one   squirrel   tree-ABL tree-DAT jump-PRS
      'A squirrel is jumping from tree to tree.'

(2)  *Örtek čïlïŋ   čer-de       qïšta-pča.*
      duck  warm place-LOC   spend.winter-PRS
      'Wild ducks spend winters in warm places.'

### 2.3.2. The form *-(p)čatqan /-(p)čïtqan / -(p)čïyan / -(p)čïn*

This form has developed from the postverbial construction *-(X)p čat-* combined with the perfect marker *-GAn*. The aspectual character of this form is reflected in the names it is given by different authors: intraective (Čispijakov 1992; Tenišev 2002), progressive (Dyrenkova 1941, Babuškin & Donidze 1966). In the finite usage, this form expresses focal intraterminality combined with the past-tense reference (the heritage of the perfect marker), see examples (3) and (4). In non-finite positions, this form expresses the aspectual semantics of focal intraterminality irrespective of the time reference of its action, which is defined by the finite verb. However, there are some restrictions in this respect: the time reference should be past or present: *qïïr-čatqan ool* [read-INTRA boy] 'a boy who is/was reading'.

(3)    *Naybur  toqta-ġanče    men   čat-čïya-m.*
          rain     stop-CONV     I     lie-INTRA-1SG
          'I was lying until the rain stopped.' (Kurpeško & Širobokova 1991: 31)

(4)    *Kök  tegri-be     ayïldïrïm    puludaq-tar    ïk-čïtqan-nar.*
          blue  sky-INSTR    whitish     cloud-PL       float-INTRA-PL
          'White clouds were floating in the blue sky.' (Dyrenkova 1941: 198)

### 2.4. The form based on the postverbial constructions with the verb *tur-* 'stand'

Postverbial constructions with the verb *tur-* have produced a number of aspect-tense forms in Shor. The lexical verb can have the converb form *-A* or *-(X)p*.

### 2.4.1. The form *-(A)dIr*

The aspect-tense form *-(A)dIr* has developed from the postverbial construction *-A tur-*. This form expresses a habitual or an atemporal action that happens usually and should happen in the future. It is a non-focal intraterminal form that has a tendency to prospectivity, see (5). This form is becoming obsolete in modern Shor.

(5)    *Iygi  suy-dïŋ     peltir-i       pirge    qattïš ay-adïr,*
          two   river-GEN    mouth-POSS3  together  join   flow-INTRA
          *iygi  aymaq   pala-zï     pirge   qožul qon-adïr.*
          two   village  child-POSS3 together  join   live-INTRA
          'Two rivers join and flow together; children from two villages join and live together.' (Dyrenkova 1941: 205)

### 2.4.2. The indirective forms *-(p)tXr* and *-(p)čattïr*

The form *-(p)čattïr* is a contracted postverbial construction *-(X)p čat-* in combination with the postverbial construction *-(X)p tur-*. This form expresses an event taking place before the moment of speech or at the moment of speech. The aspectual se-

mantics of the form is quite prominent: it is focal intraterminality. In this respect, this form is opposed to the focal postterminal form -*(p)tXr*. However, the main semantic function of both forms is indirectivity; they render practically all the types of indirective semantics–indirect or direct evidentiality, and mirativity, see (6) and (7).

(6) *Parčazï      čaqšï      ište-pčattïr-lar.*
     everybody   well      work-IND.INTRA-PL
     '[Apparently/Judging by the results], everybody is/was working well.'

(7) *Men    mïnda    tur-čattïr-ïm!*
     I        here      stand-IND.INTRA-1SG
     'I appear to be standing here!'

### 2.4.3. The non-transformative actional form -*(X)p tur-*

Shor also has an actional form -*(X)p tur-*, which combines non-transformativity and intensiveness: *par-ïp tur-d-ï* [go-CONV stand.aux-PST-3] 's/he was going fast'. Together with aspect-tense markers, it is used in focal intraterminal contexts (*parïp turγan* 's/he was going fast [at that moment]', *parïp tur-ča* 's/he is going fast now', etc). The fact that it preserves its actional semantics of intensivity does not allow us to define such combinations as analytical aspect-tense forms.

### 2.5. The forms based on the postverbial constructions with the verb *odur-* 'sit'

This postverbial construction is formed with the -*(X)p* converb form of the lexical verb. In Shor, it has produced both an actional form and an aspect-tense form, which has become obsolete by now.

### 2.5.1. The aspect-tense form -*(p)odur*

Dyrenkova described this form as an aspect-tense one. According to her terminology, it is used to express the present progressive or intraective tense (Dyrenkova 1941: 205). In a different terminology, it was a focal intraterminal form with present-tense reference, see (8). It had already become unstable at the beginning of the twentieth century and was used parallel to combinations of the actional form -*(X)p odur-* with tense markers; these combinations render focal intraterminality (Dyrenkova 1041: 206).

(8) *Apšïy    čol-ba      par-ïp odur.*
     old.man  road-INSTR  walk-PRS
     'An old man is walking on a road.' (Dyrenkova 1941: 206)

### 2.5.2. The actional form -p odur-

Kurpeshko and Shirobokova describe this form as an actional form of non-intensive and durative action (Kurpeško & Širobokova 1991: 35). The combination of this form with the affix of the present tense in -(p)ča is developing as a newly coined intraterminal aspect-tense form. The actional semantics of non-intensiveness and durativity is gradually fading, although it is still present in some contexts, see example (9).

(9)  *Ulġa-ulġa          par-b       odur-ča-lar.*
     cry:CONV-cry: CONV   walk-CONV   sit.AUX- PRS -PL
     'Constantly crying, they are slowly walking on and on.

### 2.6. The forms based on postverbial constructions with the verb čör- 'wander'

### 2.6.1. The aspect-tense form -(A)čör

Dyrenkova describes this aspect-tense form as a present progressive one. As our material shows, it used to be an intraterminal form which has become obsolete by now in literary Shor, see (10). We should distinguish it from the prospective forms -(X)p para/kele čör, see 2.6.2.

(10)  *Ol     töbere    en-e čör.*
      s/he   down      accend-PRS
      'S/he is going downwards.'

### 2.6.2. The prospective form -(X)p para/kele čör

This is a combinations of the form -(A)čör with the actional forms -(X)p par- or -(X)p kel- (see also Kurpeško & Širobokova 1991). It expresses the approaching of the starting (with non-transformative and initio-transformative verbs, e.g. (11)) or the finishing point of the action (with fini-transformative verbs, see (12)). Kurpeško & Širobokova define it as a completive actional form (1991: 53).

(11)  *Naybur    čet.kel-e.čör.*
      rain      approach-PROSP
      'The rain is about to start.'

(12)  *Ol      kniga-nï qür.para.čör.*
      s/he    book-ACC    read-PROSP
      'S/he will finish reading the book soon.'

### 2.6.3. The prospective form -(A)rGA čör

This prospective form is present also in other Siberian Turkic languages (Nevskaya 2005). It renders a short and constantly melting time interval left until the starting point of an action, see (13).

(13) *Aŋ        qol-ïn-ġa        kir-erge.čör-ziŋ,   te-p        toolan-d-ïm.*
     wild.animal arm-POSS3-DAT   enter-PROSP-2SG   say-CONV    think-PST-1SG
     'You will get into the paws of a wild animal very soon", I thought.'
     (Dyrenkova 1941: 207)

### 2.6.4. The actional form -(X)p čör-

This form was described by Dyrenkova as a progressive one (13). Kurpeško & Širobokova have also mentioned it (1991: 48). It preserves its lexical meaning to some extent and denotes actions that are carried out while walking, see (14).

(14) *Pir   kiži  aŋna-p      čör-gen.*
     one   man   hunt-CONV   walk.AUX-PRF
     'One person is hunting.'

### 2.6.5. The aspect-tense form -(p)čü(r)

This newly coined focal intraterminal form of the Ust'-Anzas subdialect has developed from the progressive actional form -(X)p čör-. It has been contracted and lost the final consonant in all persons except the 3rd person. The vowel has become high. The all-Shor intraterminal from -(p)ča is used here only in non-focal contexts while -(p)čü(r) renders focal intraterminality: *par-čü-m* [go-PRS-1SG] 'I am going (at this moment)', compare *par-ča-m* [go-PRS-1SG] 'I (usually) go'. Thus, this sub-dialect has renewed the opposition of focal and non-focal intraterminal forms in the present tense.

## 3. Discussion

In literary Shor, the Common Turkic aorist form -(A)r has developed prospective aspectual semantics; therefore the Turkish opposition of a focal -yor and non-focal -(A)r is not found here. Non-focal intraterminal forms often develop prospective semantics through the stage of habituality and atemporality: he usually goes < he went, he goes and he will go. The form -(A)r has practically become a future tense marker; it has preserved atemporal semantics in certain contexts (in general statements, in formulations of laws of nature) and has developed a dynamic modal semantics of capability to fulfill an action (as in *He can study well*).

The competing analytical forms described by Dyrenkova (-p čat; -a tur; -p tur; -a čör, -p čör, -p odur) were already not very active in the beginning of the twentieth

century; they gradually lost their focality or had been totally abandoned by the literary language in the course of the previous century. Their fate in contemporary Shor is different. The form with the auxiliary *čat-* has been synthesized and contracted, and has become grammaticalized as the *-(p)ča* present temporal form; its aspectual semantics is general intraterminality; it is used in both focal and non-focal intraterminal contexts. The form *-a tur-* was already synthesized by the beginning of the twentieth century as a non-focal intraterminal form; Dyrenkova noted its usage also with the prospective semantics; in Shor dialects, it has become a remote past form (as in *We used to go hunting*). The form *-p odur* is not used as an aspect-tense marker in contemporary Shor, although it was described as a focal intraterminal form in the beginning of the twentieth century. The auxiliary *odur-* appears in the actional form *-p odur-* with the semantics of a non-intensive action. On the contrary, the auxiliary *čör-*, which used to be a part of the actional form *-p čör-* has been grammaticalized as a focal intraterminal form *-(p)čü(r)* in the Ust'-Anzass subdialect of the Mras dialect. Here, it is opposed to the non-focal intraterminal *-(p)ča*. The actional form *-p čör-* exists parallel to it. The form *-p para/kele čör* is one of the prospectives in modern Shor; its semantics denotes 'to be about to do something, to be at the edge of doing something'. This semantics could be defined as proximative, in distinction to the general prospective 'to be going to do something'.

Thus, literary Shor does not have an opposition of focal and non-focal intraterminal forms at present. In Shor dialects, this opposition has been restored thanks to the grammaticalization of actional forms. In literary Shor, the non-transformative actional forms with existential auxiliary verbs (*-p odur/tur/-čör*) with the present tense marker *-(p)ča* render focal intraterminality, but they still preserve their actional semantics of non-intensive/intensive action. Whether one of these complexes will merge into a new focal intraterminal form is not certain now. It is, in any case, a vector of their development. The complex *-(p)odurča* seems to have better chances of developing this way due to its frequency. However, it will take time, since its non-intensive actional semantics is still being preserved.

### Abbreviatons

| | | | | | |
|-----|-----------|------|------------|-------|-------------|
| ABL | ablative | GEN | genietive | PRF | perfect |
| ACC | accusative | IND | indirective | PROSP | prospective |
| AUX | auxiliary | INSTR | instrumental | PRS | present |
| COND | conditional | INTRA | intraterminal | PST | past |
| CONV | converb | LOC | locative | SG | singular |
| DAT | dative | PL | plural | | |
| FUT | future | POSS | possessive | | |

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