

Establishing language contact II

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Slides: github.com/sverhees/site

> teaching > MA research > seminar 2022

Last week

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- ▶ Comparing L1 and L2 signs, extending the use of one to the other

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- ▶ Matter and pattern borrowing

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- ▶ Borrowing scales: lexemes > grammatical morphemes
- ▶ Matter and pattern borrowing
- ▶ Lexical borrowing does not require direct or large-scale bilingualism, whereas grammatical borrowing generally does

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- ▶ Factors can override each other; social pressure can overcome structural differences (or resist a popular innovation)

Evidentiality

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(1) kieylali-k kan-n-tika
peccary-OBJ to.die-VS-EVID:INFER.CERT/PST
hala-n-dana
to.stink-VS-EVID:SENS.CERT/PRS
'The peccary died; (because) it stinks.'

Sabanê (Nambikwara) (Eberhard 2018: 347)

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- ▶ It is easily gained but also easily lost in situations of intense language contact
- ▶ What makes evidentiality so borrowable?

According to Alexandra Y Aikhenvald (2018) and others, evidentiality as a grammatical category is culturally and communicatively salient.

“Speakers’ awareness of the need to be precise in marking information source manifests itself in numerous ways. [...] Aymara has an array of proverbs used in teaching children the significance of correct use of evidentials: ‘Seeing, one can say “I have seen”, without seeing one must not say “I have seen”’. The following proverb in Jaqi stresses the importance of visually acquired information: ‘Seeing, speak; without seeing, do not speak.’ These same proverbs are used in disputes, to revile the statements of an opponent.”
(Alexandra Y. Aikhenvald 2004: 339)

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- ▶ Improper use of evidentials can have serious consequences for the speaker's reputation
- ▶ Danger of circularity (and *kartinamirizm*): source is salient because its marking is obligatory, and it is obligatory because it is culturally important

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- ▶ Yet a number of larger languages have grammaticalized it (e.g. Quechua and Turkish)
- ▶ And many smaller languages lack the category

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- ▶ Another possible explanation is culturally conventional resistance to speaking for someone else; necessity to emphasize your own subjectivity
- ▶ Though the presence of this cultural value does not always correlate with grammaticalized evidentiality

Interference

Linguists Dan Slobin and Victor Friedman report from personal experience that the habit of marking one's information source is quickly acquired as an L2 speaker. (Slobin 2016)

“My Turkish friends and colleagues speak fluent and beautiful English, but when I listen carefully I note an abundant use of expressions like “apparently” and “it seems.” These are perfectly grammatical and contextually appropriate, yet their abundance can sometimes be pragmatically unsettling. I wonder why the speaker is hedging so frequently. *When I return to English from a period of talking Turkish, I find myself doing the same thing.*” (Slobin 2016: 108)

Borrowability

Unclear whether evidentiality is somehow more borrowable than other features, and what to compare it with in this regard.

Perceptual magnets

Recall the idea of Blevins (2017) about phonological segments as perceptual magnets:

- ▶ Phonetic pattern is perceptually salient
- ▶ Speakers of target language are sufficiently exposed (exposure to other languages changes the perception of phonemes)
- ▶ Phonetic proximity to existing phonemes

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Can these principles be applied to grammatical patterns and semantics?

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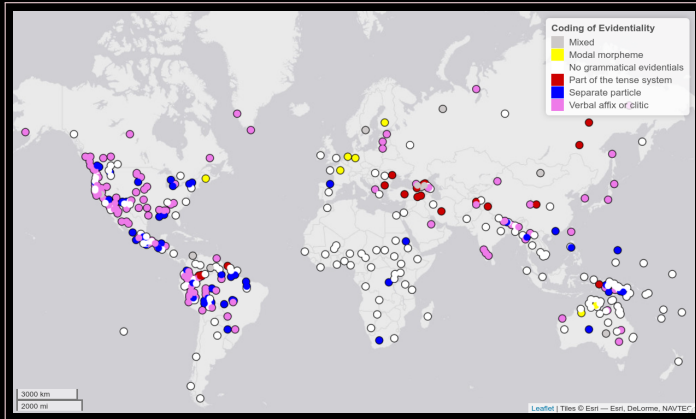
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- ▶ It is “easier” to adopt evidential marking (both structurally and on the fly) than, e.g., definiteness or Slavic style verbal aspect?
- ▶ Though both definiteness and Slavic style verbal aspect are borrowable given the right circumstances

Evidential areas



Reproduction of WALS Map 78A (de Haan 2013)
made with Lingtypology (Moroz 2017) for R (R Core Team 2018)

Disclaimer

The WALS map is problematic in several respects:

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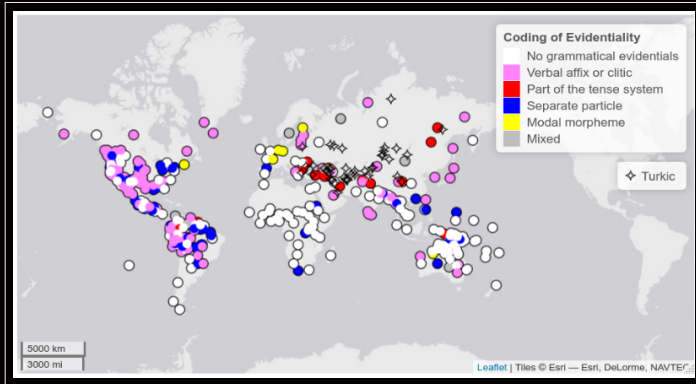
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- ▶ Incorrect information for several languages of the Caucasus; chapter is archived
- ▶ Conspicuous absence on the African continent could be due to descriptive gaps (Crane 2021)

Evidentiality in Eurasia



Same map as before

+ the distribution of the Turkic languages according to the Glottolog database.

Evidentiality in Eurasia

(Plungian 2010)

A chain of contiguous areas:

- ▶ Baltic region
- ▶ Balkans
- ▶ Caucasus
- ▶ Volga-Kama area
- ▶ Central Asia
- ▶ Tibetan languages
- ▶ Northern Siberia

Perfect

- ▶ Most commonly part of the (past) tense system, originating from a perfect tense or resultative construction
- ▶ Perfect denotes an event completed in the past with a resulting situation in the present
- ▶ Either a direct result or more elusive current relevance (cf. 'The emperor has died.' vs. 'I have read this book.')

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- ▶ A complicated grammatical form to which a lot of research has been dedicated (Плунгян 2016)

Origins

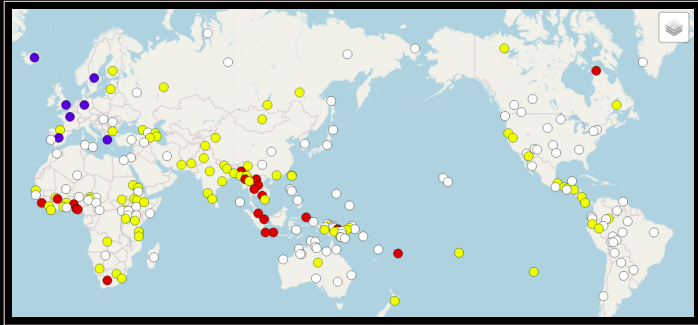
- ▶ Different possible diachronic sources (Bybee, Perkins & Pagliuca 1994: 105)
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- ▶ Most commonly resultative, indicating a present *state*: ‘my leg is broken’
- ▶ Overwhelmingly periphrastic (Bybee & Dahl 1989: 56), consisting of a perfective or past non-finite form and a present auxiliary (most often ‘be’)

Perfect areal patterns

(Dahl & Velupillai 2013)



Blue are 'have'-perfects, which are characteristic of the Charlemagne Sprachbund (or SAE).

Perfect areal patterns

- ▶ In the Balkans we find both 'have'-perfects (Charlemagne Sprachbund) and evidential perfects (former Ottoman empire and beyond)
- ▶ Both are considered features of the Balkan Sprachbund, while both are also typical of adjacent areas

Perfect areal patterns

- ▶ In the Balkans we find both 'have'-perfects (Charlemagne Sprachbund) and evidential perfects (former Ottoman empire and beyond)
- ▶ Both are considered features of the Balkan Sprachbund, while both are also typical of adjacent areas
- ▶ 'have'-perfects are typically not evidential, due to confounding areal factors rather than structural causes
- ▶ See Dahl (1985: 152–153) on limited indirect connotations of the Swedish perfect

Development

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- ▶ Through a fairly common language-internal process of conventionalizing implicatures ▶ ▶ ▶
- ▶ Evidential perfects are marginally attested in languages outside the contact areas (e.g. Tucano (Bybee, Perkins & Pagliuca 1994: 95))

Implicatures

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(3) My mother has read this book.

General implicature: I know that my mother read this book until the end.

Conversational implicature: it might be worth reading (since my mother has good taste).

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- ▶ More or less conventional implicature: speaker (probably) did not witness the event unfold

Further development

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Source of a new perfective past (Romance languages), or its non-witnessed counterpart (Turkic).

A number of languages subsequently develop new resultatives as part of a tendency to restore current relevance marking in the system when it is lost.

Perfects

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Contact with a Turkic language seems to help, though this is not a necessary condition, see Old Japanese (Shinzato 1991).

Turkic as source of diffusion

- ▶ Plausible due to areal spread and political importance of Turkic-speaking communities
- ▶ All Turkic languages have the feature in some form, regardless of their location and contact situation (Johanson 2018)
- ▶ Evidence from Old Turkic (Erdal 2004)

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- ▶ Evidence from Old Turkic (Erdal 2004)
- ▶ Arguments are often superficial: Language A has the feature, Turkic language B is spoken nearby → must be contact-induced

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- ▶ I.e. distribution of the feature follows areal rather than genealogical patterns

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- ▶ Azerbaijani lost the evidential function under the influence of Persian (Johanson 2018: 514)
- ▶ Not necessarily incompatible scenarios, but they require more information about distribution and the time-frames of changes (cf. Friedman (2018: 129–131) on Balkan Slavic)

Replication

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- ▶ Replica – perfect tense already in place, which copies or boosts the non-witnessed function

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- ▶ Replica – perfect tense already in place, which copies or boosts the non-witnessed function
- ▶ Important to keep in mind that both forms are likely polysemous at the transfer stage (combine current relevance and evidential function)
- ▶ Afterwards they may grammaticalize further

Problems

- ▶ The *-miş* past in Turkish is not a perfect, but a non-witnessed past
- ▶ Its diachronic origins survive only in the semantics of the homophonous participle form (Slobin & Aksu-Koç 1982: 188–192)

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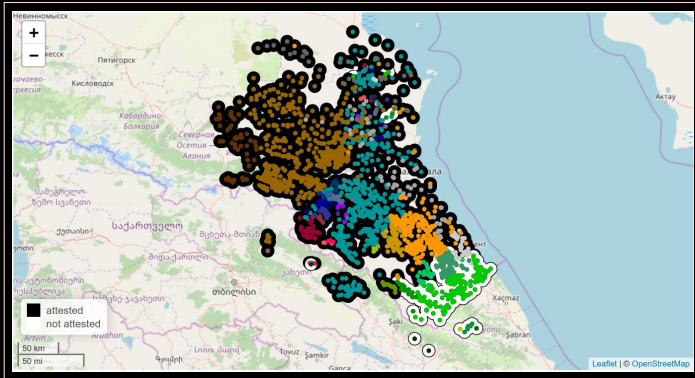
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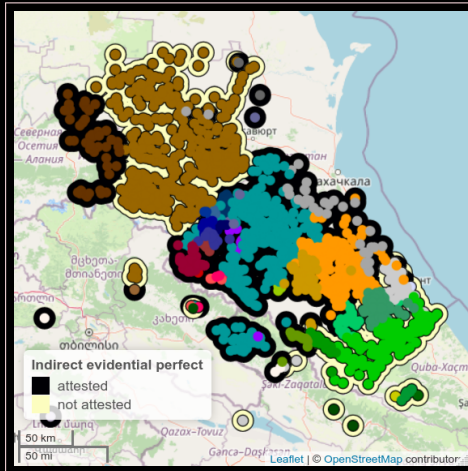
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- ▶ A syncretic finite past / participle could be a poor model for largely periphrastic perfects to borrow from, especially if current relevance is absent in the model
- ▶ Note also that Slobin (2016) mentioned substituting *-miš* with lexical expressions rather than the English present perfect

The eastern Caucasus

Evidentiality in the tense system

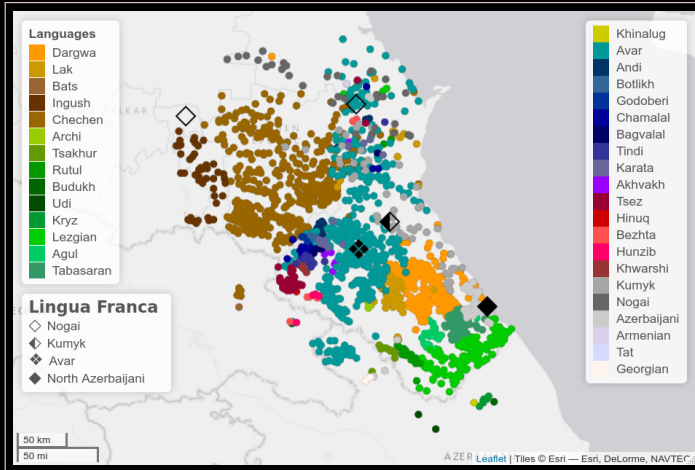


The eastern Caucasus



Lingua francas

based on Wixman (1980)



Areal patterns

- ▶ Feature is not likely to be an independent development
- ▶ Shared across branches that are not in contact with each other
- ▶ Shared across language families
- ▶ Conspicuously absent among languages where Azerbaijani was the dominant L2

Problems

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- ▶ No evidence for structural convergence between East Caucasian and contemporary Kipchak languages
- ▶ Contrast is also reflected in modern bilingualism data (late 1800s – now) from the *Atlas of Multilingualism in Dagestan*
- ▶ Knowledge of Azerbaijani in the south is very high, Kumyk is found incidentally, and Nogai is not attested

Problems

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- ▶ An evidential perfect is found in Agul, which belongs to the Azerbaijani zone, with no competing contact influence
- ▶ Contradictory data exists for Lezgian (Haspelmath 1993, Greed 2017); evidential function of the perfect in isolated sentences is attested in one study
- ▶ Possibly this effect can be achieved in any language, or it could be indicative of a descriptive gap for languages of the south

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There are no reliable empirical criteria for this distinction: implicatures can be cancelled even in languages where they are conventional; and in case of polysemous evidential perfects, current relevance can be cancelled just like evidentiality.

Pros

+

- ▶ Use of perfect in a narrative sequence is possible only if it doubles as a non-witnessed past

Narrative sequence

(Verhees 2020)

Andi (East Caucasian), Rikvani dialect – elicited narrative

- (4) se-b zaman hege-j t'ulu=gu
 one-INAN1 time DEM-F strongly=INT
 j-abi-d hege-j hogik'o-d
 F-become_tired-PRF DEM-F sit_down-PRF
 ʔet'uro-ʔ angu-l'a
 tree-GEN branch-SUP
 'One time, she became very tired. She sat down
 on a tree branch.'

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- ▶ Same verb forms in isolation would have a present result interpretation ('is tired', 'has sat down')

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- ▶ Same verb forms in isolation would have a present result interpretation ('is tired', 'has sat down')
- ▶ Paraphrasing the same sequence with perfects in English (or another non-evidential language) results in some kind of awkward sports commentary

Pros

+

- ▶ Use of perfect in a narrative sequence is possible only if it doubles as a non-witnessed past
- ▶ Marker of a higher degree of grammaticalization
- ▶ Easier to extract from natural speech data
- ▶ And also easier to elicit (does not require the speaker to process complex situational descriptions)

Cons

-

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- ▶ Use of evidentials in narrative is often conventionalized; not source marking per se, but a stylistic habit (specialization for fictitious events)
- ▶ To some extent a feature in itself; children first learn about the evidential through narrative use and fairy tale formulae (Aksu-koç 1988, Aksu-Koç, Ögel-Balaban & Alp 2009)

Cons

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- ▶ Narrative tradition as a conservator of the evidential
- ▶ Alexandra Y. Aikhenvald (2004: 301): loss of narrative tradition in the process of language obsolescence means loss of the evidential
- ▶ Narrative use is more straightforward, can be preserved in the speech of speakers who do not display or recognize other uses of the evidential (Verhees 2019: 129–131)

Cons

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- ▶ Evidential perfect can be used to set the scene in narrative, then switch to a different form (see Comrie & Polinsky (2007) on Tsez)

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- ▶ Evidential perfect can be used to set the scene in narrative, then switch to a different form (see Comrie & Polinsky (2007) on Tsez)
- ▶ Alternation of evidential forms can mark discursive foregrounding and backgrounding (Макарцев 2013)

Cons

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- ▶ Evidential perfect can be used to set the scene in narrative, then switch to a different form (see Comrie & Polinsky (2007) on Tsez)
- ▶ Alternation of evidential forms can mark discursive foregrounding and backgrounding (Макарицев 2013)
- ▶ Alternative strategies exist in the languages of Dagestan: historical present, unmarked past, or unmarked past with a reportative particle

Use of narrative data

my dissertation (Verhees 2019)

- ▶ Narrative use can tell us whether evidential meaning is not just a conversational epiphenomenon

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- ▶ Narrative use can tell us whether evidential meaning is not just a conversational epiphenomenon
- ▶ It provides a clear diagnostic that can be applied cross-linguistically at least within the region
- ▶ Possible quantitative evaluation: perfect can occur in non-evidential use, and other forms can be used for the main line, but perfect will be more frequent in evidential languages and non-witnessed contexts

Narrative traditions in the Caucasus

- ▶ Relative cultural homogeneity especially in Dagestan; convergence of other nations with East Caucasians

Narrative traditions in the Caucasus

- ▶ Relative cultural homogeneity especially in Dagestan; convergence of other nations with East Caucasians
- ▶ Many shared folklore motifs and formulae
- ▶ Though typological expectedness can also be a factor here, and plot equivalents of Wanderwörter

Narrative traditions in Dagestan

- ▶ Within Dagestan areal patterns of folklore roughly correspond to those of Islamization and L2 influence, see Аджиев (1991)
- ▶ Strong influence of Turkic and Persian traditions in the south
- ▶ Turkic as a conduit for Islamic culture

Perfected in narrative

Research in progress

- ▶ Dagestanian folklore anthology (6/20 volumes published)
- ▶ Narratives and poetry presented in local languages and Russian
- ▶ Different sources, but mostly field recordings by Dagestanian scholars from the Soviet period
- ▶ Bias towards languages with a written tradition, not larger or literary languages

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Perfected in narrative

Research in progress

- ▶ Idioms officially considered dialects are represented a bit covertly
- ▶ Most Dargwa material is actually from Kubachi, a highly divergent variety commonly considered to be a separate language
- ▶ Non-written languages are represented with only a few texts
- ▶ Some texts represent L2 speech

Comparison of narratives

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- ▶ First attempt: impressionistically determine the form used for the main line

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Research in progress

- ▶ First attempt: impressionistically determine the form used for the main line
- ▶ Narrative main lines typically consist of one and the same form, and the pool of candidates is limited (Labov & Waletzky 1967)
- ▶ This makes it relatively easy to spot the narrative strategy, even when you are not an expert in the language (especially if it has agglutinative morphology)

Data

my dissertation (Verhees 2019)

- ▶ First four volumes of the anthology, representing different folklore genres
- ▶ Four languages: Kumyk (Turkic, central Dagestan), Avar (central Dagestan), Rutul (southern Dagestan), Lezgian (southern Dagestan)
- ▶ Central languages have evidential perfects, Rutul does not, Lezgian probably also lacks it

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- ▶ Central languages have evidential perfects, Rutul does not, Lezgian probably also lacks it
- ▶ 1 randomly chosen text per language per volume

Results

my dissertation (Verhees 2019)

- ▶ Kумык perfect strategy (4)

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- ▶ Kumyk perfect strategy (4)
- ▶ Avar perfect strategy (1), reportative particle (2), mixed (1)

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- ▶ Rutul mixed present / aorist (4)

Results

my dissertation (Verhees 2019)

- ▶ Kumyk perfect strategy (4)
- ▶ Avar perfect strategy (1), reportative particle (2), mixed (1)
- ▶ Rutul mixed present / aorist (4)
- ▶ Lezgian aorist (4)

Further refinement

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- ▶ Plot strategies against distribution of folklore motifs and formulae

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- ▶ After initial borrowing further bidirectional convergence, cf. new perfect in Kumyk consisting of a converb and a copula



Abbreviations

CERT	certainty 7, 8
DEM	demonstrative 90
EVID	evidential 7, 8
F	feminine 90
GEN	genitive 90
INANI	inanimate 1 class 90
INFER	inferential 7, 8
INT	interrogative 90
OBJ	object 7, 8
PRF	perfect 90
PRS	present 7, 8
PST	past 7, 8
SENS	sensory evidential 7, 8
SUP	super locative 90
VS	verbal suffix 7, 8



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