

Finitization of participles in Uralic languages: grammaticalization of modals and evidentials

Participles in many Uralic languages have served as basis for formation of finite categories. For example, 3rd person suffixes in Finnic and Mordvinic languages, mood markers in Mordvinic and Samoyedic languages, and evidential suffixes in several Uralic languages have been suggested to derive from participles or verbal nouns (e.g. Bartens 1999: 123, Janhunen 1998: 471). Even though many of these examples are well-known and relatively often referred to in Uralic studies, the actual grammaticalization processes of most participle-based finite forms have not been studied in detail.

This paper focuses on grammaticalization of participle-based modals and evidentials in Uralic languages. Participle-based modals are found especially in Mordvinic and Samoyedic languages, where modal and evidential suffixes are numerous and complex in their morphological structure. While in many Uralic languages possess only one inflectional evidential, deriving from a participle construction either by finitization or insubordination, Samoyedic languages again have rich categories of TAME suffixes including several distinct evidentials, most of them based on verbalized participles.

Analysis on the development of participle-based modals and evidentials suggests that the key to the emergence of numerous modal and evidential suffixes is nonverbal predication. In languages such as Mordvinic and Samoyedic languages, participles like other nominals, may agree with the subject in predication taking the conjugational person suffixes. This predication strategy opens a path for functional grammaticalization and new semantic contents of participle predicates, which widen their scope from the properties of the subject into the whole discourse context by the grammaticalization process.

In this paper, I will provide examples especially from Tundra Nenets, where finitization of participles has produced most of the numerous modal and evidential suffixes. Many of these suffixes seem to have been recreated from other functionally similar participle constructions, while their predecessors are either lost or continue their grammaticalization to new functions. A fine-grained formal and functional analysis on the diachrony of these modals and evidentials may provide tools and models for better understanding of emergence of finite categories from participles in other structurally similar languages, and the development of more stable participle-based finite categories, such as personal suffixes.

Bartens, Raija. 1999. *Mordvalaiskielten rakenne ja kehitys* (Memoires de la Societé Finno-Ougrienne 232). Helsinki: Suomalais-Ugrilainen Seura.

Janhunen, Juha. 1998. Samoyedic. In Daniel Abondolo (ed.), *The Uralic Languages*. London/ New York: Routledge. 457–479.