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On the functions of the retrospective shift markers in the languages of the Volga–Kama Sprachbund and Russian

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The term *retrospective shift marker* is used in description of temporal constructions, which include a TAME-marked finite lexical verb and a finite-origin item petrified from the 3rd person singular past tense form of the verb 'to be'. This 'was'-element functions as a shift marker that moves the interpretation of an event to past from the deictic location of the speaker. Constructions of this kind are found in several Eurasian languages, including Turkic, Uralic, Slavic and Northwest Caucasian. (Plungian/van der Auwera 2006; Arkadiev 2020, pp. 10.) Examples (1) and (2) illustrate the construction type in Udmurt (Uralic) and Russian (Slavic) with finite past tenses combined with 'was'-element:

(1)　Udmurt (Keľmakov/Hännikäinen 2008, pp. 269)
　　*So　tolon　tone　utčaz　**val**　no,　öz　šeď'ty.*
　　3SG　yesterday　2SG.ACC　look.PST.3SG　**was**　but　NEG.PST.3SG　find.CNG
　　'He was looking for you yesterday, but did not find [you].'

(2)　Russian (Timberlake 2004, pp. 398)
　　*On　pošol　**bylo**　proguljat'sya,　no　peredumal.*
　　3SG　start.going.PST　**was**　carous.INF　but　change.mind.PST
　　'He went out to go carousing, but changed his mind.'

The employment of the 'was'-elements has various semantic effects. In our study, we will start a comparative discussion on the semantic properties of the constructions in the Uralic and Turkic languages of the Volga–Kama Sprachbund as well as in Russian based on previous studies and corpus data in case of the less studied Volga–Kama languages (e.g. Corpora of Uralic Volga–Kama Languages). Even though temporal manipulation is the primary function of the shift markers, the constructions also show interesting yet understudied connections related to other TAME contents.

　Firstly, the temporal meanings have been complemented or overridden by modal readings in the languages in question. In the examples above, they appear in so-called 'future counterfactual' functions, where the possibilities of the marked event are not fulfilled in the actual world.
Developed from past perfect constructions, the future counterfactuals (e.g. Goeringer 1995 and Kagan 2011; Saraheimo 2022) represent a change from temporal ordering to modal evaluation.
　However, besides of *being modal*, the studied retrospectivization-based constructions also possess restrictions concerning certain types of modality. Since the shift markers naturally operate on the level of temporality, which is an event-based phenomenon, the propositional contents such as epistemic modality and evidentiality do not belong to the scope of

the retrospectivization (c.f. division of modality in Palmer 2001 and scope hierarchies of modality as in Nuyts 2014). In the presentation, contrastive examples are given on how this affects the possibilities of the shift markers to attach in certain verb forms and how in some cases the process of retrospectivization makes the propositions not just temporally but also modally different from their non-past counterparts.

Our presentation will thus start a broader typological discussion on the essence of retrospective shift markers. In addition to functional analysis, the areal distribution of the retrospective shift markers and the possibilities of code-copying are discussed.

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