Retrospective shift of Buryat verbal forms: evidence from the Barguzin dialect[1]

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0. Data source

- Barguzin < Ekhirit–Bulagat < Buryat (Mongolic family)
- fieldwork data collected in 2014–2017 in the Baraghan village (Buryatia, RF) within the MSU linguistic expeditions
- particle *hɘn*

1. Background

- etimological origin

(1)   Janhunen 2012; Poppe, 1938
        hɘn   ←   *a-han*
        RS   be-PFCT

Typologically, perfective (participle) markers are a plausible source of discontinuous past tense markers. This is characteristic for the Asiatic region as a whole and Altaic languages in particular (Sitchinava 2007).

By a discontinuous past tense marker we understand, following (Plungian, van den Auwera 2006), a marker which, attached to a verbal form, modifies its default time reference. Thus, the target verbal form undergoes a retrospective shift and gains a more "past time" interpretation.

- its Modern Mongolian cognate (Janhunen 2012) +

  - ✓ futurutive participle: past irrealis necessitative
  - ✓ imperfective participle: uncompleted action in the past
  - ✓ perfective participle: plusquamperfectum
  - ✓ habitative participle (*-dAg*): habitual in the past

- Buryat *hɘn* as reported in Poppe 1938 +

  - ✓ futurutive participle (*-xA*)
  - ✓ imperfective participle (*-A:*)
  - ✓ perfective (*-hAn*)
  - ✓ habitative (*-dAg* and *-gʃA*) participles
  - ✓ finite present tense (*-nA*)

Our goals:
  - ✓ determine the exhaustive list of finite verbal forms and participles that can be modified by *hɘn* in the contemporary Barguzin Buryat
  - ✓ determine the preliminary semantics of such constructions

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2. Barguzin *hən*: morphophonology

hən follows the verbal form, but it is not subjected to its vowel harmony (cf. 2a-d).

(2)   a.   *xara-dag*   *hən*   b.   *bəšə-dəg*   *hən*
               see-HAB   RS   write-HAB   RS

       c.   *olo-dog*   *hən*   d.   *təər-dəg*   *hən*
               find-HAB   RS   wander-HAB RS

It may undergo optional contraction: if the verb form ends in a short vowel, the latter is deleted while the particle realizes as *–a:n*, sequence that likewise violates the verbal stem's vowel harmony.

(3)   *təər-xə*   *hən*   →   *təər-x=a:n*
       wander-POT   RS   wander-POT=RS

Like copulas in analytical constructions and some verbal particles, *hən* attracts predicative personal endings:

(4)   *hən*
       a.   *b ʲi*   *xara-dag*   *hə-m*   b.   **b ʲi*   *xara-dag-ab* *hən*
           I   see-HAB   RS-1SGv   I   see-HAB-1SGv RS

(5)   analytical construction
       a.   *b ʲi*   *xara-dag*   *bai-na-m*   b.   **b ʲi*   *xara-dag-ab* *bai-na*
           I   see-HAB   be-PRS-1SGv   I   see-HAB-1SGv be-PRS

(6)   type I particles
       a.   *b ʲi*   *xara-dag*   *jum-b ʲi*   b.   **b ʲi*   *xara-dag-ab* *jum*
           I   see-HAB   PTCL-1SGv   I   see-HAB-1SGv PTCL

(7)   type II particles
       a.   **b ʲi*   *xara-dag*   *da:-b*   b.   *b ʲi*   *xara-dag-ab* *da:*
           I   see-HAB   PTCL-1SGv   I   see-HAB-1SGv PTCL

As for negation, evidence is controversial: while some informants allow the negation both on the verbal form or after *hən*, others never negate the particle, although copula in normal periphrastic constructions with verbal participles can be negated (cf. 8 and 9).

(8)   a.   *xara-xa-gʉi*   *hən*   b.   *⁇xara-xa*   *hən-gʉi*
           see-POT-NEG   RS   see-POT   RS-NEG

(9)   a.   *xara-xa-gʉi*   *bai-na*   b.   *xara-xa*   *bai-na-gʉi*
           see-POT-NEG   be-PRS   see-POT   be-PRS-NEG

Importantly, neither the perfective participle, nor proper verbal particles can bear negation:

(10)   **bai-han-gʉi*
       see-PFCT-NEG

(11)   type I particles
        a.   *bai-dag-gʉi   jum*   b.   **bai-dag   jum-gʉi*
               be-HAB-NEG   PTCL   be-HAB-NEG   PTCL-NEG

(12)   type II particles
        a.   *bai-dag   da:*   b.   **bai-dag   da:-gʉi*
               be-HAB-NEG   PTCL   be-HAB-NEG   PTCL-NEG

Participles modified by *hɘn* can not introduce relative clauses (cf. to analytical construction where the copula bears the marker of the perfective participle)

(13)   a.   *unʃa-dag   basagan*   b.   **unʃa-dag   hɘn   basagan*
               read-HAB   girl   read-HAB   RS   girl
               'a girl who often reads (sth)'   Int. 'a girl who used to read (sth)'

        c.   *unʃa-dag   bai-han   basagan*
               read-HAB   be -PFCT   girl
               'a girl who used to read (sth)'

All this might be viewed as an evidence of *hɘn's* (in)complete grammaticalizaion process (drift from the copula status to that of a particle).

3. Barguzin *hɘn*: combinatorial properties

Table 1. List of possible contexts

		Barguzin Buryat	**Buryat (Poppe 1938)**	**Mongolian (Janhunen 2012)**
nonverbal predication		+		
participles:				
habitative	*-dAg* HAB	+	+	+
	g-ʃA PERM-INTS	+		
	a:-ʃa PRT1-INTS	+		
potential	*-x-A:r* POT-INST	+	+	
un-*V*-able	*-ʃA-gʉi* INTS-NEG	+		
futurative	**-xA** POT	+	+	+
perfective	*-hAn* PFCT	*	+	+
subject resultative	*-nxAi* RES	*		
object resultative	*-A-tAi* PRT1-COM	*		
finite verbal forms:				
presence	**-nA** PRS	+	+	
past 1	*-A:* PRT1	+	+	+
past 2	*-bA* PRT2	*		
non-indicatives	*-hAi* OPT, etc.	*		
modal constructions				
deontic modality	*-xA joho-toi* POT habit-COM	+		
epistemic modality	*-A: joho-toi* PRT1 habit-COM	*		

Only those synchronically finite forms that were participles or verbal nouns are able to combine with *hɘn*.

(14) a.   *Aldar nom unʃa-ba*
           Aldar book read-PRT2
           'Aldar read (a) book.'

      b.   **Aldar nom   unʃa-ba   hɘn*
           Aldar book read-PRT2   RS

(15) a.   *Aldar nom unʃa-hai*
           Aldar book read-OPT
           'If only Aldar could read (a) book.'

      b.   **Aldar nom   unʃa-hai   hɘn*
           Aldar book read-OPT   RS

Resultatives refer to an action performed in the past, but whose result is still present, and the discontinuous past implies a detachment from the default reference point of the verbal form (Plungian and van den Auwera 2006) ⇒ a conflict arises when these markers co-occur?

(16)   subject resultative participle
      a.   *Ojuna nom   unʃa-nxai*
           Ojuna book read-RES
           'Ojuna has read (the) book (i.e. she is in the resultant state of having read the book).'

      b.   **Ojuna   nom   unʃa-nxai   hɘn*
           Ojuna   book read-RES   RS

(17)   object resultative participle
      a.   *nom   unʃ-a:-tai*
           book   read-PRT1-COM
           'The book has been read.'

      b.   **nom unʃ-a :-tai   hɘn*
           book   read-PRT1-COM   RS

(18)   perfective participle
      a.   *Ojuna nom   unʃa-han*
           Ojuna book read-PFCT
           'Ojuna has read (the) book (in her lifetime).'

      b.   **Ojuna   nom   unʃa-han   hɘn*
           Ojuna   book read-PFCT   RS

OR an inherited restriction on two markers of the perfective participle per one construction?

(19) a.   *Ojuna nom   unʃa-han   *bai-han   /   *bai-nxai*
          Ojuna   book read-PFCT   be-PFCT   be-RES

      b.   *Ojuna nom   unʃa-nxai   *bai-han   /   *bai-nxai*
          Ojuna   book read-RES   be-PFCT   be-RES

c.   *nom*   *unʃ-a:-tai*   **bai-han*   /   **bai-nxai*
       book   read-PRT1-COM   be-PFCT   be-RES

3. Barguzin *hɘn* as a discontinuous past marker

- non-verbal predication + *hɘn*

(20)   a.   *tɘrɘ*   *ʉndɘr*
           that   high
           'He is high.'

      b.   *tɘrɘ*   *ʉndɘr*   *hɘn*
           that   high   RS
           'He was high.'

hɘn implies that either Aldar is dead or possesses this quality no more.

(21)   *ʉsɘgɘldɘr*   *bʲi*   *Aldar-tai*   *tanʲi-ls-a:-b*
       yesterday   I   Aldar-COM   get.accquainted-SOC-PRT1-1SGv
       'Yesterday, I got acquainted with Aldar.'

      a.   *tɘrɘ*   *ʉndɘr*   *bai-ga:*
           that   high   be-PRT1
           'He was high.'

      b.   #*tɘrɘ*   *ʉndɘr*   *hɘn*
           that   high   RS
           'He was high.'

- habitative participles (*-dAg, -g-ʃA, -A :-ʃA*), potential participle (*-x-A:r*) and the *ʃa-gʉi* form + *hɘn*

Remote past or a discontinuous habit / lost property.

(22)   a.   *bagʃa*   *man-da*   *xɘʃɘl-ɘi*   *hʉ:l-ɘr*   *honʲin*   *nom*
           teacher we-DAT   lesson-CNT1   end-INST   new   book

           unʃɘ-dɘg   *hɘn*
           read-HAB   RS
           '(The) teacher used to read us new books (e.g. an utterance of a schoolchild on
vacation).'

      b.   *bʲi*   *baga*   *bai-xa-d-a :*   *oi*   *so:-guur*   *jaba-dag*
           I   little   be-POT-DAT-REFL   forest   in-LOC   go-HAB

           bai-ga:-b   *tɘndɘ*   *xodo*   *mogoi*   *xara-dag*   *hɘ-m*
           be-PRT1-1SGv   there   often   snake   see-HAB   RS-1SGv
           'When I was a child, I often saw snakes in the forest.
'

- past 1 (*-A:*) + *hɘn*

Starting a narrative (used in folk tales, legends or stylizations of such).

(23) *mʉnөө naʒar*   *man-ai*   *xurumxa:n*   *nʲutag-ta-mnai*
now   summer   we-CNT2   Kurumkan   region-DAT-1PLn

Barga-Ba:tar-nu:d-ai   *bargad-u:d-ai*   *festivalʲ*   *bol-o:*   *hən.*
Barga-Baatar-PL-CNT1   bargut-PL-CNT1n   festival   become-PRT1   RS
'This summer, there was held a bargut festival Barga-Baatar.'

tiig-ə:-d   *tərə*   *bargad-u:d*   *i:mə*   *tʉ:xə-təi*
do.so-PRT1-CONV2   that   bargut- PL   such   history-COM
'And these barguts have the following history.'

urain xa-d-a: *olon*   *tʉmən*   *ʒəl*   *təndə*   *Barga-Ba:tar*   *gə-ʒə*
before   POT-DAT-REFL   many   thousand   year   there   Barga-Baatar   say-CONV1

jəxə   *xʉn*   *bai-dag*   *bai-ga:*   *hən*
big   man   be-HAB   be-PRT1   RS
'Long ago, many thousands of years ago, there lived a great man Barga-Baatar.'

Some native speakers allow its usage as a plusquamperfect in complex sentences (cf. interpretations 1 and 2):

(24) *aldar-ai*   *gər-t-ə:*   *jərə-xə-də-nʲ*   *svʲət*   *ah-a:*   *hən*
Aldar-CNT1   house-DAT-REFL   come-POT-DAT-3   light   ignite-PRT1   RS
1. [%]'When Aldar came home, the light was (already) on.'
2. '(Long ago,) when Aldar came home, the light went on.'

- modal constructions with *joho-toi* 'habit-COM'

(25) deontic *joho-toi*
a.   *Aldar unta-xa*   *joho-toi*
   Aldar   sleep-POT   habit-COM
   'Aldar must sleep.'

b.   *Aldar unta-xa*   *joho-toi*   *hən*
   Aldar   sleep-POT   habit-COM   RS
   'Aldar had to sleep.'

(26) epistemic *joho-toi*
a.   *Aldar unt-a:*   *joho-toi*
   Aldar   sleep-PRT1   habit-COM
   'Aldar is probably sleeping / Aldar has probably slept.'

b.   **Aldar unt-a:*   *joho-toi*   *hən*
   Aldar   sleep-PRT1   habit-COM   RS
   Int. 'Aldar was probably sleeping / Aldar probably slept.'

4. Futuritive participle –*xa* + *hən*

The preferred means to express a wish (note that there is a distinct optative marker in Buryat).

(27) a. *aldar hu:-hai gɘ-ʒɘ hana-na-m*
    Aldar sit-OPT say-CONV1 think-PRS-1SGv

   b. *aldar hu:-x=a:n gɘ-ʒɘ hana-na-m*
    Aldar sit-POT-RS say-CONV1 think-PRS-1SGv
    'I want Aldar to sit down.'

(28) a. *aldar hu:-hai*
    Aldar sit-OPT

   b. *aldar hu:-x=a:n*
    Aldar sit-POT-RS
    'If only Aldar could sit down.'

Apodosis in conditional sentences.

(29) a. *mɵngɵ: ab-a:n bai-ga:-d-a: xɵbɵ:n basagan-d-a:*
    money get-PFCT.D be-PRT1-DAT-REFL boy girl-DAT-REFL

    bɘlɘg aba-xa hɘn
    present get-POT RS
    1. 'If the boy had got the money, he would have bought a present for his girlfriend.'
    2. 'If the boy had got the money, if only he could buy a present for his girlfriend.'

   b. *mɵngɵ: ab-a:n bai-ga:-d-a: xɵbɵ:n basagan-d-a:*
    money get-PFCT.D be-PRT1-DAT-REFL boy girl-DAT-REFL

    bɘlɘg aba-xa bai-ga:
    present get-POT be-PRT1
    1. 'If the boy had got the money, he would have bought a present for his girlfriend.'
    *2. 'If the boy had got the money, if only he could buy a present for his girlfriend.'

   c. *mɵngɵ: ab-a:n bai-ga:-d-a: xɵbɵ:n basagan-d-a:*
    money get-PFCT.D be-PRT1-DAT-REFL boy girl-DAT-REFL

    bɘlɘg aba-hai
    present get-OPT
    *1. 'If the boy had got the money, he would have bought a present for his girlfriend.'
    2. 'If the boy had got the money, if only he could buy a present for his girlfriend.'

- non-indicative negation puzzle

(30) a. **Aldar bɵ hu:-xa*
    Aldar NEG sit-POT
    Int. 'Aldar will not sit down.'

    b.   *Aldar bʉ   hu:-x=a:n*
            Aldar NEG   sit-POT=RS
            'If only Aldar did not sit down.'

    c.   *Aldar bʉ   hu:-hai*
            Aldar NEG   sit-OPT
            'If only Aldar did not sit down.'

(31) a.   *boro:n or-oo   ha:,   Aldar bʉ   bajar-la-xa   hɘn*
           rain   come-PRT1   COND Aldar NEG   joy-VRB-POT RS

    b.   *boro:n or-oo   ha:,   Aldar bʉ   bajar-la-hai*
           rain   come-PRT1   COND Aldar NEG   joy-VRB-OPT
        1. 'If it rained, Aldar would not be happy.'
        2. 'If it rained, if only Aldar was not happy.'

Note that conditional *per se* is not sufficient to license the non-indicative negation.

(32) a.   **boro:n   or-o: ha: Aldar bʉ   bajar-la-xa   bai-ga:*
           rain   come-PRT1 COND Aldar NEG   joy-VRB-POT be-PRT1

    b.   **boro:n   or-o: ha: Aldar bajar-la-xa   bʉ   bai-ga:*
           rain   come-PRT1 COND Aldar joy-VRB-POT NEG   be-PRT1
        Int. 'If it rained, Aldar would not be happy.'

4. Present-in-the-past or when evidentiality steps in

The *-nA hɘn* construction as a direct evidential.

(33) a.   *ojuna nom   unša-na   hɘn*
           Ojuna book   read-PRS   RS
           '(I saw,) Ojuna read the book.'

    b.   *ojuna nom unša-na   hɘn , ᵗᵉxarʲin tɘrɘn-i:-je-nʲ   xar-a:-gʉi-b*
           Ojuna book read-PRS   RS   but   that-CNT2-ACC-3   see-PRT1-1SGv
           '(I saw,) Ojuna read the book, #but I didn't see it (her reading the book).'

It extends to visible results, if the verb describes something that cannot be seen, i.e. feelings or cognitive processes.

(34) *aldar ɵ:r-i:-ŋ-gɵ: basagan   tuxai-ga: ʃɘbʃɘ-nɘ   hɘn*
      Aldar self-CNT2-GEN-REFL girl   about-REFL think-PRS   RS
      'Aldar thought about his girlfriend (e.g. the speaker saw him buying her a present).'

- first person effect (see, Aikhenvald 2004)

This construction is rarely used with 1 person subjects. In such cases, the speaker is reporting actions that he has seen himself do:

(35) *ˀbʲi   nom   unša-na   hɘ-m*
      I   book read-PRS   RS-1SGv
      '(I saw myself), I read a book (e.g. in a dream, on a video…).'

- shift of the information source in questions and in dependent clauses (see, e.g. Aikhenvald 2004)

A question with this verbal form implies that the addressee must have witnessed what he is being asked about.

(36) *bʲi   nai-man   sag-ta   unta-n-aː-m-pai?*
      I   eight   hour-DAT   sleep-PRS-RS-Q-1SGv
      'Did I fall asleep at eight o'clock? (The speaker presumes that the addressee was looking at the clock when the speaker fell asleep and can be summoned as a witness).'

In embedded sentences, source of evidence may be shifted.

(37) a. *Badma Aldar-iː-je*   *ʃʉlə*   *ədʲi-nə*   *hən*   *gə-ʒə*
          Badma Aldar-CNT2-ACC   soup.ACC   есть-PRS   RS   say-CONV1

          mədə-nə
          know-PRS
          'Badma knows that Aldar has eaten the soup.'
          source of evidence: Badma, ᵗspeaker

      b. ᵗ*Badma*   *Aldar-iː-je*   *ʃʉlə*   *ədʲi-nə*   *hən*
          Badma   Aldar-CNT2-ACC   soup.ACC   есть-PRS   RS

          gə-ʒə   *mədə-nə-gʉi*
          say-CONV1   know-PRS-NEG
          'Badma doesn't know that Aldar has eaten the soup.'
          source of evidence: *Badma, speaker

- **where does the direct evidentiality come from?**

⇒ not from *hən*: perfective participle markers usually give rise to non-firsthand evidentials (Aikhenvald, 2004), and actually, there is no direct evidentiality with other verbal forms

(38) a. ᵒᵏ*Badma*   *nom*   *unʃ-aː*   *hən*   *gə-ʒə*   *xar-aː-gʉi-b*
          Badma   book   read-PRT1   RS   say-CONV1   see-PRT1-NEG-1SGv
          'I did not see how Badma read the book.'

      b. **Badma*   *nom*   *unʃa-na*   *hən*   *gə-ʒə*   *xar-aː-gʉi-b*
          Badma   book   read-PRS   RS   say-CONV1   see-PRT1-NEG-1SGv

⇒ direct evidentiality comes from the presence, *hən* shifts the time the event was witnessed

Argument 1: individual level stative verbs

(39) a. *Aldar burʲad   xələ   mədə-xə*
          Aldar Buryat   language   know-POT
          'Aldar knows the Buryat language (lit. he will know Buryat).'

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b. *Aldar bur^jad xǝlǝ mǝdǝ-dǝg*
   Aldar Buryat language know-HAB
   'Aldar knows the Buryat language, i.e. he often demonstrates his knowledge.'

c. *Aldar bur^jad xǝlǝ mǝdǝ-nǝ*
   Aldar Buryat language know-PRS
   'Aldar knows the Buryat language, i.e. he is demonstrating his knowledge **NOW**.'

Argument 2: non-verbal predication

(40) a. *Aldar nam-ha: ʉndǝr*
     Aldar I-ABL high
     'Aldar is higher than me (general knowledge).'

   b. *Aldar nam-ha: ʉndǝr bai-na*
      Aldar I-ABL high be-PRS
      'Aldar is higher than me (we have just compared Aldar's hight and my hight).'

(41) a. *gǝr jǝxǝ*
     house big
     'The house is big (general knowledge).'

   b. *gǝr jǝxǝ bai-na*
      house big be-PRS
      'The house is big (description of the house that is in front of us or just acquired knowledge).'

Argument 3: participle + copula constructions as an inferential

(42) a. *b^ji kl^jʉtʃ-nʉʉd-ǝ: marta-dag-ab*
     I key-PL-ACC.REFL forget-HAB-1SGv
     'I often lose keys.'

   b. *b^ji kl^jʉtʃ-nʉʉd-ǝ: marta-dag bai-na-b*
      I key-PL-ACC.REFL forget-HAB be-PRS-1SGv
      '(It has turned out that) I often lose keys.'

In (30b), the speaker had no personal awareness of the event until after it occurred.

- still, if it is only a shift of the time when the event was witnessed, why an aspectuality change?

(43) a. *Dugar taban sag zurag zura-na*
     Dugar five hour drawing draw-PRS
     'Dugar is drawing for five hours.'

   b. *^{??}Dugar taban sag zurag zura-na hǝn*
      Dugar five hour drawing draw-PRS RS
      Int. '(I saw,) Dugar was drawing for five hours.'

5. Conclusions

- *hɘn* looks like a discontinuous past tense marker, but in case of some verbal forms, its behaviour demonstrates that there is much more than just a retrospective shift going on

Abbreviations

1, 3 first, third person, **ABL** ablative, **ACC** accusative, **CNT** connective, **COM** comitative, **COND** conditional, **CONV** converb, **DAT** dative, **HAB** habitative participle, **INST** instrumental, **LOC** locative, **NEG** negation, **OPT** optative, **PFCT** perfective participle, **POT** futuritive participle, **PL** plural, **PRS** presence, **PRT** preterite, **PTCL** particle, **Q** question, **REFL** reflexive possessive suffix, **RES** resultative, **RS** retrospective shift, **SG** singular

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