Evidentiality in Kalmyk

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1 Kalmyk

Kalmyk is an endangered Western Mongolic language spoken in the Republic of Kalmykia (Russian Federation, lower Volga region). The number of native speakers of Kalmyk is ca. 180 000 (census 2010).

Kalmyk is an agglutinative language with AOV/SV basic constituent order, postfixed and postpositions, and vowel (backness and rounding) harmony. The nominal system comprises nine cases and possessivity (both personal and reflexive). The verbal system includes ten moods: indicative, precative, voluntative, optative (both simple and expanded), benedictive, concessive, permissive, dubitative and potential (Blässing 2003: 241); in the indicative, eight simple (synthetic) temporal, aspectual and evidential forms are used (see below). The category of voice has derivational character and expresses the passive with the marker -gd-, causative with -Ul'-, reciprocal with -ld- and sociative with -lc-.

Negation involves several negative particles: the prepositional prohibitive bičä with imperative forms, the postpositional contrastive biš with nominal predicates, and prepositional es and postpositional uga with participles and converbs. Indicative finite forms, with one exception, cannot be combined with negation, and instead special constructions based on participles and converbs with uga are used (asymmetric negation).

Clausal subordination in Kalmyk is based on an extensive system of non-finite forms: ten converbs and seven polyfunctional forms traditionally labelled as participles. Subject agreement of finite predicates is based on the personal predicative paradigm derived from personal pronouns (with the exception of the unmarked third person); with non-finite dependent predicates possessive affixes are used (personal possessive in different-subject
sentences, reflexive-possessive in same-subject ones). Direct speech constructions use the quotation verb *gi-* ‘say’; some of its forms are grammaticalized as complementizers, others as evidentials (see §§ 8, 9, 11).

Verbal predicates can be simple (synthetic) and complex (analytic). Simple predicates consist of the stem and one of the affixal forms, four specialized finite and four participial:

<place Table 1 about here>

Complex predicates with directional, temporal, aspectual, modal, and evidential meaning consist of the main verb plus one or more analytic constructions with either auxiliary verbs or auxiliary elements of nominal character. Auxiliary verbs have one of the eight affixes listed above. Such constructions belong to three classes:

a. The main verb with one of the converbial markers (only three converbs out of ten can be used here) and an auxiliary verb (there are more than 30 different auxiliaries); the meanings thus expressed belong mostly to directional and aspectual spheres, e.g.:

- directivity / benefactivity

(1) *güü-ž*  *od-*  run-CONVB.IMPERV  go away  run away (from the deictic centre);

(2) *har-č*  *ir-*  go out-CONVB.IMPERV  come  go out (towards the deictic centre);

(3) *xuld-ž*  *ög-*  buy-CONVB.IMPERV  give  buy (for somebody else);

(4) *xuld-ž*  *av-*  buy-CONVB.IMPERV  take  buy (for oneself);

- aspect / aktionsart (here perfective and continuative)

(5) *kel-äd*  *ork-*  say-CONVB.PERV  put away  having said;

(6) *kel-ž*  *büü-*  say-CONVB.IMPERV  be  saying;

- modality
b. The main verb with one of the participial markers (out of seven participial forms only four are used here) and two auxiliary verbs bää- ‘be’ and bol- ‘become’. Our preliminary inventory of participial analytic constructions (Skribnik; Seeings 2012) shows that the majority of forms are highly idiomatized (including negation and the finalizing finite or participial affix) with almost exclusively evidential (see Table 2 below) and modal meanings.

c. The auxiliary verb of quotation gi- ‘say’ is used in only two analytic constructions: one with the modal converb in -n (‘having almost done something’), the other with the future participle in -x (‘going to do something’):

(9) kel-n
    gi-
    say
    say-CONVB.MOD say
    having almost said;
(10) kel-x
    gi-
    say
    say-PARTIC.FUT say
    be about to say.

Nominal elements in analytic constructions are grammaticalized abstract head nouns with participial relative clauses reanalysed as particles following the participial predicate. There are about twenty such elements (Mulaeva 2011) conveying different nuances of modality and evidentiality, e.g. zövtä (< etymologically zöv ‘right; obligation’ in the comitative case) and zövgo (zöv plus the negative particle uga) expressing deontic modality:

(9) kel-x
    zövtä-v
    MOD-1sg
    say-PARTIC.FUT say
    I have to say;
(10) kel-x
    zövgo-t
    MOD.NEG-2pl
    say-PARTIC.FUT MOD.NEG-2pl
    you do not have to say.

Analytic constructions are highly combinatory; e.g. (11) contains three (-ž ir- for directivity, -dg bol- for a phasal change leading to a habitual event and -Ad bää- for perfectivity), the last auxiliary taking the finite past affix:

(11) ükr-müd
    orat-ž
    ir-dg
The cows have started to come home later [Pyurbeev 1977: 124].

In this chapter we will analyze two synthetic and 18 analytic markers of evidentiality, as well as four constructions based on the quotation verb (see §§8, 9).

2 Organization of the evidential system

Kalmyk has a complex evidentiality system with seven evidential terms expressed by structurally different markers: Direct and Indirect Unspecialized on the one hand, and Specialized Inferred, Assumed, Prospective, Reported and Common Knowledge on the other. Evidential marking is not strictly obligatory; it is used only when in the speaker’s opinion it is relevant where the information comes from. Marking of the information source takes place on two levels: first, the speaker can signal that the event was directly or indirectly witnessed with the most frequent etymologically opaque verbal affixes. Secondly, the speaker can specify the indirect source of information (inference, assumption, prediction, report or common knowledge) using different idiomatic analytic constructions.

Three evidential categories based on logical operations – inferred, assumed and prospective – are characterized by the interaction between temporal characteristics of the input (e.g. perceived visual evidence) and the logical operation/utterance. In the case of Inferred we distinguish between current and previous visual evidence (cf. ‘current evidence’ observed at the time of speaking vs. ‘previous evidence’ observed before the time of speaking, San Roque & Loughnane 2012:118). Assumed and Prospective distinguish between current, previous and expected states-of-affairs. Additional aspectual distinctions are possible.
3 Direct Evidential

Direct perception in Kalmyk is encoded in the synthetic form -lA (negation: -sn uga bilä) and two analytic constructions with -lA-marking on the auxiliary bää- (bilä), both negated by the postpositional particle uga. The most frequently used lA-form (1539 occurrences in KNC) refers mainly to the 3rd person sg/pl (1001 occurrences) and the 1st person sg/pl (495 occurrences); it denotes recent events that the speaker witnessed or took part in:

(12) xürm özklüür ekl-lä

wedding yesterday begin-WIT.EVID

The wedding began yesterday [KNC]⁷.

In principle, analytic constructions of different types behave very differently concerning their combinations with -lA. Converbial constructions show no constraints and the meaning of the resulting complex predicate is compositional, -lA retaining its original meaning. Among participial constructions only five combinations with -lA are attested: where only two (-dg bilä and -A bilä) retain the original meaning of -lA, one builds a separate evidential category (-sn bilä) and two (-x bilä and -x bolla) are idiomatized as modal constructions with irreal and deontic meanings, respectively. Thus the direct evidential subsystem includes three values with TAM oppositions: -lA direct evidential past, -dg bilä direct evidential past habitual and -A bilä (very rare) direct evidential past continuous.

(13) illustrates a witnessed habitual past event (-dg bilä, 715 occurrences):

(13) mana eež xaľ'mg zää-g jahž čan-dg

our grandmother Kalmyk tea-ACC how cook-PARTIC.HAB

bilä?

be:WIT.EVID

(You surely remember) How did our grandmother usually make Kalmyk tea? [KNC]
(14) shows a witnessed continuous event occurring in a definite time period in the past (-A bilä, less than 10 occurrences in the KNC):

(14) čama-g iigž kel-x giž küläh-ä
you-ACC so say-PARTIC.FUT CMPLZ wait-PARTIC.PRES

bilä-v
be:WIT.EVID-1sg

I have been waiting for you to say so [KNC].

Through negation the imperfective participle is replaced by the converb in -Ad (-Ad uga bilä).

To sum up, the core of the subsystem of direct evidentiality in Kalmyk comprises the simplest and most frequent marker -lA and its negative counterpart -sn uga bilä; in addition there are two analytic constructions with aspectual characterization of the witnessed event.

4 Indirectivity

Indirectivity is expressed by one simple synthetic marker -ž (the most frequent – 851 occurrences) and two analytic constructions, all of them with past time reference and a mirative extension. The source of information is not specified – it can mark the information obtained through hearsay (15, 19) or inference (16), it can also denote an uncontrolled event (17) or a dream (18).

(15) Nam-sa, soŋs-v-či? Dörž-in gölm-d-n’ söö-nä
N. hear-PAST-2sg D.-GEN fishing net-DAT-POSS.3 night-GEN
arat tor-ad xon-ž.
fox stick-CONVB.PERV spend a night-INDIR.EVID
Däkäd ükr-n’ ikrl-ž. Ün-ä-ř-į? also cow-POSS.3 give birth to two calves-INDIR.EVID truth-INST-Q.PART

Teŋgr en. Min’ oda itktlä kün kel-v
heaven this just now trusty person say-PAST

Namsa, have you heard? (Surprisingly) a fox spent the night stuck in Dorž’s fishing net. And (surprisingly) his cow gave birth to two calves. – Really? – Really. Just now a reliable person told me about it [BB-102].

(16) Čirä-d-ân zahan pomad zövär zuzanar türk-ž
face-DAT-REFL white powder very thickly spread-INDIR.EVID

[Her face is unnaturally white;](She) will have spread white powder on her face very thickly [KNC].

(17) Gee-čk-ž-v… Xama ujh-a-sn
lose-COMPL-INDIR.EVID-1sg where fall-CAUS-PARTIC.PERV

bol-x-v-i?
become-PARTIC.FUT-1sg -Q

(To my surprise) I have lost it… Where could I have dropped it? [BB-123]

(18) Čüüčä, bi söö-nä neg aal’ta züüd üz-ü-v.
Č. I night-GEN one strange dream see-PAST-1sg

Neg örüün öndr šavr bääşy deld-gd-üd
one morning high clay castle build up-PASS-CNVB.PERV

xon-ž. Bi tana ax tüšml
spend a night-INDIR.EVID I your senior councillor

bol-sn bol-ž jov-ž-v
become-PARTIC.PERV AUX-CNVB.PERV AUX-INDIR.EVID-1sg
Čüüčä, I had a strange dream this night. One morning (to my surprise) a tall clay castle had been put up during the night. I was there your senior councillor [BB-183].

As (18) shows, this marker can be freely combined with analytic converbial constructions (aspect, benefactivity, etc. plus indirectivity); it can be negated by the postpositional particle uga (19):

(19) vaxtjor jum üz-ž uga
    porter something see-INDIR.EVID NEG

The porter did not see anything / claimed not to have seen anything (from a police report about a theft) [XY-02/02/02].

The analytic construction -dg bääž adds aspectual meaning of habituality:

(20) mini eež ik lam-nr-in xuvz-ig altn utz-ar
    my grandmother big monk-pl-GEN clothes-ACC golden thread-INST
    keerül-ž uj-dg bää-ž
    decorate-CONVB.IMPERV sew-PARTIC.HAB be-INDIR.EVID

(I was told that) My grandmother used to decorate the clothes of important monks with embroideries made with a golden thread [XY-06/03/29].

The second construction, -sn bääž, refers to an event located in the ‘more remote past’, i.e. in relation not to the utterance/narration time, but to another event in the past (pluperfect indirectivity). Often this event is named in the same sentence or paragraph and represents one of the first two links in the chain ‘movement – perception – cognition – communication’ (‘veni, vidi …’):

(21) ger-t-än ir-xlä, šaltgta avh-m sän
    house-DAT-REFL come-CONVB.COND sick uncle-POSS.1sg well
    bol-ad serg-äd bol-sn bää-ž
    become-CONVB.PERV cheer up-CONVB.PERV become-PARTIC.PERV be-INDIR.EVID
When (I) came home, (it turned out that) my sick uncle had (already) cheered up, feeling better [KNC].

To sum up, in the indirectivity zone there is an opposition between simple past indirectivity (with an additional construction to mark habituality) and pluperfect indirectivity.

5 Inferred evidential

The constructions based on current evidence are further opposed by an additional epistemic meaning ‘degree of certainty’: if the speaker is certain of his/her conclusion, the constructions with the auxiliary bol- ‘become’ are used, and a less certain conclusion is encoded in the series with the particle bäädl tü (etymologically bäädl ‘look, appearance’ + comitative in -tA). The ‘less certain’ inferentials differentiate past, present and future. The ‘certain’ inferentials have no future form. Previous evidence is employed in just one pluperfect construction with the epistemic overtone ‘certainty’.

a. If the current evidence is interpreted more or less simultaneously with the speech act and the speaker is sure in their conclusion, they can use two constructions: -dg bol(ža)na signals that the inferred event still continues at the speech moment (present time reference, absolute in speech act or relative in narrations, see 22), and -sn bol(ža)na shows that the inferred event took place previous to the perception of the current evidence (23):

(22) ä uガah-ar tiigäd bič-äd diür-äd
sound NEG-INST so write-CONVB.PERV put away-CONVB.PERV
jov-dg bol-ža-na

(Look, Bata’s suitcase under his bed is full of his poems!) Without telling anyone, he writes (poems) and puts them away [KNC].
(23) xulxač-nr  öd-r-är  xöö-d-ig  košar-t  bär-sn
thief-pl  day-INST  sheep-pl-ACC  shed-DAT  hold-PARTIC.PERV

bol-ža-na,  asxn  bürül-in  alnd  teđn-ig
become-PROG-PRES  evening  dusk-GEN  at  they-ACC

ač-sn  bol-ža-na.
load-PARTIC.PERV  become-PROG-PRES

Ter  saam-la-n’  Badm  ir-sn  bol-ža-na
that  time-COMIT-POSS.3  B.  come-PARTIC.PERV  become-PROG-PRES

(The sheep owner sees traces of his sheep and the body of his murdered assistant Badm in an empty shed.) The thieves must have kept the sheep in the shed during the day, and then in the evening at dusk they must have been loading the sheep. That is when Badm must have come [DzA-55].

b. If the current evidence is interpreted more or less simultaneously with the speech act but the speaker is less certain in his conclusion, s/he uses constructions with the particle bäädltá. The inferred event can refer to the past (-sn bäädltá), present (-dg bäädltá) and future (-x bäädltá):

(24) en  xoir-in  negn-d-n’  möŋg  es giž  posylk  ir-sn
this  two-GEN  one-DAT-POSS.3  money or  parcel  come-PARTIC.PERV
bäädltá
PART

(On watching two students cooking a big dinner) Probably one of these two has received money or a (food) parcel (from the parents) [KNC].

(25) mini  kövün-ä  dun  bol-dg  bäädltá
my son-GEN voice become-PARTIC.HAB PART

(Hearing a baby crying) Probably it is the voice of my son [KNC].

(26) xur or-x bäädlä

rain enter-PARTIC.FUT PART

(Look, a big cloud is coming) Probably it will rain [KNC].

(27) Ör zää-tl gii-x bäädl uga

dawn glimmer-CONVB.TERM hold-PARTIC.FUT PART NEG

(The rain is drizzling everywhere) Probably it will not hold till sunrise [KNC].

c. The previous (remembered) evidence (re)interpreted by the speaker has no separate construction; it is the second meaning of the past inferred evidential in -sn bolžana. The fact that it is about recaptured evidence is understood from the context. The logical operation here is not actually inference of some event causally connected with the state-of-affairs perceived as evidence, but the (re)interpretation of this evidence:

(28) Ter-n' digitä Dzhek avtomat-as žiijnül-sn

that-POSS.3 exactly D. phone booth-ABL call-PARTIC.PERV

bol-ža-na

become-PROG-PRES

(Before I opened the door for you, the phone rang, but the caller hung up without speaking. Now I think that) It must have been Dzhek calling from the telephone booth [TA-54].

In brief, the specialized inference in Kalmyk demonstrates two main oppositions: current vs. previous evidence, certainty vs. uncertainty. The current evidence allows the differentiation of
present, past and future events inferred with uncertainty and present and past events inferred with certainty. The previous evidence allows inferring only pluperfect certain events.

A question is how the specialized inferential construction with past time reference differs from indirectivity constructions, whose reading is also inferential (see §4). According to our informants, the specialized inferential construction presupposes a more intensive deduction process.

6 Assumed evidential

The assumed evidential is used in utterances motivated by some current input, sensual or informative, whereby the given state-of-affairs is interpreted/explained on the basis of speaker’s knowledge. This evidential distinguishes past and present forms, -sn bolx (29) and -dg bolx (30); both forms have no fixed epistemic overtone (depending on context, different examples can have different degrees of certainty – or none).

(29)  oln hazr-ar or-sn bol-x-č
  many place-INST enter-PARTIC.PERV become-PARTIC.FUT-2sg

  oln kūūn-lă xarh-sn bol-x-č
  many man-COMIT meet-PARTIC.PERV become-PARTIC.FUT-2sg

You must have visited many places. You must have seen many people [DB-19].

(30)  gerts-m nama-g kūlā-žā-dg bol-x
  family-POSS.1sg I-ACC wait-PARTIC.HAB become-PARTIC.FUT

(I will go home now) My family is probably waiting for me [DzJ-25].

The assumed evidentiality has no future form of its own: assumptions for the future are covered by a separate category Prospective.
7 Prospective evidential

As this evidentiality category exclusively refers to the future, the question arises if it is a separate category – or the future realization of either Inferred or Assumed evidentiality (cf. ‘The Prospective resembles the Inferential in that it implicitly refers to an additional situation (E), which serves as the source of information’ (Maslova 2003: 225). We consider it a separate category with the following arguments. First, it has common features with both Inferred and Assumed evidentiality. As in Inferred, logical operations are used to postulate some event different from the input state-of-affairs. As in Assumed, the input state-of-affairs is not necessarily visual / sensual and the logical operations deal with general knowledge. There are also features that are specific to Prospective evidential: the possibility to use as input a future, expected state-of-affairs and the fact that the temporal characteristics reflect both the moment of speech and the state-of-affairs.

There are three prospective forms in Kalmyk: based on the current (\(\cdot x\) bol(ža)na), the previous (\(\cdot x\) bolv) and the expected state-of-affairs (\(\cdot x\) bolx).

a. The speaker predicts an event that takes place in the near future as a logical consequence of the current state-of-affairs; this state-of-affairs often presupposes the set of social norms and rules, so that the utterance gets a strong necessitive reading and the epistemic overtone of certainty:

(31) noolda-hi-\(\cdot n\’)  tadin  ke-\(\cdot x\)  bol-ža-na-t

fight-ACC-POSS.3  you  do-PARTIC.FUT  become-PROG-PRES-2pl

\(\cdot bidn\)  bolxla,  zug  zal’vr-\(\cdot x\)  bol-ža-na-vdn

we  become-CONVB.COND only  pray-PARTIC.FUT  become-PROG-PRES-1pl
You (young people) will have to continue the fight. As for us, we (being old now), will have only to pray [DzA-7].

b. The form -x bolx codes that the speaker predicts an event for the remote future on the basis of the expected state-of-affairs. By contrast, this evidential is characterized by a low degree of certainty:

(32)  
\[
\begin{array}{cccc}
bi & terüü-lä & xarh-ž & čad-š-go \\
\text{I} & \text{he-COMIT} & \text{meet-CONVB.IMPERV} & \text{be able-PARTIC.FUT-NEG}
\end{array}
\]

bol-ža-x-m-b ?

become-PROG-PARTIC.FUT-AFF-Q

(He intends to leave for the city.) Would I not (be able to) see him? [DzA-145]

c. The form -x bolv codes that the speaker makes a prediction based on a previous state-of-affairs: the situation in the past (-v) was such that its logical consequence (-x) could only be the event named in the sentence:

(33)  
\[
\begin{array}{ccccccc}
zug & xal’mg & kel-ăr & āg-gd-sn & zakvr-mud-yg \\
\text{but} & \text{Kalmyk} & \text{language-INST} & \text{give-PASS-PARTIC.PERV} & \text{command-pl-ACC}
\end{array}
\]

en  šinäs  das-x  bol-v

this anew learn-PARTIC.FUT become-PAST

(The dog I found knew commands in German and Russian.) But it had to learn anew the commands given in Kalmyk [XY-06/07/29].

This construction has developed one more meaning (see below §8).

Summing up, the three prospectives designate a prediction based on information sources in present, past and future; by contrast, the simple future form in -x denotes a hypothesis without any reference to an information source.

8 Reported evidential
The category of Reported in Kalmyk includes the construction -ž ginä and two other constructions, -sn bilä and -x bolv, reanalyzed as Reported, both characteristic for the modern newspaper style. Besides the Indirective, -ž can have hearsay as one of its possible readings.

a. The quoting strategy of Kalmyk, as in all other Mongolic languages, consists of using the quotation verb gi- alone or as an auxiliary in combination with other verbs of speaking. Gi- introduces direct speech in its original form and the speaker as its first argument; as an independent quotation verb it takes finite forms and personal marking: gi-nä-v ‘I say’, gi-nä-č ‘you say’, gi-nä ‘he/they say’, gi-vü-v ‘I said’, gi-lä-č ‘you said (witnessed)’ etc.:

(34) či jun gi-v-č?- ezk-ek-ās zöväšl sur-na-v
   you what say-PAST-2sg parents-ABL permission ask-PRES-1sg
   gi-lä-v
   say-WIT.EVID-1sg

   What did you say? – I said, I will ask my parents for permission [KNC].

The most frequently used form gi-nä, the present form 3sg of gi-, is grammaticalized as the reported evidential particle ginä; it therefore represents a wide-spread phenomenon in which complement clauses of verbs of quotation are reanalyzed as main clauses, and the verbs themselves as evidential particles (Aikhenvald 2004: 123). In the process of grammaticalization ginä has changed its properties considerably: it reports instead of quotes, there is no slot for the exact speaker as there is just one complex predicate instead of two clauses, the main and the complement, and there are restrictions on verbal forms that encode the reported information. Compare the independent form gi-nä in a direct speech construction with a cited form of the direct evidential (35) and ginä as reportative particle with the only possible form of indirective in -ž (36):

(35) en-tn xuld-ž av-la-v gi-nä
he-POSS.2pl buy-CONVB.IMPERV AUX-WIT.EVID-1sg say-PRES

(Interpreter:) He says he bought it (lit.: I bought it, he says) [KNC].

(36) Batah-as bičg ir-ž ginä, ünn-lij?
B-ABL letter come-INDIR.EVID REP truth-Q

Is it true that (as they say) a letter from Bata has come? [KNC]

Ginä combined with the habitual participle in -dg is grammaticalized to a different evidential with the meaning of common knowledge (see §9).

b. By the construction -sn bilä the speaker signals that the information was directly witnessed or experienced by another person (often named in the context), i.e. obtained through hearsay, but is considered reliable:

(37) xud-Igo, özklädür kövi-d sad dotr naad-ž
lie-CONVB.NEG yesterday boy-PL garden inside play-CONVB.IMPERV
jov-ad, nemșin mași üz-sn bilä
AUX-CONVB.PERV German car see-PARTIC.PERV be:WIT.EVID

That is no lie; the boys who played in the garden yesterday saw a German car [KNC].

This construction is stylistically specialized: the majority of the examples in the KNC are from newspapers (only 10 out of 161 occurrences come from fictional texts; there were none in our initial self-collected corpus), so this form has become genre-specific (= a journalist always has reliable firsthand witnesses):

(38) en xo-d Zugäräsän hääxül-d čign
this sheep-pl All-Russian exhibition-DAT even
üzül-gd-sn bilä
show-PASS-PARTIC.PERV be:WIT.EVID

These sheep were shown even at the All-Russian exhibition [XY-06/07/12].
A negated form of this construction is not attested; there does exist a formal counterpart -sn uga bilä, but semantically this corresponds not to the analytic form itself, but to the simple form in -lA: it denotes the direct witnessing by the speaker himself, not the reliable witnessing by another person:

(39) nan-la ädl surhul' sur-sn uga bilä

He did not study (as much) as me [KNC].

c. To the Reported category we assign the prospective evidential -x bolv in its second meaning realized exclusively in newspaper language⁹, where it has become restricted to reported information about planned future events obtained in personal interviews with their planners, so that often the information source is the subject of such sentence (or is introduced in constructions like According to...):

(40) en tör-müd-lg xahlhn-d ministr on'g-an ög-x

bol-v

become-PAST

The minister will pay attention to the study of these questions [XY-06/09/02].

Summing up, the two central reported evidentials describe past events and differ in the type of information source: either an unspecified person or a reliable person (often mentioned in the context). An additional construction covers future events reported by their planners (also often mentioned in the context). The last two constructions show that the modern, actively developing newspaper style does not just use the existing evidentials, but creates new meanings.

9 Common knowledge
An evidential construction -dg ginä (habitual participle in -dg + grammaticalized form of the quotation verb gi-) occurs mainly in proverbs, referring to common knowledge (cf. Lidz 2007: 60-63):

(41) äämtx-äg asr-ž tus uga bol-d-mn ginä
    coward-ACC care-CONVB.IMPERV use NEG become-PARTIC.HAB-AFF REP

Taking care of a coward is useless (as everyone knows) [XY-06/08/10].

10 Evidentials in discourse

In Kalmyk there are three established strategies of past tense narration encoded by evidentials, one for witnessed past and two for non-witnessed (historic descriptions, folk tales etc.)

a. A story witnessed by the speaker is marked by the synthetic marker (-lä) and analytic constructions of direct evidentiality (-dg bilä, -sn bilä and -A bilä):

(42) Ik năr tedn-ă-d bol-la. Tüüind či bas
    big party they-GEN-DAT become-WIT.EVID there you also
    ir-lä-č. Ger-in haza oln bahčud zuglr-la.
    come-WIT.EVID-2sg house-GEN outside many youth gather-WIT.EVID
    Dun dombr xoir-in ais songs-gd-la
    song dombra two-GEN melody hear-PASS-WIT.EVID
    Tügxd bi čini duuh-i-čn songs-la-v,
    at that time I your singing-ACC-POSS.2sg hear-WIT.EVID-1sg
    čamag jahž biil-dg-i-čn üz-lä-v.
    you-ACC how dance-PARTIC.HAB-ACC-POSS.2sg see-WIT.EVID-1sg
    Bi kesgtän čini nüdn gerd-lä-v
    I long your eye stare-WIT.EVID-1sg
There was a big party at their place. Also you went there. Many young people gathered in front of the house. There was dombra (a string instrument) music and singing. At that time I heard your singing, I saw how you danced. I stared very long into your eyes [IL-21].

b. In traditional narrative stories and folk tales the indirectivity marker -ž is used in the beginning, indicating a non-firsthand information source (cf. Bläsing 1984). A typical opening formula kezänä bääž (long ago be-INDIR.EVID) ‘once upon a time’ sets the framework of the fairy tale genre. With the non-firsthand framework established, the following narration contains the unmarked past tense form -v expressing a dynamic development of a story or -nA as the historical present:

(43)  Kezänä bää-ž. Hurvn kūük-tä emgn övgn xoìr
long ago be-INDIR.EVID three daughter-COMIT old woman old man two
bää-ž. Edn jir taalta bül bää-ž.
be-INDIR.EVID they very harmonious family be-INDIR.EVID
Kūük-d-n’ soŋsvrč, xoorndan eeltä bää-ž.
daughter-pl-POSS.3 obedient between friendly be-INDIR.EVID
Edü-tedü žirh-žäh-äd, kūük-d-in ek-n’
some time be happy-PROG-CONVB.PERV daughter-pl-GEN mother-POSS.3
gemt-äd öŋgr-ž od-na
take sick-CONVB.PERV die-CONVB.IMPERV AUX-PRES

It was long ago. There was an old woman and an old man with their three daughters. They were a very harmonious family. The daughters were obedient and friendly to each other. Having lived happily for some time, the mother becomes sick and dies [XT-4].
c. One more narration strategy found in traditional stories and fairy tales is based on the historical present, which makes the presentation more vivid. In this case a standard beginning in the folkloric texts contains the analytical construction -dg bolna:

(44) Kezänä neg bain kün kövün-d-än ger av-č
    long ago one rich man son-DAT-REFL house take-CONVB.IMPERV
    ög-dg bol-na. Ödr ir-väs ber
give-PARTIC.HAB become-PRES day come-CONVB.COND daughter-in-law
du har-l uga atyh-ad bää-dg bol-na
    sound emit-CONVB.NEG be sad-CONVB.PERV be-PARTIC.HAB become-PRES

Long ago a rich man arranged (lit.: arranges) a marriage for his son. Day by day the daughter-in-law is getting sadder and sadder without uttering a sound [EK-343].

The stylistic possibility of evidential markers in creating humorous effects is illustrated by the use of the direct evidential in the rhymed folktale Daln xoir xudl (‘Seventy-two lies’):

(45) ezk-äs-n türül-ž har-ad,
    father-ABL-REFL be ahead-CONVB.IMPERV come-CONVB.PERV
elnzg ezk-in-n’ adu xärül-lä-v
    great-grandfather-GEN-POSS.3 herd look after-WIT.EVID-1sg

Being born before my father, I looked after a herd of horses of my great-grandfather [Xudl-8].

11 Evidentiality strategies: Complementation

There are two competing clause complementation types in Kalmyk: a non-finite (participial complement with a case marker) and a finite with an introducing complementizer giž (< imperfective converb of already discussed quotation verb gi-). We argue that these two types distinguish meanings related to the information source. Our analysis of the corpus indicates
that not every predicate taking clausal complement can take both these types; in the following
we will show the distribution of complement types with verbs of immediate perception and
cognition.

The verb soŋs- ‘hear, listen’ takes both kinds of complement clauses; a participial complement
with the accusative case implies direct perception (actual hearing), a finite complement clause with the complementizer giž marks information obtained through hearsay:

a. Verbs of immediate perception (soŋs- ‘hear’, üz-, xälä- ‘see’)

(46) zal-d  bää-sn  uls  Kugultinov  šüü-güd-aän
    auditorium-DAT  be-PARTIC.PERV  people K.  poem-pl-REFL
    umš-s-ig  soŋs-v
    read-PARTIC.PERV-ACC  hear-PAST

The people sitting in the auditorium listened to Kugultinov reading his poems [XY-06/06/20].

(47) xalx  Monγl-yn  političesk  boln  olna  üüldüč-nr  dund
    Khalkha Mongolia-GEN  political  and  social leader-pl  among
    dörvd  jas-ta  uls  oln  bilä  giž  soŋs-la-v
    Dörbet  bone-COMIT  people many  be-WIT.EVID  CMPLZ  hear-WIT.EVID-1sg
I heard that there were many Dörbet people among Khalkha Mongolian political and
social leaders [XY-06/05/18].

The verbs üz- ‘see’, xälä- ‘see’, indicating direct visual perception, only take a participial
complement and never take a finite clause complement with the complementizer giž:

(48) özkldür  zetkrtä  jovdl  učr-s-ig
    yesterday  dangerous  accident  happen-PARTIC.PERV-ACC
    [*učr-v  giž]  üz-lä-v
happen-PAST  CMPLZ see-WIT.EVID-1sg

Yesterday I saw a dangerous accident happen [XY-06/02/16].

b. Verbs of cognition (med- ‘know’, san- ‘think’)

The verb med- ‘know’ allows both types of complements with the difference that the participial complement with accusative case encodes direct perception of a situation (49), while the giž-complement indicates that the speaker’s knowledge is indirect (50):

(49) xaalh-s mu  bol-ža-x-i-n’  bidn  evrán en
road-pl bad  become-PROG-PARTIC.FUT-ACC-POSS.3  we  self  this
jovud-t  med-ü-vidn
trip-DAT  know-PAST-1pl

We have understood ourselves during this trip (we have taken part in) that the roads are becoming poor in quality [XY-06/02/16].

(50) en  kővü-g  iïgž  zov-x  giž
this  boy-ACC  like this  suffer-PARTIC.FUT  CMPLZ
med-sn  uga-v
know-PARTIC.PERV  NEG-1sg

I did not know (at that time) that this boy would suffer like this [KNC].

Commonly held views are expressed with a giž-complement:

(51) kū  allhn  ik  kilnz  giž  med-x  kergtä
man  killing great  sin  CMPLZ  know-PARTIC.FUT  necessary

One should know that it is a great sin to kill a man [XY-06/09/07].

With the verb san- ‘think’ only a finite complement clause with giž is possible, probably because this verb denotes complex logical operations like evaluations, etc. and not direct reflection of events:
I rather think that this bad law needs to be altered [XY-06/04/22].

Therefore, choice of complement types by verbs of cognition and perception in Kalmyk depends on the information source: the non-finite (participial) complement signals a firsthand information source, and the finite clause complement with the complementizer giž indicates a non-firsthand basis (hearsay or complex logical operations).

12 Evidentiality strategy: Demonstratives and interpretation of evidence

There are two idiomatic constructions, gidg en (60 occurrences) and gidg ter (29 occurrences), related to the evidence/knowledge marking system. They are grammaticalized on the basis of complex structures with demonstratives en ‘this’ and ter ‘that’ as formal main predicates plus subject clauses built by habitual participles in -dg from the quotation verb gi- (‘this/that is what they would call…’). Both constructions denote that the speaker generalizes the evidence and gives it a complex interpretation or an evaluation; i.e. these constructions are close to both inferential and assumptive evidentials, but are still specific. In the case of en the current evidence is interpreted (53), and in the case of ter the previous evidence like remembered facts (54):

(53) iígäd edgd-nä gi-dg en
    this way recover-PRES say-PARTIC.HAB this

(This is what they call) such a recovery [KNC].

(54) nan-as zul-ža-na gi-dg ter
    I-ABL avoid-PROG-PRES say-PARTIC.HAB that

(She) is avoiding me (I’d say remembering her behaviour) [KNC].
Very often proverbs occur as ‘labels’ or formulaic means of interpretation:

(55) $xojr$ $uul$ $biʃ$, $xojr$ $kün$ $xarh-na$ $gi-dg$ $en$

  two   mountain   NEG two  man   meet-PRES  say-PARTIC.HAB   this

  Two mountains do not meet, but two men do (this is what they say) [KNC].

Compare also (56) with the mirative particle attached on the demonstrative (see more below):

(56) $yosn$ $tuul-in$ $orn$ $gi-dg-tn$ $en-ž$

  real   hare-GEN   form   say-PARTIC.HAB-POSS.2pl   this-MIR

  (Just look, this is, for your attention) a real hare form! [XM-26]

13 Mirativity

In addition to the verbal indirective marker -ž that can have a mirative extension, Kalmyk has a special mirative particle -ž which is homonymous with the indirective marker and etymologically related to it: historically it is an indirective form of the old copula verb *a- (cf. Sanžeev 1983:290). These two markers are in complementary distribution: the mirative marker accompanies nominal predicates (57), existential negation (58) and participles functioning as finite predicates (59, 60). The central meaning of the particle is mirative, though with participial predicates it can also convey indirectivity; separate mirative values (Aikhenvald 2012) are not differentiated, the most common readings being surprise, newly acquired and unexpected information:

(57) $Kermn$ $gem-tā-ž-ij$?

  K. illness-COMIT-MIR-Q

  Is Kermn ill? [TA-12] (new unexpected information)

(58) $aav$ $eež$ $xoir$ $ger-t-än$ $uga-ž$

  grandfather   grandmother   two house-DAT-REFL   NEG-MIR
Grandfather and grandmother are both not at home (surprise, contrary to expectations) [Sanžeev 1983: 290].

(59) xurl xaa-x-m-ž

temple close-PARTIC.FUT-AFF-MIR

The temple will be closed (contrary to expectations) [EK-75].

(60) Dzek zavod-t ködl-dg-ž

D. factory-DAT work-PARTIC.HAB-MIR

(Surprise, sudden discovery:) Dzek is working in a factory [TA-41].

14 Summary

Kalmyk has an optionally used seven-term evidential system covering Direct, Indirect, Inferred, Assumed, Prospective, Reported and Common Knowledge evidentials organized on two structurally different levels. On the first level the primary synthetic forms -lA and -ž are in opposition: the marker -lA indicates direct perception, and -ž encodes information obtained indirectly (inference, assumption and hearsay as well as mirativity are represented as contextual readings).

The second level is shaped by idiomatic analytic constructions of different character with highly specialized evidential meanings. These can be roughly divided into ‘Logical operations’ and ‘Communicated information’.

In the first group we find five Inferred, two Assumed, three Prospective evidential forms. These are opposed through the temporal reference to the state-of-affairs that serves as input or evidence (previous or current, for Prospective also expected). In the case of Inferred
they are also opposed by epistemic overtones (certainty vs. uncertainty, whereby the ‘certain’
inference has no future form – this option is separately elaborated in prospectives).

‘Communicated information’ includes Reported and Common Knowledge. Reported
information is encoded in the three constructions -ž ginä, -sn bilä and -x bolv, with the last
two being exclusively used in newspaper texts encoding information about the past or future
obtained from a reliable first witness or the planner. The construction of common knowledge
-dg ginä indicates by its form that common knowledge is communicated (ginä from the
quotation verb gi-).

Evidential distinctions are also encoded in complement clauses with verbs of perception
and cognition: non-finite clauses with case affixes as connectors denote the information that is
directly perceived, and finite complement clauses with the complementizer giž (one more
form of the quotation verb gi-) represent their content as indirect information (e.g. hearsay or
results of logical operations). One more evidentiality strategy of Kalmyk is based on
demonstratives combined with another form of gi-; two constructions with proximal and distal
demonstrative pronouns, gidg en and gidg ter, respectively encode online or postponed
interpretation or evaluation of evidence (‘this/that is what you would call …’). This strategy is
close to both inference and assumption, but seems to be something different.

The indirectivity marker -ž as well the inferred constructions may have mirative
extensions; a pure mirative meaning in Kalmyk is conveyed by the particle -ž, etymologically
connected with the verbal indirectivity marker -ž (the old copula verb *a- in indirective form),
but accompanying nominal predicates.

Text Corpus


KNC  Kalmyk National Corpus
(http://web-corpora.net/KalmykCorpus/search/index.php?interface_language=ru)


XT  Xal’mg tuuls. 2010. Elista: Xal’mg degtr harhač

XY  Xal’mg Ynen (Kalmyk national newspaper, examples taken from the KNC)

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Table 1: Verbal predicates (terms after Bläsing 2003: 244)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>affix</th>
<th>function</th>
<th>example</th>
<th>negation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>-nA</td>
<td>present-future</td>
<td><em>ir-nā</em> ‘(he) comes’</td>
<td><em>ir-x biš (&gt; ir-x-š)</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-v</td>
<td>terminative</td>
<td><em>ir-v</em> ‘(he) came’</td>
<td><em>ir-sn uga</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-lA</td>
<td>confirmative</td>
<td><em>ir-lā</em> ‘(he) came’</td>
<td><em>ir-sn uga bilā</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-ž</td>
<td>resultative</td>
<td>*ir-ž ‘(he) came’</td>
<td><em>ir-ž uga</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-sn</td>
<td>perfective participle</td>
<td>*ir-sn ‘(he) came’</td>
<td><em>ir-sn uga</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-x</td>
<td>future participle</td>
<td>*ir-x ‘(he) will come’</td>
<td><em>ir-x uga (&gt; ir-š-go)</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-dg</td>
<td>habitual participle</td>
<td>*ir-dg ‘(he) usually comes’</td>
<td><em>ir-dg uga (&gt; ir-d-go)</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-A</td>
<td>imperfective participle</td>
<td>*ir-ā ‘(he) is still on his way’</td>
<td><em>ir-ād uga</em></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 2: A multi-term evidentiality system in Kalmyk

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>evidential meaning</th>
<th>TAM / realization</th>
<th>epistemic / mirative overtones</th>
<th>marker</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Direct</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Direct</td>
<td>Direct Past</td>
<td></td>
<td>-lA</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>(neg.) -sn uga bilä</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Past Habitual</td>
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<td>-dg bilä</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Past Continuative (rare)</td>
<td></td>
<td>-A bilä</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Indirect</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Indirect</td>
<td>Direct Past</td>
<td>mirative</td>
<td>-ž</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Pluperfect</td>
<td>mirative</td>
<td>-sn bää-ž</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Past Habitual</td>
<td>mirative</td>
<td>-dg bää-ž</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inferred</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Inferred</td>
<td>Present (current evidence)</td>
<td>uncertainty</td>
<td>-dg bäädlitä</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Present (current evidence)</td>
<td>certainty / mirative</td>
<td>-dg bol-ža-na</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Past (current evidence)</td>
<td>uncertainty</td>
<td>-sn bäädlitä</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Past (current evidence)</td>
<td>certainty / mirative</td>
<td>-sn bol-ža-na I</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Pluperfect (previous evidence)</td>
<td>certainty / mirative</td>
<td>-sn bol-ža-na II</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Future (current evidence)</td>
<td>uncertainty</td>
<td>-x bäädlitä</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assumed</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Assumed</td>
<td>Present</td>
<td></td>
<td>-dg bol-x</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Past</td>
<td>certainty</td>
<td>-sn bol-x</td>
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<tr>
<td>Prospective</td>
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<tr>
<td>Prospective</td>
<td>Future-in-the-past (previous evidence)</td>
<td></td>
<td>-x bol-v I</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Near future (current evidence)</td>
<td>certainty</td>
<td>-x bol-(ža-)na</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Remote future (expected evidence)</td>
<td></td>
<td>-x bol-x</td>
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<tr>
<td>Reported</td>
<td>Past</td>
<td>-ž gină</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Past based on reliable</td>
<td>-sn bilä</td>
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<td></td>
<td>information source</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Future based on personal</td>
<td>-x bol-v II</td>
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<td></td>
<td>interviews</td>
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<tr>
<td>Common knowledge</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>-dg ginä</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Scheme 1: Inferred evidentials in Kalmyk</td>
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<td>----------------------------------------</td>
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<tr>
<td>current evidence</td>
<td>online processing</td>
<td>inferred event:</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>→ utterance</td>
<td></td>
<td>+ certainty: present/past</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>- certainty: present/past/future</td>
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<tr>
<td>previous evidence</td>
<td>remote processing</td>
<td>reinterpreted evidence:</td>
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<tr>
<td>→ utterance</td>
<td></td>
<td>pluperfect + certainty</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>current state-of-affairs</td>
<td>online processing → utterance</td>
<td>assumed event: present / past</td>
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<td>----------------------------------</td>
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<td>------------------------------</td>
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<tr>
<td>+ knowledge</td>
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</table>
### Scheme 3: Prospective evidentials in Kalmyk

<table>
<thead>
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<th>Current state-of-affairs</th>
<th>Online processing</th>
<th>Predicted event: near future</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>→ utterance</td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Previous state-of-affairs</th>
<th>Remote processing</th>
<th>Predicted event: future-in-the-past</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>→ utterance</td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Expected state-of-affairs</th>
<th>Processing → utterance</th>
<th>Predicted event: remote future</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>


We express our sincere gratitude to the Fritz-Thyssen-Stiftung for its generous support of this research project (Az 40.10.0.023). Special thanks go to our consultants, especially to A.D. Lidzhiev and T.D. Chemidova, who patiently answered all of our sometimes odd questions, to Rogier Blokland and Christianna Stavroudis for their comments on the first version of this chapter, and last but not least to Sasha Aikhenvald for the valuable discussion and support at all stages of this project.


The following brief grammatical sketch of Kalmyk is based mainly on the grammatical descriptions of Sanžeev (1983), Pyurbeev (1977), Bläsing (2003) and Say/Baranova/Serdobol'skaya (2009).

The capital letters in the affixes stand for vowel-harmonic variants.

The preliminary description was based on the corpus compiled by ourselves (ca. 3000 clauses); for this study we could already use the Kalmyk National Corpus (KNC) that was officially launched in January 2012 (http://webcorpora.net/KalmykCorpus/search/?interface_language=ru). This corpus comprising ca. 800,000 words enabled us to reassess our first research results and revealed new evidential forms and strategies, as well as differences in the use of evidentials across text genres.

Such nominal elements/particles take personal predicative suffixes, but no temporal marking; to express the past and future tenses they appear with auxiliary verbs bää- ‘be’ and bol- ‘become’ in a temporal form. An absence of an auxiliary denotes the present tense. Predicative suffixes instead of possessive ones signal the final stage of grammaticalization.
References to the example sources are organized as follows: The letters refer to the initials of the text author (e.g. BA for Badmin Aleksey, with the exception of KNC which refers to the Kalmyk National Corpus and XY which refers to the newspaper Xal’mg Ynen); the letters are followed by the page number within the textbook or the date of the newspaper issues. All examples without explicit references are taken from personal interviews with informants.

Cf. with the deontic modality constructions (see examples 9, 10) which contain a reference to known social norms instead of a reference to another situation which serves as an impulse for a certain conclusion.

We found this reading only in the newspaper part of the KNC; there were no examples of it in our self-collected corpus of Kalmyk fiction.