

*PROSPECTIVE and PROXIMATIVE
as cross-linguistic categories*

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Bernard Comrie (1976):

- “The perfect is retrospective, in that it establishes a relation between a state at one time and a situation at an earlier time. If languages were completely symmetrical, one might equally well expect to find prospective forms, where a state is related to some subsequent situation, for instance where someone is in a state of being about to do something.

Comrie

- Distinguishes two types of prospectives in English
- Opposes prospective to future semantics
- Opposes prospective and intentional semantics
- Proposes combinability with inanimate subjects as a test for distinguishing prospectivity
- Stresses the combinability of prospective forms with TAM markers

(i.e. it is not a TAM marker)

Johanson. Prospectives and proximatives In print

Proposes to distinguish prospective and proximative; the first being an aspect marker, and the second an actionality marker. In his view,

- „Prospective (← Latin *prospicere* ‘to look forward’) is a perspective on events foreseen to occur subsequent to some temporal orientation point (‘reference time’).
- Prospective items mostly have a more or less strong modal component. Volition, intention, probability, etc. are modal notions directed towards a relative future. Future reference is largely a matter of modality. “
- The primary orientation point is the moment of encoding. “Prospectives-in-present” convey a preview in a non-past perspective, implying that an event is foreseen to occur after the primary orientation point. The items get readings such as ‘shall, will occur, is going to occur, is supposed, expected, or requested to occur’, e.g. Turkish *Gid-ecek* ‘X will go’.
- *Proximatives* refer to a pre-phase, a phase preliminary or preparatory to a possible subsequent event, conceived of as imminent, impending, i.e. as being “about to occur”. The situation obtaining at the orientation point coincides with this pre-phase.

Östen Dahl (1985):

- “A formally and semantically analogous construction to the English one is found in some Romance languages, e.g. the French *aller* + infinitive, and in Afrikaans *gaan* + infinitive. In all those, verbs meaning ‘to go’ are employed.”

- “There is thus evidence for postulating a cross-linguistic category Prospective. All the assumed examples of Prospective are periphrastic. It should be noted that in some languages (e.g. Maori and Oromo), a Progressive category may be used for Prospective, as it is also possible in similar cases in English.”

Further research on prospective /imminent future / proximative forms

- Joan Bybee (1994: 271-273) discovered 26 future grams (grammatical morphemes) that have immediate future of some kind as its use; in 19 of the cases, it is their sole function. Immediate future is also the sole future reading of two imperfectives and two perfectives.

The sources of immediate futures:

- forms of desire and obligation
- the verb “to come”
- temporal adverbs

- ”: “The prototypical glosses for such grams are ‘be about to do something’ and ‘be on the point of doing something’. Although this is obviously very much like the notion ‘entering on a path to do something’ (especially, of course, in the case of such grams descending from ‘come’), it is in a sense also not at all like a prediction.

- If immediate futures cannot be said to involve prediction, they may be regarded in either of two ways: as necessarily young future somewhere between proto-futures and a mature future with prediction as its core function; or if not young, but rather established and stable, not strictly speaking futures at all, at least not in epistemic terms, amounting more to assertions announcing the imminence of an event rather than a prediction that it will take place.”

- Fleischman (1983) states that immediate futures can be generalized to a general future

- Heine - “almost-aspect”
- König - “proximative”
- Tania Kuteva – proximative versus avertive

Lexicon of grammaticalization (Heine & Kuteva 2002):

- *come to* (found in Lahu, Tchien, Krahn), this type of grammaticalization reflects a more general process: process verbs are grammaticalized to auxiliaries denoting tense or aspect functions
- *want* (Ani, Ewe, Chamus, dialect of Maa, Chrau, Hungarian, Persian): verbs are grammaticalized to markers denoting tense or aspect functions

- *love* (Lingala, Tok Pisin PE) representing a special case of a development: love > want > proximative
- *near* (Swahili, Seychelles CF) reflecting a development of grammatical aspect functions by locative concepts

Metzler's dictionary of linguistic terms (*Metzler Lexikon Sprache*):

- **Prospektiv**
- (lat. *prospicere* 'in die Ferne schauen, Vorsorge treffen') Futurische Aspektbedeutung der Präsensformen des Russ. (future aspect meaning of present tense forms of Russian perfective verbs)
- It is an aspect marker

L. Johanson. *Aspekt im Türkischen*

- L. Johanson opposes prospective forms to interterminal, terminal and postterminal aspects and defines the Turkish form *-acak* as a prospective one (aspect marker)

Semantic features of PROS/PROX

Components of the PROS semantics

deictic, inferential, modal

Semantic types of PROS/PROX

General versus Near Prospective

To be going to do something

Versus

To be about to do something

Comrie, B.



Photo of a Tuvan landscape by Alexandra Sheymovich

It is going to rain.



A moment ago the car was about to explode, and now it has exploded.

Avertive

Avertive forms indicate that the anticipated action has not happened.

The action that is expressed by prospective forms may happen or not, but the state of anticipating an action was real.

Semantic types of Prospectives/Proximatives Maslova (2004)

- Jukagir languages have two constructions that satisfy the definition of “Prospective”: intentional prospective and a providential one.

- The intentional prospective roughly corresponds to be going to.
- The providential prospective roughly corresponds to *be marked to*, as in Shakespearean *If we are marked to die* ...

- More precisely, the providential construction signifies an event in future that is predetermined by external circumstances, independent of the intentions of its participants and recognized by the observer as „signs“ of the future in the present.

PROS/PROX versus avertive

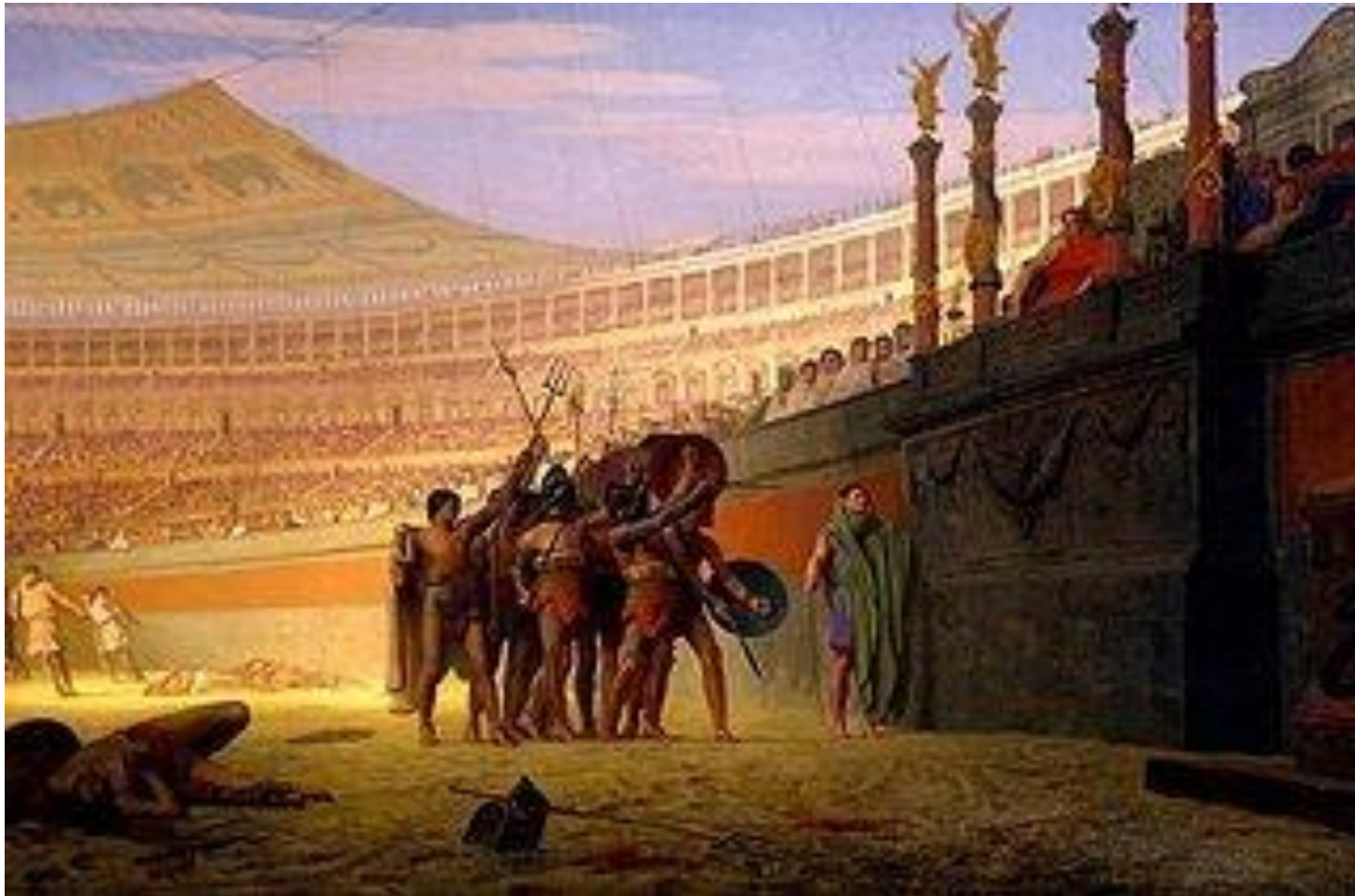
- Turkish (1)
- *Git-mek üzere-yim*
- go-INF for:POSTP-1SG
- ‘I am about to go.’
- Altay (2)
- *Meni sog-o d’asta-d-i-lar.*
- I:ACC beat-CONV miss-PST-POSS3-PL
- ‘They have almost beaten me.’

PROS/PROX

- For most languages and language families of Eurasia this category has not been defined yet. And this in spite of the fact that prospective semantics can be already found in classical examples. The reason could be the fact that this semantics does not have any specialized grammatical encoding.

A classical example on the use of Perspective

Remember an ancient salute used by Roman prisoners to be executed in the Colosseum



Ave Caesar Morituri te Salutant, by Jean-Léon Gérôme (1859), depicting gladiators greeting Vittelius
http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ave_Imperator,_morituri_te_salutant

Ave, imperator, morituri te salutant (Sueton, Claudis 21)

‘Hail emperor, we who are about to die, salute you.’

or

Ave, Caesar, morituri te salutant

‘Hail Caesar, we who are about to die, salute you.’

where *morituri* is the Nominative Plural form of the Future Participle in the Active Voice from the verb *mori-* ‘die’: *morituri* ‘those who will die, who are going/about to die’.

It is interesting to compare translations of this salute into different languages:

German: Heil dir, Kaiser (Cäsar), die Todgeweihten grüßen dich!

Russian: До здравствует Цезарь! Идущие на смерть приветствуют тебя!

The situation has changed dramatically in the current century.

Prospective/Proximative as an object of recent research

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Research on PROS/PROX in Turkic

- For Turkic, Nevskaya 2005 gave a preliminary description of PROS/PROX means and main sources of their development. These are as follows:
- 1) actional constructions with infinitives of the lexical verb and various auxiliary verbs bearing tense morphology; tense markers getting omitted by certain forms, which then express tense reference themselves and function as near futures
 - (Intention>Prospective)
 - (Purposive> Prospective);
- 2) constructions of direct speech with volitive forms of the lexical verb
 - (Intention>Prospective);
- 3) synthetic intraterminal aspect forms of low focality (mainly participles) that tend to develop into prospectives and, finally, into futures
 - (Intraterminal>(Obligation)>Prospective).

The inventory of Turkic PROS/PROX grammar means

- **PROS/PROXs with the infinite form of the lexical component**
- Altai

Qazan emdi de qayn-arya tur-d-ı

Qazan now PRTCL boil-INF stand:aux-PST-3

‘Qazan is just about to boil’.

The inventory of Turkic PROS/PROX grammar means
(intention – prospective)

PROS/PROXs - grammaticalized constructions of direct speech (*dep*-based constructions)

Kazakh

Tas	qǘl-ayn	de-p	tūr
stone	fall-IMP1SG	say-CV	stand:aux

,The stone is going to fall down (lit.: The stone says, 'I will fall.')

The Kazakh intention-PROS/PROX form –mAKŠI bol

- Is always with animate subjects
- Is combined with various auxiliary verbs expressing different shades of intentional and prospective semantics:

Ol qayt-paqši bol-ïp žür
s/he return-VN be-CV wander

‘(S)he is going to go (home)’ – in the context: but s/he does not leave

Ol qait-paqši bol-ïp tūr
s/he return-VN be-CV stand

‘(S)he is going to go (home)’ – I see that s/he is going to leave

Ol qayt-paqši bol-ïp otİR
s/he return-VN be-CV sit

‘(S)he is going to go (home)’ – s/he decided to leave

Ol qayt-paqši bol-ïp žat-İR
s/he return-VN be-CV lie-AOR

‘(S)he is going to go (home)’ – s/he intends to leave

Compare to the *dep*-based construction which is prospective:

Ol qayt-ayİN de-p tur/žür/otİR/žat-İR
s/he return-IMP1SSG say-CV stand/wander/sit/lie-AOR

‘(S)he is going to go (home)’

The inventory of Turkic PROS/PROX grammar means

Synthetic PROS/PROXs in South Siberian Turkic

- Shor

Par-argača-m

go-PROSP-1SG

‘I am going to go’

- Khakas

Sug taza-rya čör

river swell-INF wander:aux

‘The river is going to be very high very soon’

- Chalk.

[Anna Kandarakova]

- *Sooq-tar kel-ereyt.*
- frost-PL come-PROSP
- ‘Frosts are coming (are just about to come).’

Perfective to Proximaties

- Intransitive accomplishment verbs such as *püt-* ‘to be completed, to be constructed, to be ready’, *piš-* ‘to be ready, to be cooked, to ripen’, *bol-* ‘to become’ in the *-(i)b / -(i)p* converb form, constructed with the auxiliary *qal-* ‘to stay, to remain’ in the past tense, create proximaties in Uyghur and in Uzbek; e.g.:

- *Kiyim püt-üp qal-di.* (Uyghur)
Dress be.complete-CVB stay-PST.3SG
‘The dress is about to be ready’

- *Ovqat pišib qol-di.* (Uzbek)
Food cook-CVB stay-PST.3SG
‘The food is about to be ready.’

Providential PROS/PROXs

The future participle –*Ar*

Shor: *par-ar kiži* ‘a person who will go /is going to go’

The participle –*Čaŋ*

Shor: *par-čaŋ kiži* ‘a person who will inevitably go’

The Tuvan participle –*GAIAk*

Xün ün-gelek

Sun rise-PART

‘The sun is about to rise (while observing the sky).’

The Altay participle –*AtAn*

Qoncert-te turuž-atan

concert-LOC take.part-PART

bal-dar kel-gen

child-PL come-PF

‘Children who are going to take part in the concert have come.’

Symmetrical Proximative in Old Turkic

M. Erdal:

-yOk anterior proximative (has just happened)

-gAllr posterior proximative (is about to happen)

Compare „perspective“ by Dick

S. Dik distinguishes four types within the ‘perspective aspect’, two of which are special cases of the prospective: 1) prospective (*is going to cry*); immediate prospective (*is about to cry*); 3) recent perfect (*has just cried*); 4) perfect (*has cried*, and it is relevant at the moment) [Dik, 1997. P. 239]

Further proximative means

Locative proximatives –mAk üzere (Türkisch)

Preterite –D: kettik ,We are gone – We are about to leave‘
(Kazakh)

Reduplications: -D – AcAk (Turkish)

Borrowed proximatives (Southern Azeri):

Want/Go + Subjunctive (from Persian)

Etc.

The counterexample: Brrowings of Turkic constructions
into Sayan Samoyed languages Kamas and Mator.

Some intermediate results

- Even PROX languages as Turkic ones do not have a SINGLE common proximative
- A great semantic and formal diversity in spite of the fact that already OT had a lot of proximative morphology traced mostly in Siberian and Kypchak Turkic nowadays
- Low grammaticalization degree of most PROX means cross-linguistically
- As a consequence, no descriptions in grammar books available

The Prospective as a Grammatical Category: Evidence from Turkic, Iranian and beyond

International Symposium
September 23-25, 2013

As a cross-linguistic phenomenon,
the prospective has attracted the attention
of general linguistics only recently.

Mae hi ar fin bwrw glaw.

Welsh

It's about to rain.

English

Bārān āmad.

Persian

Нағбур чағарғачыр.

Shor

The areal distribution of prospective forms and phenomena of language contact have not yet been studied. Other topics that need to be investigated include the relations between the categories of Prospective, Future, Intention and further phenomena dealing with planned and/or anticipated actions.

Yamghur yaghay dāp turidu. (Lit.: rain says, 'let me fall')

Modern Uyghur

Д'анмырларга д'астаган турбай.

Altai-kiži

Boraan ča:aryā duru.

Dzungar Tuvan

Nerdeyse yağmur yağacak.

Turkish

The Symposium will provide a forum to present case studies of a large number of Turkic and Iranian varieties in contact with each other, as well as with other languages (Mongolic, Tungusic, Ugric, Armenian, Aramaic, etc.).

<http://titus.fkidg1.uni-frankfurt.de/prospective/>

Photo of a Tuvan landscape by Alexandra Sheymovich
Design by Wolfgang Fischer

Campus Bockenheim, Neue Mensa
Konferenzraum K III, 1st floor

Organisers:

Prof. Dr. Irina Nevskaya
PD Dr. Agnes Korn

Languages treated

Turkic

Mongolian

Tungusic

Iranian

Ob-Ugric

Russian

Etc.

Hanty and Russian PROX (Natal'ja Koshkarjova, Novosibirsk)

- Various lexical means to encode PROX
- *In Russian, vom-vom* ‘about to’ combined only with perfective verbs in future tense, often combined with other modal markers, usually with *должен* ‘must, ought’, as well as *готов, предстоит* ‘is ready, lays ahead’.
- In Hanty, the particle *śi / či* ‘almost’ reminds us of the symmetrical proximative in Old Turkic.

The Khanty particle *śi / či* and the Russian adverb *vom-vom*

Khanty	Russian
śi / či ‘about to’	ВОТ-ВОТ
Pr (the prospective)	Perf Fut (the prospective)
PAST (the perfective)	∅
Aspect	Modality

- The PROS/PROX are categories widely represented in languages of various systems. However, in each case, the limits of these categories depend on highly varied individual traits of each language, which results in broad variations of their interpretations. In this case, it is reasonable to define the PROS/PROX as *comparative concepts* [Haspelmath, 2010], which are products of linguistic abstraction and not the same as the PROS/PROX as descriptive categories in specific languages.

- Thank you!