

How *-(I)ptu* and *-iken* Are Used in the First Person – A Note on Mirativity in Uyghur

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Verb forms built with the suffixes *-(I)ptu* or *iken* are sometimes explained as conveying information that has been gained **indirectly**. Marking differences regarding the source and reliability of information is known as the category of **evidentiality**. One thing that is not perfectly explained this way is the use of such verb forms in the **1st person**. When one speaks of oneself, does one not have *direct* access to the facts? Not always!

Aikhenvald¹ explains: "Every language has some way of expressing what is new and unexpected for the speaker or for the hearer, and of indicating surprise" (207). Some languages have "grammatical mirativity". (207) "**Mirativity is a grammatical category whose primary meaning is speaker's unprepared mind, unexpected new information, and concomitant surprise.**" (209) - **And this can refer to facts about oneself as well.**

"Evidentials may have mirative meanings as part of their semantic extensions." (207) Depending on the language, the morpheme that is used for non-firsthand / reported / inferred / assumed information, may, by extension, be used for mirative too. (Cf. 207) Such is the case in Uyghur: **The same suffix that signals evidentiality (indirect knowledge) in the 2nd and 3rd person, when used with the 1st person signals mirativity.** Here are some ways how the mirative is used in Uyghur:²

1. Childhood / lack of awareness

Events that lie in one's early childhood one cannot recall from own memory, but one learns about them from parents or others – i.e. indirectly.

- Ex. 1. Qembeghel bolsaqmu arzuluq bala idim, chünki meningdin burun toghulghan töt oghul, töt qiz ölüp ketip, men eng axirida turup qalghanikenmen. (Qahir: Emethaji)
While we were poor, I was the child of dreams, because four sons and four daughters born before me had died and I had remained living as the very last one.

2. Outsider's influence / lack of control

These verb forms are also used where other people exercise some authority and make decisions on behalf of a person, but affecting this person. One learns about this indirectly.

- Ex. 2. Men Béyjinggha barghanikenmen.
I'm going / supposed to go to Beijing [as others have decided and told me].

¹ Alexandra Y. Aikhenvald: "Evidentiality", Oxford University Press 2004, Pb. 2006.

² Tömür / Lee classify the form *-(I)ptimen* as Indirect Statement Mood of the Simple Past (*-Ti*) and the forms *-ghanikenmen* and *-iptikenmen* both as alternative forms of the Indirect Statement Mood of the Present Perfect Tense (*-QAnmen*) or Past Perfect Tense (*-QAnidim*). 322/331/338. For the language learner, in oral usage, it will usually suffice to know the form *-(I)ptimen*.

3. New realization

This occurs especially with verbs of the mind and the senses.

Ex. 3. Men qizning hayatiga shunchiliq paji'ening yoshurunganliqini qilche oylimaptikenmen, teqdirning bu shepqetsizlikidin xudumni yoqitip qoydum.

(Qahir: Emethaji)

I hadn't thought the tiniest bit that such a tragedy had hidden in the girl's life, from this mercilessness of fate I lost my sense.

The writer is realizing only now, in retrospect, that he had misjudged the situation as it had appeared to him. He discovers having been wrong, i.e. there is surprise over a newly found fact.

Ex. 4. Men sizni "undaq qilidu" dep oylimaptikenmen. (Polat Tursun: Qaytilanghan chüsh [movie])

I had not thought that you would do such a thing [but you did!].

Ex. 5. Aldiniptimen. (Polat Tursun: Qaytilanghan chüsh [movie])

I was deceived [– now I know].

Ex. 6. Xatalishti. (Polat Tursun: Qaytilanghan chüsh [movie])

I was mistaken [and I regret it].

Ex. 7. Waqit toshiti. Bilmey qaptimiz. (Teacher after a long lesson.)

Our time is over. We didn't realize.

Ex. 8. ... dep oylaptimen / ... oylimaptimen.

I thought [mistakenly] that ... / I didn't think

Ex. 9. Uqmaptimen.

I didn't understand [but now I do].

Ex. 10. Peqet anglimaptimen.

I overheard it completely [e.g. a missed call on the mobile phone].

Ex. 11. Untup qaptimen.

I forgot.

Ex. 12. Bu sözni körmey qaptimen.

I overlooked this word.

Ex. 13. Menmu tamaqni xeli oxshitip eteleydikenmen.

Even I can fix a quite nice meal [contrary to my own expectation].

4. Regret / apology

This is related to the above. Upon realizing one's own wrong, there will often be an attitude of regret, embarrassment or apology. Using the mirative adds such a tone to the statement.

Ex. 14. Kéchikip qaptimen.

I ran late. [I'm sorry.]

Ex. 15. Biz ularni chaqirmaptimiz.

We didn't invite them [but we should have].

5. Distancing / disagreement

The mirative can serve to express a reservedness towards a certain idea or thought:

Ex. 16. Men yawayi adem bolup qaptimenmu, némishqa bir chetke chiqip hoqushtek turuwérimen? (Turdi: Arzular emelde 233)

Have I turned out to be a wild man? [Of course not!] Why have I moved out to the edge and keep living like an owl?

Ex. 17. Men neme qilptimen?

What should I have done [wrong]? [I'm blamed falsely.]

Ex. 18. Némishqa kétédikenmiz, ...(Ötkür: Iz 194)

Why should we leave? [We won't!] ...