

The Kazakh Particle *ǵoj*

This presentation considers the Kazakh (Turkic) particle *ǵoj*, which has not been thoroughly examined in the linguistic literature to date. First, I present two existing (brief) descriptions of *ǵoj*, and introduce new data that shows that these descriptions fail to fully capture the distribution patterns and functions of this item. I propose that *ǵoj* is an information-structurally loaded form, which plays a role in Common Ground (CG) management. I also present an informal description of the semantics of *ǵoj*, which elegantly captures this particle's contribution to the clauses in which it occurs, and paves a way for comprehensive description and analysis of this item's distribution and functions.

The two mentions of *ǵoj* that can be found in the literature are by Straughn (2011) and Muhamedowa (2016). Straughn (2011) glosses *ǵoj* as 'Explicative', and states that "the addition of *ǵoj* merely indicates that the speaker is expressing an emotive attitude toward the content of an utterance" (2011:135). It is also claimed that *ǵoj* is "limitless in distribution" (2011:136). The example below disproves this and demonstrates that, *ǵoj* not only adds an emotive colouring to the utterance, but also indicates that the information carried by the utterance had previously been added to the CG and is now referred to again by the speaker. *ǵoj* would be infelicitous in (1b) if the information carried by the utterance had not been previously shared between the interlocutors; the same sentence without *ǵoj* would simply be adding new information to the CG. Thus, *ǵoj* here adds the effect that the information carried by the proposition is 'old', and is being re-activated in the CG.

- (1) a) Mother: Why weren't you home yesterday afternoon?
b) Son: Keše sabaq bol-dī ǵoj!
yesterday lesson be-PAST.3SG ǵoj
'There was a class yesterday, wasn't there/don't you remember?'

Muhamedowa (2016) states that *ǵoj* "appeals to shared information between the speaker and the hearer" (2016:163), however, also claims that the particle has a "fixed position in a sentence and must appear after the predicate" (2016:15). The example in (2b) disproves this.

- (2) a) Speaker 1: Bolat wrote this book.
b) Speaker 2: Bul kitap-tī Marat qoj žaz-ǵan!
this book-ACC Marat ǵoj write-PERF
'It was Marat who wrote this book (not Bolat)!'

In (2b) *ǵoj* follows the contrastively focused subject of the sentence, and not the predicate. Regardless of the difference in the positioning, the presence of *ǵoj* in this sentence also adds the pragmatic effect of previously shared, 'old' information.

It is important to note that the types of *ǵoj* presented in (1) and (2b) differ syntactically, and I posit that the former is a particle, while the latter performs a copulative function; this distinction has not been highlighted in any of the sources to date. However, despite their syntactic difference, both types of *ǵoj* contribute the pragmatic effect of 'givenness' or 'shared information' to the proposition in which they occur. I propose that this pragmatic effect is the result of the existential semantics *ǵoj* carries.

I follow Matić and Nikolaeva's (2014) analysis of the Tundra Yukaghir particle $mə(r)$ as an existential operator, and apply this approach to *ǵoj*. Analysing *ǵoj* as an existential quantifier unifies the meaning of both types of *ǵoj* and explains the numerous pragmatic effects *ǵoj* produces, especially that of givenness or shared information. Informally, it can be said that

ǰoj explicitly marks that the proposition exists in the Common Ground, or that it at least must be treated as such by the hearer. This new way of approaching *ǰoj* might have wider implications and be adopted in the analysis of comparable items in other languages, such as *že* in Russian, or *doch* and *ja* in German.

References:

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