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From narrative past to mirativity and direct evidentiality: the case of Moldavian (Csángó) Hungarian

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Abstract: This paper describes the evolution of grammaticalized evidentiality in the Moldavian dialect of Hungarian. It documents how the suffix -a/e, originally the marker of narrative past, became a rare, elevated marker of past tense highlighting significant past events; how it assumed a mirative overtone; and how the features ‘witnessed’ and ‘immediate past’, often present in mirative utterances, became inherent parts of its meaning. This grammaticalization path has resulted in an evidential system with typologically unique features. It is a two-term system based on the opposition of direct evidentiality and no evidentiality – violating the alleged universal that if a language has grammaticalized direct evidentiality, it has also grammaticalized indirect evidentiality. Mirative meaning is expressed by the same -a/e suffix that also encodes direct evidentiality – whereas it is claimed to be the extension of inferred evidentiality elsewhere. The unique properties of Moldavian Hungarian evidentiality are derived from the historical evolution of the -a/e suffix.

Keywords: evolution of evidentiality; Hungarian; immediate past; mirativity; two-term evidential system

1 Introduction

This paper points out an evidential system in the Moldavian (Csángó) dialect of Hungarian that is at variance with the typological characterization of grammaticalized evidentiality (Aikhenvald 2003, 2004, 2012; De Haan 2012; Lazard 2001, etc.) in the following respects:

(i) Moldavian Hungarian has past tenses not referring to the source of information, and past tenses (perfect immediate past and imperfect past) expressing direct evidentiality – thereby violating the alleged universal that if a language has grammaticalized direct evidentiality, it has also grammaticalized indirect evidentiality.

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In Moldavian Hungarian, mirative meaning is expressed by the same -a/e suffix that also encodes direct evidentiality – whereas it is overwhelmingly associated with the marker of inferred evidentiality elsewhere.

Mirativity preceded direct evidentiality in the functional evolution of the -a/e suffix – as opposed to the semantic paths reconstructed for other languages (Aikhenvald 2004, 2012).

These properties will be shown to be consequences of the historical evolution of the -a/e suffix.

The analysis of Moldavian Hungarian evidentiality describes a phenomenon that is absent from other versions of Hungarian and is not taken notice of by Hungarian grammars. It also contributes to the typological classification of evidential systems by introducing a rare new type, and furthermore, it shows that the correlation hypothesized between mirativity and indirect evidentiality in two-member evidential systems actually holds between mirativity and the evidentially marked form, irrespective of whether it encodes direct or indirect evidentiality. On a more general level, the analysis of the evolution of Moldavian Hungarian evidentiality demonstrates how the pragmatic conditions of the use of a grammatical form can grammaticalize into inherent meaning components.

The two-term evidential system of Moldavian Hungarian, contrasting the -a/e-marked past tenses expressing direct witnessing with the evidentially neutral -t-marked past tenses, is introduced in Section 2. Section 3.1 surveys the functional evolution of the -a/e suffix and traces back its history to Old Hungarian, where it was the marker of narrative past, the suffix of past events unrelated to the present. Section 3.2 shows how the -a/e suffix gradually lost ground to -t, the former perfect marker and how it assumed, because of its rarity, an emotionally loaded mirative overtone in the Middle Hungarian period. Section 3.3 demonstrates the reinterpretation of -a/e from the marker of mirative past to a suffix of witnessed mirative past and witnessed immediate past in Modern Hungarian. Section 4 revisits the atypical properties of evidentiality and mirativity marking in Moldavian Hungarian and derives them from the developmental path of -a/e. Section 5 is the conclusion.

2 Grammaticalized evidentiality in Moldavian Hungarian

Whereas Standard Hungarian displays no grammaticalized evidentiality or mirativity, fieldwork with Hungarian speakers in the Moldavia region of Romania has shown that these notions play a crucial role in the distribution of past tenses in Moldavian Hungarian.
2.1 The Moldavian dialect of Hungarian

Moldavian Hungarian is a dialect spoken on the eastern side of the Carpathian Mountains. This region has always been outside the borders of the Hungarian state. The core of the Hungarian population was settled there in the 13th century after the 1241–42 Mongol invasion of the Hungarian Kingdom to guard the country from eastern attacks in a network of outposts. A later large immigration wave from the Secler region (Székelyföld) of Hungary took place in 1764, after the Madéfalva massacre of the Habsburg army.¹ As for the present situation, the 1992 census found 240,000 Catholics in the Moldavia region of Romania, nearly all of whom are of Hungarian descent. About 25% of them, 62,000 people from 80 villages, professed to speak Hungarian alongside Romanian (Tánczos 1997).

Moldavian Hungarians are a rural society which have never had any Hungarian clerisy or Hungarian schools; the language of schooling, religious services and administration has been Romanian for them. Their Hungarian culture is oral culture; their prayers preserve archaic folk poetry rather than written Hungarian religious tradition, to which they have had no access (Tánczos 1999).² Only recently have extracurricular Hungarian classes been introduced for schoolchildren in some villages, based on the local Hungarian dialect. Because of its isolation, Moldavian Hungarian has preserved various features of Middle Hungarian (Kiss 2003: 107–315). The impact of Romanian is manifested mostly in the high proportion of loanwords, as Moldavian Hungarians have met with the material and cultural innovations of the past centuries through the Romanian language. Romanian morphosyntax has affected Moldavian Hungarian mostly by preserving and reinforcing existing grammatical alternatives that are parallel with their Romanian functional equivalents. Thus the influence of Romanian must have helped the preservation of complex tenses, which disappeared from Standard Hungarian in the 16th–18th centuries.³ Importantly, Romanian has no grammaticalized evidentiality marking, hence the emergence of evidentiality in Moldavian Hungarian cannot be due to contact effects.

Moldavian Hungarian is not homogeneous dialectally. It has three major subdialects, identified as Northern, Southern, and Secler-type Moldavian Hungarian. The present description is based primarily on consultations (partly in person, partly via Skype) with two speakers of the Southern subdialect, a man and a woman in

¹ On the history of Moldavian Hungarians, see Benkő (1989), Domokos (2001), and Tánczos (2011), among others.
² Moldavian Hungarians have asked for Hungarian priests and Hungarian religious services in vain ever since the 17th century. They were sent Polish and Italian priests, and from the end of the 19th century, Romanian priests (Sándor 1996).
³ The parallelism between the Hungarian and Romanian complex tense forms is not complete though. Whereas in Romanian the agreement suffix is on the auxiliary, in the Hungarian verbal complex, it is on the lexical verb; the temporal auxiliary only bears a tense suffix.
their sixties, one of them a native of the village Cleja/Klészse, the other a native of Faraoani/Forrófalva. Hungarian is still fully functional in these villages, and our consultants are Hungarian-dominant bilinguals. The consultant from Forrófalva only speaks the Moldavian version of Hungarian. The consultant from Klészse was also exposed to the vernacular Hungarian of the Transylvania region of Romania for some time, and he often made comments on the differences of the Transylvanian standard and his own dialect. Our consultations involved grammaticality judgement tasks, evaluations of minimal pairs, and discussions of the (in)appropriateness of sentences with different past tenses in various contexts. Two sources covering all three Moldavian Hungarian subdialects have also been consulted: the Moldavian Hungarian database of the Hungarian Research Centre for Linguistics (https://nlp.nytud.hu/csango/), containing video recordings and their transcriptions recorded by Vilmos Tánczos in the 1990s, and Penteček’s (2018) dictionary of Moldavian Hungarian, containing text examples from archived materials of Moldavian fieldwork carried out by the Hungarian Linguistics Department of Babeș-Bolyai University in the second half of the 20th century. Their data indicate that the evidential system outlined below must be, or must have been, present in all three subdialects of Moldavian Hungarian.

2.2 The tenses system of Moldavian Hungarian

Whereas Standard Hungarian only has a single past tense (and an unmarked non-past), Moldavian Hungarian has preserved the complex tense system of Old Hungarian. It has five tenses, which are labelled in terms of the Hungarian grammatical tradition as follows:

(1) The Moldavian Hungarian tense system (based on Hungarian grammatical tradition)
   
   i. present: V+AGR  
   mond-om  
   say-1SG ‘I say’
   
   ii. general past: V+t+AGR  
   mond-t-am  
   say-PST-1SG ‘I said’
   
   iii. past perfect: V+t+AGR AUX+t  
   mond-t-am vó-t  
   say-PST-1SG be-PST ‘I had said’
   
   iv. immediate past: V+a/e+AGR  
   mond-a-m  
   say-APST-1SG ‘I have just said’

4 The past perfect tense consists of a lexical verb bearing tense and agreement suffixes, and a temporal auxiliary (the be-verb) bearing a tense suffix. The tense suffix on the lexical verb was originally an aspect marker.

5 APST stands for -a/e-marked past.
As will be argued below, two of the four past tenses have developed evidential and mirative functions. Whereas the tenses marked by -t, i.e., the general past (2.2.1) and the past perfect (2.2.2), are evidentially neutral, the tenses marked by -a/e, i.e., the immediate past (2.2.3) and the imperfect past (2.2.4), encode direct evidentiality.

### 2.2.1 General past

The suffix -t is the general past-tense suffix in Moldavian Hungarian as it is in Standard Modern Hungarian. The -t-marked past can be used to describe any situation that precedes the speech time. It is the tense of narratives – irrespective of whether or not the event was witnessed by the speaker (2a–b). It can be used in the case of past events with a present result (2c), recent past events (2d), extended past events (2e), past events prior to a past reference point (2f), etc. It can occur with time adverbials of all types.

(2) a. Jézus Betlehem-be szület-ett egy pajtá-ba, Mária és József
Jesus Betlehem-in be.born-PST.3SG a stable-in Mary and Joseph
csak ott kap-ott hely-et.
only there find-PST.3SG space-ACC
‘Jesus was born in Betlehem in a stable, Mary and Joseph found space only there.’

b. Régvel, mikor ki-nyit-t-am a szem-em-et, fel-kel-t-em,
morning when out-open-PST-1SG the eye-1SG-ACC up-get-PST-1SG
el-kezd-t-em imádkoz-ni.
off-start-PST-1SG pray-INF
‘In the morning, when I opened my eyes, I got up, I started to pray.’

c. Ki-nyit-t-am az ablak-ot.
out-open-PST-1SG the window-ACC
‘I have opened the window.’

d. Most et-t-ünk.
now eat-PST-1PL
‘We have just eaten.’
e. Mikor a liceum-ba tanul-t-am, akkor az internát-ba ült-em.

When I went to high school, I lived in a dormitory.

f. Sokszor esz-i-be jut-ott a gyermek-nek, mi-t mond-ott az ap-ja.

The child often remembered what his father had said.

2.2.2 Past perfect

The verbal complex consisting of a lexical verb bearing the -t past-tense suffix and an auxiliary (the be-verb) also bearing the -t suffix expresses past perfect tense. The agreement suffix cross-referencing the subject and the definite object (if any) is carried by the lexical verb. The two instances of -t iconically mark past events that precede a past reference point, which is often determined by the tense of a superordinate or a coordinate clause:

(3) a. El-te-tt-em a level-et, ami-t a fi-am küldött vó-t.

I kept the letter that my son had sent to me.

b. Ve-tt-ünk vó-t tavaly malac-ot, s az meg-döglött.

We had bought a piglet last year and it died.

2.2.3 Immediate past

Verbs supplied with the -a/e past tense suffix (glossed as APST) denote recent events, in most cases events that barely preceded the speech time. Verbs marked by -a/e can cooccur with adverbials like most ‘now’, az imént ‘just’, tíz minutiá ‘ten minutes ago’, but they may refer to the immediate past also without any time adverbial:

(4) a. Ki-ereszt-é-m a tyuk-ok-at.

I have (just) let out the chickens.

b. Az imént ev-é-m /ev-é-nk.

I/We have just eaten.
c. Most jöv-é-nk bé az ógradá-ból.
   now come-APST-1PL in the courtyard-from
   ‘We have just come in from the courtyard.’

d. Tíz minut-já, hogy el-kel-ék az asztal-tól.
   ten minute-3SG that off-get-APST-1SG the table-from
   ‘It is ten minutes since I got up from the table.’

The attested examples involving an -a/e-marked verb all refer to events immediately preceding the speech time, but our consultants also accepted examples like (5a), representing recent past rather than immediate past. However (5b), referring to an event preceding the speech time by several weeks, was rejected.

(5) a. Tennap hamar kell-e fel-kel-j-ek.
   yesterday early need-APST.3SG up-get-SBJV-1SG
   ‘Yesterday I needed to get up early.’

   summer.in PRT-visit-APST-1PL the son-1PL-ACC Budapest-in
   ‘In the summer we visited our son in Budapest.’

A further condition of the use of the -a/e past is that the denoted event be completed before the speech time. That is, the suffix marks perfect immediate past, as revealed by the interpretation of example (6):

(6) A gyermek bele-es-ék a gödör-be.6
   the child into-fall-APST-3SG the pit-into
   ‘The child fell into the pit.’

As our consultants explained, this sentence means that the child fell into the pit just now but he is not in there any more; he has been taken out. (Apparently, a past action with an ongoing result state is not regarded as completed by our consultants.)

The most conspicuous condition of the use of the -a/e past is that the given activity be carried out by the speaker himself/herself, or be experienced by him/her via seeing, hearing or smelling:

(7) a. Most ki-lel-é-m, mi-t akar-sz.
   now out-find-APST-1SG what-ACC want-2SG
   ‘Now I have found out what you want.’

b. “Hol a gyermek?” “Lát-á-m az imént az ógradá-ba.”
   where the child see-APST-1SG the now the courtyard-in
   “Where is the child?” “I have just seen him/her in the courtyard.”

6 The verb in (6) (es-ék) is in the -ék conjugation, whose 3SG immediate past suffix is homonymous with the 1SG immediate past suffix of the general indefinite conjugation, illustrated in (4d) (jár-ék).
The subject of the -a/e-marked verb is usually 1st person singular or plural. 2nd and 3rd person forms mostly occur in dialogues as the speaker’s reactions to a previous question or statement (8a), or in mirative exclamations (8b):

(8) a. Nem hall-á-m, mi-t es mond-á-l.
not hear-APST-1SG what-ACC PRT say-APST-2SG
‘I have not heard what you have said.’

b. Ur-am Isten-em, mi-t pacil-á-l! (looking at a child with a dirty face)
Lord-1SG God-1SG what-ACC experience-APST-2SG
‘My Lord, my God, what happened to you!’

The -a/e suffix cannot be used if the event in the immediate past was not personally witnessed by the speaker. Thus the following utterances – said with the school and the church out of sight – are judged to be unacceptable:

(9) a. %Dél van, most indul-á-nak haza a gyermekek az escolá-ból.
noon is now start-APST-3PL home the children the school-from
‘It is noon; the children have just set off home from school.’

b. %Tíz minut-ja, hogy harangoz-nak val-a; már meg-kezdül-e
ten minute-3SG that ring-3PL be-APST already start-APST.3SG
a mise.
the mess
‘It is ten minutes since they were ringing [the bell]; the mess has already started.’

The -a/e past can also be used in sentences expressing surprise, and anger, annoyance or joy caused by an unexpected event, i.e., it can also encode mirativity. Of the mirative values distinguished by Aikhenvald (2012), we find sudden discovery, surprise, and unprepared mind in the attested examples. Our consultants often began sentences of this type with Istenem! ‘My God!’, or Uram Istenem! ‘My Lord, my God!’.

They said that such sentences are addressed to themselves.

(10) a. Essze-tör-é-m a mesin-om-at!
 together-break-APST-1SG the car-1SG-ACC
‘I have damaged my car!’
b. *Isten-em, az a bolond essze-tör-é a mesin-om-at!
   God-1SG that the fool together-break-APST.3SG the car-1SG-ACC
   ‘My God, that fool has damaged my car!’

c. Ur-am Isten-em, el-ver-é a jég a puj-t!
   Lord-1SG God-1SG up-cut-APST.3SG the hail the corn-ACC
   ‘My Lord, my God, the hail has cut up the corn!’

d. Isten-em, nyer-é-k 100 frank-ot!
   God-1SG win-APST-1SG 100 franc-ACC
   ‘My God, I have won 100 francs!’

In mirative exclamations of this type, the recency condition is not always observed. The requirement of witnessing, however, holds in this case, too; if it is not satisfied, the -a/e past is rejected:

(11) a. *A fi-am Budapest-en ki-tör-é a kez-é-t!
   the son-1SG Budapest-in out-break-APST.3SG the hand-3SG-ACC
   ‘My son in Budapest has broken his arm!’

   b. *Onoká-m szület-é-k Budapest-en!
   grandchild-1SG be.born-APST-3SG Budapest-in
   ‘I have had a grandchild born in Budapest!’

The -a/e past is rare in negated sentences, and even rarer in questions (12a–b). It is ungrammatical in if-clauses (12c), where the requirement of immediate precedence with respect to the speech time is hard to satisfy.

(12) a. Nem hoz-á-l-e kicsi szilvá-t?
   not bring-APST-2SG-Q little plum-ACC
   ‘Haven’t you brought some plums?’

   b. Nem hall-á-m, ami-t mond-á-l.
   not heard-APST-1SG what-ACC say-APST-2SG
   ‘I haven’t heard what you have said.’

   c. *Ha túl sok-at ev-é-m, rosszul lesz-ek.
   if too much-ACC eat-APST-1SG sick be-1SG
   ‘If I have eaten too much, I get sick.’

The -a/e past is seldom found in the narrative documents of Moldavian Hungarian, among them life stories, tales, and ethnographical explanations (see, e.g., Rubinyi 1901, 1902, 1905; Hegedűs 1952); they are more common in conversations recorded by field workers. The reason must be that this tense is used to describe events that take place in the speech situation in which the given utterance arises.

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7 Leu, the currency used in Romania, is referred to as franc in Moldavian Hungarian.
2.2.4 Imperfect past

The imperfect past is a complex verb form, involving a lexical verb supplied with an agreement suffix, and the temporal auxiliary val-a (cognate with the be-verb) carrying the -a/e past-tense suffix (see Section 2.2). The -a/e suffix encodes witnessed past in this case, too. Whereas the -a/e-marked simple verb discussed in Section 2.2.3 expresses witnessed perfect immediate past, the V+AGR val+a form encodes witnessed imperfect past, often witnessed imperfect immediate past.

The participation or witnessing requirement on the use of the -a/e suffix cannot be lifted, but the immediacy condition is not always observed. Thus, V+AGR val+a can be used to describe continuous immediate past events (13a–c), and repeated or habitual past events (14a–d). In most cases, one of the arguments (the implicit goal in (14b)) is the 1st person pronoun.

(13) a. *Gondol-om val-a, nem es jö-sz.* (when waiting for someone who is late)
   think-1SG be-APST not even come-2SG
   ‘I thought you wouldn’t come.’

b. “*Harangoz-t-ak-e?” “Most harangoz-nak val-a.”*
   ring-PST-3PL-Q now ring-3PL be-APST
   ‘Did they ring the bell yet?’ “They have just been ringing it.”

c. *Mikor ül-ünk val-a az ógradá-ba, bè-jö-tt a szomszéd.*
   when sit-1PL be-APST the courtyard-in in-come-PST.3SG the neighbour
   ‘When we were sitting in the courtyard, the neighbour came in.’

(14) a. *Amikor gyermek vó-t-am, mámó-ká-m vigyáz val-a*
   when child be-PST.1SG grandmother-DIM.1SG look.3SG be-APST
   riv-ám.
   on-1SG
   ‘When I was a child, my grandmother looked after me.’

b. *Beszél-i val-a mámá-m, apá-m erős itkányos vó-t.*
   say-3SG be-APST mother-1SG father-1SG very drinker be-PST.3SG
   ‘My mother would say my father was a heavy drinker.’

c. *Minden hét-be sit-ünk val-a kinyer-et.*
   every weak-in bake-1PL be-APST bread-ACC
   ‘We baked bread every week.’

d. *Men-ünk val-a a kollektiv-ba.*
   go-1PL be-APST the cooperative-in
   ‘We used to go to the cooperative.’
If the participation or witnessing condition is not satisfied, the use of this tense is rejected. For example:

Jesus teach.3SG be-APST heal.3SG be-APST
‘Jesus was teaching, was healing.’
the war during Mihai king rule-3SG be-APST
‘During the war, King Mihai ruled.’

2.2.5 Interim conclusion

The notions of evidentiality and mirativity are not parts of the Hungarian grammatical tradition, but the above observations indicate that they play a crucial role in the grammar of Moldavian Hungarian. Consequently, the terminology describing the Moldavian Hungarian tense system is to be revised as follows:

(16) The tense system of Moldavian Hungarian
i. present
V+AGR
mond-om
say-1SG ‘I say’
ii. general past:
V+t+AGR
mond-t-am
say-PST-1SG ‘I said’
iii. past perfect:
V+t+AGR AUX+t
mond-t-am vót-
say-PST-1SG be-PST ‘I had said’
iv. witnessed
(mirative) immediate past:
V+a/e+AGR
mond-á-m
say-APST-1SG ‘I have just said’
v. witnessed imperfect
past:
V+AGR AUX+a
mond-om val-a
say-1SG be-APST
‘I have been/I was saying’

2.3 Atypical properties of Moldavian Hungarian evidentiality

The grammatical encoding of evidentiality is common in the languages of the world, and linguistic typology has extensively described, compared and classified the general and diverse properties of the different evidential systems (see, e.g., Aikhenvald 2004, 2018). A criterion of classification is whether evidentiality is expressed autonomously or fused with a grammatical category, and in the latter case, what grammatical category it is fused with (Aikhenvald 2015). The situation found in Moldavian Hungarian, where evidentiality marking is restricted to the past tenses, and the evidentiality marker is fused with a past tense suffix, is common crosslinguistically – see also Visser (2015) and Forker (2018).
Another criterion of classification is the number of evidential specifications. Aikhenvald (2003, 2004) distinguishes two-term, three-term, four-term, and multi-term evidential systems. Two-term evidential systems may instantiate the following contrasts:

- **A1.** Firsthand versus non-firsthand;
- **A2.** Non-firsthand versus everything else (where ‘everything else’ includes ‘non-firsthand’ and ‘evidentially unspecified’);\(^8\)
- **A3.** Reported (or hearsay) versus everything else;
- **A4.** Sensory evidence versus reported (or hearsay);
- **A5.** Auditory (acquired through hearing) versus everything else.

Moldavian Hungarian represents a further type:

- **A6.** Firsthand versus everything else.

Type A6 is predicted in the literature to be impossible, albeit the reasoning, based on intuition, is far from being conclusive. According to de Haan (2012: 11–12),

> it would seem to be a near absolute universal that if a language has grammaticalized direct evidentials, it also has grammaticalized indirect evidentials. Or, to put it another way, indirect evidentials are grammaticalized before direct evidentials. Pragmatically, the reasoning seems to be that statements made by the speaker are assumed to convey direct evidence unless stated otherwise. Hence the abundance of lexical material and grammaticalized evidentials to mark indirect evidence, as this is the marked member of the opposition. Once grammaticalized indirect evidentials are present, direct evidentials can be grammaticalized.

DeLancey (2012: 544–545) makes a similar claim, arguing that the particle łō in the Athabaskan language Hare cannot be a direct evidentiality marker because the language does not mark indirect evidentiality, and “one cannot coherently describe a hypothetical language in which there was a marked construction indicating ‘direct sensory evidence’ contrasting only with an unmarked construction with no evidential value at all”. Hill (2012) rejects this argument; for him it seems a perfectly legitimate strategy for speakers not to mark the source of information unless it has been obtained from direct personal experience. That is, Hill does not exclude the possibility that Hare represents a formerly unattested type, the one identified above as A6.

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8 Some of the Uralic sister languages of Hungarian, among them the northern dialects of Khanty (Csepregi 2014) and Mansi (Sipőcz 2014), and Udmurt (Szabó 2019, 2022; Kubitsch 2022) have been reported to have two-term evidential systems. Aikhenvald (2004) identifies them as A1 systems, but recent analyses have shown them to represent type A2. These evidential systems, similarly to Moldavian Hungarian evidentiality, reflect language-internal developments rather than shared inheritance.
A further unusual feature of Moldavian Hungarian is that mirativity is expressed by the suffix encoding direct evidentiality. Mirativity has been claimed to be an extension of indirect evidentiality – unless mirativity marking is a system independent of evidentiality, encoded by a separate morpheme, in which case it can cooccur with any type of evidentiality (Aikhenvald 2004, 2012; DeLancey 1997, 2001). Mirativity, along with hearsay and inferential, is a use of the non-firsthand, or mediative, evidential in Lazard’s (2001) description of evidentiality in Balkan and Middle Eastern languages, as well. Witnessed evidentials with mirative overtones have been reported from two languages: Cupeño (Hill 2005) and Lhasa Tibetan (DeLancey 1997, 2012), but Aikhenvald (2012: 467) found these examples inconclusive. The problem with Hill’s analysis of Cupeño is that when she discovered mirativity in texts and notes collected by her decades earlier, there were no more Cupeño speakers left, hence there was no way to examine mirativity with targeted tests. DeLancey’s claim that the morpheme encoding sensory or visual evidentiality in Lhasa Tibetan also marks mirativity is not found fully convincing because it is not placed within the context of a full grammar of the language. According to Aikhenvald (2004: 210),

any evidential except for visual and firsthand, can acquire mirative extensions. These extensions are a frequent feature of the non-firsthand form in small systems, and of inferred in larger systems. […] The emerging correlation is intuitively right: new and unexpected knowledge appears to be interconnected with something one makes inferences about but has not witnessed or hardly has under control.

The Moldavian Hungarian facts suggest a different – trivial – correlation, which holds for all languages with a two-term evidential system contrasting an evidentially marked and an evidentially neutral form. Namely, if the evidential system can also express mirativity, it is the evidentially marked form that has a mirative use.

In Moldavian Hungarian, the mirative use of the evidential -a/e appears to be elicited in the case of directly experienced events that are not only unexpected but also trigger an emotional reaction – mostly sorrow, anger, or exasperation – in the speaker. An emotional component has been pointed out in the licencing of mirative morphemes in some other languages, as well. As observed by DeLancey (2012: 558), unexpected information often provokes some kind of emotional reaction, and it is inevitable that some emotional value will sometimes attach to a mirative construction. DeLancey points to a number of descriptions that refer to implications of disapproval or other negative attitudes associated with mirative constructions, e.g., Hein (2007) and So-Hartmann (2009: 293–294). In Tsakhur (Tatevosov and Maisak 1999: 232–233), the non-firsthand evidential may acquire a mirative connotation if something happens contrary to the speaker’s expectation and much to their regret. Sapir (1922: 200), too, mentions anger among the conditions licencing the mirative
use of the inferential in Takelma: it is frequently used “in rhetorical questions of anger, surprise, wonder, and discovery of fact after ignorance of it for some time”. Mirative exclamations in Moldavian Hungarian often function as self-addressed rhetorical questions – similarly to rhetorical questions marked by mirative forms e.g. in IXun (König 2013), Magar (Grunow-Hårsta 2007), and Cantonese (Matthews 1998: 330–331), languages reported by Aikhenvald (2004: Ch. 6, 2012).

As I will show in the following section, the atypical properties of evidentiality in Moldavian Hungarian are a result of its historical evolution.

3 The origin of the Moldavian Hungarian evidential system

3.1 The -a/e suffix in Old Hungarian (900–1526): the marker of narrative past

Old Hungarian had the same tense forms as present-day Moldavian Hungarian except that the tense suffix on the auxiliary of past perfect tense used to be -a/e, whereas it is -t in Moldavian Hungarian. The functions of the verb forms, however, were different. Old Hungarian (preserved in coherent documents since 1192) had the following five tenses (Abaffy 1992; Szarvas 1872; É. Kiss 2014, 2016):

(17) The tense system of Old Hungarian

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Tense</th>
<th>Form</th>
<th>Translation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Present</td>
<td>V+AGR: mond-om</td>
<td>say-1sg ‘I say’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Narrative/General Past</td>
<td>V+a/e+AGR mond-á-m say-PST-1sg ‘I said’</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Perfect</td>
<td>V+t/tt+AGR mond-t-am say-PRF-1sg ‘I have said’</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Past Imperfect</td>
<td>V+AGR AUX+a mond-om val-a say-1sg be-PST ‘I was saying’</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Past Perfect</td>
<td>V+t/tt+AGR AUX+a mond-t-am val-a say-PRF-1sg be-PST ‘I had said’</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The suffix -a/e, descendant of the Uralic past-tense suffix, functioned as the marker of the general, narrative past, the past tense of events not linked to the present (hence it is glossed as PST in the Old Hungarian examples). In the late Old Hungarian period, however, it faced a competitor, the suffix -t. The suffix -t originally encoded the perfect aspect (hence it is glossed as PRF in the Old Hungarian examples). Unless followed by an -a/e-marked temporal auxiliary, t-marked verbs denoted past events
with present relevance (Abaffy 1992; Szarvas 1872). Notice the different functions of the narrative past (used by the story teller giving account of a past event) and the present perfect (used by a participant of the same situation facing the present result of the past event) in the following example:

(18)  *Orpha megapol-a o nap-a-t & mégfordol-a. Rvt*
Orpah kiss-PST.3SG she mother.in.law-3SG-ACC and turn-PST.3SG Ruth
éggésol-é o nap-ual Ki-nč mód-a Noemi
unite-PST.3SG she mother.in.law-3SG-with who-DAT tell-PST.3SG Noemi
I me te rokon-od mégfordol-t.
lo you relative-2SG turn-PRF.3SG
‘Orpah kissed her mother-in-law and turned round. Ruth held onto her mother-in-law. Noemi told her: Lo, your relative has turned round.’
(Bécsi Codex: 2)

V+AGR combined with an -a-marked temporal auxiliary represented past imperfect, i.e., continuous or habitual past:

(19)  *Es ez bezed-ek-en ... zent lelek bezzell-e ysteny edes*
and this speech-PL-SUP holy spirit speak-PST.3SG divine sweet
bezed-ek-ett ... hogy mend czudal-yak-ual-a Es halgat-yak-ual-a
speech-PL-ACC that all admire-3PL-be-PST and listen-3PL-be-PST
ew-tett
he-ACC
‘And in these speeches [of Saint Francis] the holy spirit spoke divine sweet speeches … so that they were all admiring him and listening to him’
(Jőkai Codex: 37)

A perfect, -t-marked verb followed by an -a-marked temporal auxiliary expressed past perfect tense:

(20)  *És megemlékez-é-k Péter az ıgé-ről, ki-t mondo-tt*
and commemorate-PST-3SG Peter the word-about which-ACC say-PRF.3SG
val-a
be-PST
‘And Peter commemorated the word that he had said.’
(Müncheni Codex: 103)

The tense system outlined above started disintegrating in the late Old Hungarian period already. It was still more or less complete in documents recording ‘bequeathed’ texts inherited from earlier times, i.e., in poems, and in the prose of codices. (Of the 46 Hungarian-language codices from the 14th, 15th and early 16th centuries that
survived the Turkish occupation of Hungary in 1526, all but one are copies of older texts, mostly Bible translations, monastic rules, prayers, and legends of saints.) In spontaneously created texts, mostly letters, however, the -a/e suffix was already losing ground to -t, which was developing from the marker of past events with present relevance into a marker of past events. Compare the distribution of past tenses in three different text types from the 14th, 15th and early 16th centuries (Abaffy 1992: 163):

Table 1: The distribution of past tenses in different text types in Late Old Hungarian.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Poems</th>
<th>Codices</th>
<th>Letters</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>V+a/e</td>
<td>64%</td>
<td>56%</td>
<td>26%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>V+t</td>
<td>26%</td>
<td>28%</td>
<td>61%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>V val+a</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>13%</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>V+t val+a</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>12%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In poems and codices, mostly representing copies of older exemplars, we find twice as many occurrences of -a/e-marked verbs than of -t-marked verbs. In letters representing spontaneous language use, the proportion of these tenses is reversed: there are more than twice as many -t-marked verbs as -a/e-marked verbs. The change in proportions went hand-in-hand with a functional change: -t gradually took over the role of the general past-tense suffix. The development of perfect into general past, i.e., the simplification of the [+past, +present relevance] feature complex to [+past] is not unique to Hungarian; it also happened e.g. in the case of the French passé composé (Caudal 2015).

As a consequence of this process, the -a/e suffix, the former narrative/general past marker, was gradually constrained to particular functional niches in Middle Hungarian. Abaffy (1992) already observed a new function of -a/e in a few Late Old Hungarian documents; she noticed that -a/e could also denote recent past in reported direct speech. The following Old Hungarian example illustrates both the regular and the newly emerging function of -a/e: the suffix marks narrative past on the reporting verb, and recent past on the reported verb.

(21)  
es mőd-a … “Ez az ki-ról **mond-e-c** en vtann-am iq and say-PST.3SG this that who-about say-PST-1SG I after-1SG come.3SG fér’-šl"  
above-from  
‘And said … “This is the one about whom I have said that he will come from above after me”’  
(Müncheni Codex: 85)
Abaffy (1992: 153, 166) claims that the marking of recent past by -a/e emerged as a dialectal phenomenon in codices with ties to Eastern Hungary.

### 3.2 The -a/e suffix in Middle Hungarian (1526–1772): decreasing frequency, pragmatic conditions on its use

Whereas Old Hungarian marked both tense and viewpoint aspect, i.e., +/-perfectivity, the emergence of a system of situation aspect marking by means of telicizing verbal particles led to the disappearance of viewpoint aspect marking in the Middle Hungarian period (É. Kiss 2016). The language was slowly returning to the Proto-Ugric and Proto-Uralic system of two simple tenses: past and non-past, with past tense marked by the suffix -t instead of the original -a/e.

Compare the distribution of the four past tenses in Old Hungarian, shown in Table 1, with their distribution in a corpus of 1,225 letters from the period 1526–1700 (Mohay 2018: 71), shown in Table 2.

**Table 2**: Proportion of past tenses in Middle Hungarian letters.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>16th century:</th>
<th>17th century:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>V+a/e</td>
<td>14.6%</td>
<td>14.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>V+t/tt</td>
<td>73%</td>
<td>78.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>V val+a/vol+t</td>
<td>1.8%</td>
<td>1.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>V+t val+a/vol+t</td>
<td>9.5%</td>
<td>5.5%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The commonness of the -t-past and the infrequency of the -a/e past is also confirmed by Halász’s (2021) data, who examined the percentages of the -t-marked (vol-t) and -a-marked (val-a) past-tense forms of the copula used as a discrete (main) verb among the tokens of the 1,050,000 word Old and Middle Hungarian corpus of informal language use (http://tmk.nytud.hu). Compare their changing proportions in the 16th, 17th and 18th centuries, shown in Figure 1:

**Figure 1**: The changing proportions of the t-marked and -a-marked copula.
Parallel with -t taking over the role of general past-tense suffix, the distribution of -a/e gradually came to be restricted to specific contexts. Owing to its relative rarity, the -a/e past assumed an elevated stylistic value and tended to be used to highlight important, distinguished events. This tendency has been observed by several authors analysing the Middle Hungarian tense system. Németh (2001) compared the distribution of past tenses in two late 16th-century corpora of similar sizes: private letters and a memoir appended to an entreaty for a land grant, emphasizing the author’s services of 65 years for an aristocratic family. She found that the -a/e past, making up 59.4% of all past tenses in the memoir and only 7.1% in the private letters, was used in the case of significant, often majestic, happenings. Zsilinszky (2005), analysing 17th-century manor court records, observed that the -a/e past was often used for dramatic purposes, highlighting incidents that represented a turn in a series of events. Her observations recall the characterization of mirative evidentials in some present-day languages. For example, the mirative marker in !Xun can mark the main point of the story (König 2013). In Cantonese, the mirative can be used to express notable information (Matthews 1998: 330–331).

The pragmatic contexts of the -a/e past have been investigated most thoroughly by Mohay (2018, 2020, 2021). In addition to 1,225 Middle Hungarian letters, she studied witness testimonies of witch trials, relying on the Old and Middle Hungarian corpus of informal language use (https://tmk.nytud.hu/). The Middle Hungarian letters analysed by her show a function of the -a/e past that was already present in some Old Hungarian codices as a dialectal phenomenon (Abaffy 1992: 163): the marking of recent past, i.e., the period within a few days before the speech time (Mohay 2018). The typical time adverbials used with -a/e-marked verbs include tegnap ‘yesterday’, en napokban ‘these days’, ez órában ‘this hour’, most ‘now’, as illustrated in (22a, b).

(Since in Middle Hungarian, -t is already a general past-tense marker, whereas -a/e has a varying role, I gloss them as PST and APST, respectively.)

(22) a. ez ora-ban erkez-e-k leuel-em this hour-in arrive-APST-3SG letter-1SG
   ‘My letter has arrived at this hour.’
   (1621, Mohay 2018: 79)

b. En már a dolog-rol beszéll-ett-em vol-t, most uiyobban I already the matter-about speak-PST-1SG be-PST now again beszéll-é-k
   speak-APST-1SG
   ‘I had already spoken about the matter, and now I have spoken about it again.’
   (1668, Mohay 2018: 77)

In the Middle Hungarian period investigated by Mohay (2018), the recent past marking role of -a/e is not a dialectal phenomenon anymore; she claims that it is attested in letters from all over Hungary.
The letters also contain contexts where the -a/e past encodes significant unexpected events, i.e., it has a kind of mirative role:

(23) *Ez  ell  mult ennehani esztendő-ben,  igen el*
this  PRT past few year-in quite off

*ueu-e  az  ur  Isten haza-nk-nak gonduíselő-y-tt,*
take-APST.3SG the lord God country-1PL-DAT guardian-POSSPL-ACC

*nemzet-ünk-nek io gonduílé-t-t kiszed-e koszull-ünk*
nation-1PL-DAT good guardian-POSSPL-ACC remove-APST.3SG from-1PL

‘In these past few years, the Lord completely took away our country’s guardians, it removed our nation’s good guardians from among us.’
(1609, Mohay 2018: 141)

In the witch trial testimonies analysed by Mohay (2021), the most typical function of the -a/e past is the encoding of significant events that affected the speaker personally. 21.24% of the -a/e-marked verbs in court records belong to this type. Mohay set up the following five categories of personally experienced significant events typically denoted by -a/e-marked verbs:

(i) curse, disease, symptoms of a disease, abuse, death, e.g.:

(24) *az  fi-a-t megh uer-t-em uol-t az megh fog-ot*
the son-3SG-ACC PRT beat-PST-1SG be-PST the PRT catch-PSTPTCP

*Azoni-nak, az giermek megh mond-ott-a otthon az an-ia-nak*
woman-DAT the child PRT say-PST-3SG home the mother-3SG-DAT

*es  ugi  jar-e-k  harmad nap muluan, hogi mind az*
and so come.off-APST-1SG three day after that both the

*ket lab-om özue sugorod-e-k.*
two leg-1SG together shrink-APST-3SG

‘I had beaten the son of the captured woman, the child told it to her mother at home, and it happened to me after three days that both of my legs shrank.’
(1629, Mohay 2021: 95)

(ii) other kinds of negative, threatening events, damage:

(25) *könyök-ön feküd-t-em, az pipa is szá-m-ban vól-t, nagj*
elbow-on lie-PST-1SG the pipe too mouth-1SG-in be-PST.3SG very

*hirtelen az Falu felől nagj zugas es-é-k*
suddenly the village from great buzzing happen-APST-3SG

‘I was lying on my elbow, also the pipe was in my mouth, all of a sudden there was a strong buzzing from the village’
(1723, Mohay 2021: 100)
(iii) recovery, relief of bodily symptoms:

(26) más nap mingyárt tulaidon ere-i-vel föll kel-e,  
next day right.away own strength-POSSPST-with up get-APST.3SG  
és ki mén-e, holott an-nak előtt-e Lábai-ra  
and out go-APST.3SG though that-DAT before-3SG feet.3SG-on  
sem áll-hat-ott  
not.even stand-POSSIB-PST.3SG  
‘and so the next day he got up right away by his own strength and went  
out, even though before that he could not even stand on his feet’  
(1743, Mohay 2021: 101)

(iv) immediate precursors of a turn of events:

(27) tud-od, hogy kér-t-em harom Mariás-t túl-ed kutya leány-a,  
know-2SG that ask-PST-1SG three marias-ACC from-2SG dog daughter-3SG  
és nem ad-á-l, lát-od-é mint jár-á-l  
and not give-APST-2SG see-2SG-Q how come.off-APST-2SG  
‘You know that I asked you, dog’s daughter, for three Maria-coins, but you  
did not give any; do you see what happened to you?’  
(1729, Mohay 2021: 102)

(v) emotional reactions to a turn of events:

(28) azzal el keseredvén a tornácz-bon ki fordul-t, és  
then PRT growing.desperate the porch-in out turn-PST.3SG and  
körservesen sir-a  
bitterly cry-APST.3SG  
‘Then having grown desperate, he turned in the porch and cried bitterly.’  
(1748, Mohay 2021: 102)

Mohay (2021: 88) concluded that the most prominent role of the -a/e past in witch trial  
testimonies is the expression of personal affectedness and experience, i.e., the  
expression of a kind of direct evidentiality.

In sum: statistical data indicate that the -a/e-marked past lost ground to the  
-t-marked past in Middle Hungarian. The use of -a/e was gradually restricted to  
particular contexts, i.e., to verbs describing recent past events and to verbs  
describing significant events that were unexpected and/or affected the speaker  
personally. Its frequent use in contexts describing significant unexpected events  
provides evidence of its mirative value, whereas its growing use in contexts  
describing events that affected the speaker personally indicates its emerging  
evidential role. At the same time, the mirative and evidential uses of -a/e are merely  
tendencies, which are only present in a subset of all occurrences.
3.3 The -a/e-past in Modern Hungarian (1772–): areal reduction; the grammaticalization of the conditions of its use

The functional reduction of the -a/e past also continued in the Modern Hungarian period and was accompanied by areal reduction. The suffix gradually disappeared from north to south and from west to east, and eventually it only survived in the eastern dialects as the marker of witnessed immediate past and witnessed mirative past.

Interestingly, 18th-, 19th- and early 20th-century Hungarian grammars, influenced by grammars of Latin, only recognize the temporal function of -a/e. They describe it as the marker of immediate past, calling it the suffix of alig múlt ‘barely past’ or fel múlt ‘half past’ (e.g., Magyar grammatika 1795; Schedel 1846; Szarvas 1872; Simonyi 1895; Klemm 1928). The poet János Arany, however, also noticed its mirative role (Arany 1879). He described -a/e as a suffix used in eastern and central Hungary to encode unexpected recent events. The recency condition of its use can be neutralized, however, if unexpectedness is accompanied by anger, sorrow, or exasperation. Arany cited the following example of -a/e expressing mirativity without recency:

(29) (Two friends meet after a long time, and share the most important news since their last encounter.)

“Meg-hal-a szegény Péter is!” “Meg biza! Tavaly hal-t meg.”

Poor Peter died, too!” “Yes, he did. He died last year.”

When Peter’s death is mentioned for the first time, the -a/e-marked verb describes it as an unexpected exasperating piece of news. In the second clause, his death is a presupposed fact, and the specification of the time of his death is neutral information, with the verb bearing the general past-tense suffix.

The evidential role of the Hungarian -a/e suffix was first noticed by a Turkologist, Gábor Bálint. His Kazan Tatar grammar (1877) mentions – by way of analogy – that Secler Hungarians (the western neighbours of Moldavian Hungarians) use the -a/e past to express actions that they carried out or witnessed themselves. However, Bálint’s observation remained unnoticed by Hungarian grammarians.

Hungarian grammars from the middle of the 20th century (e.g., Tompa 1962) do not discuss the -a/e past among the actively used past-tense suffixes any more. Vámszer’s (1972) dialectal study still reported the sporadic use of -a/e as a suffix of recent past in Kalotaszeg, an Eastern region of the Hungarian language area and it also described the condition of direct experience in licencing its use. More recent
dialectal studies, e.g. Kiss (2003), mention the survival of the -a/e past in the Eastern Hungarian Secler and Moldavian dialects without discussing its special function.


4 The evolution of the evidential-mirative function of -a/e

In Old Hungarian, the -a/e suffix marked past events unrelated either to the present or to the speaker. In present-day Moldavian Hungarian, by contrast, it marks events that happened right before the moment of speech, and which either involved the speaker or were witnessed by him or her. The mirative extension of narrative past has also been reported from Hindi/Urdu (Montaut 2006), but the developmental path from evidentially neutral narrative past to immediate past encoding mirativity and direct evidentiality is, to the best of my knowledge, unique, and hence in need of explanation.

The functional reinterpretation of the -a/e past must have been initiated by its relative scarcity in the Middle Hungarian period and its losing ground to the -t-marked past. The infrequency of the -a/e past gave a/e-marked verbs an elevated stylistic value as a result of which they came to be used to highlight significant, emotionally involving events – as observed by Németh (2001), Zsilinszky (2005), and Mohay (2018, 2021).

It seems plausible that its rarity and the resultant connotation of exception resulted in the evolution of a mirative overtone of the -a/e past, expressing that the event denoted by the -a/e-marked verb was unexpected and had a significant impact upon the speaker. An unexpected event is particularly likely to make a significant impact upon the speaker if the speaker is a participant, or at least a witness, of it – which may have extended the function of -a/e to direct evidentiality. Unexpected, emotionally engaging impacts usually involve recency, which explains why the ‘past’ meaning of -a/e came to be restricted to ‘recent past’ or even ‘immediate past’. These considerations suggest the following hypothetical functional evolution of -a/e:

(30) (rare) past
    > emotionally loaded past
    > mirative past
    > witnessed mirative past
    > witnessed recent past
In the case of the \textit{a}-marked imperfect auxiliary, the evolution stopped before reaching its final stage, hence the verb form ‘\textit{V}+\textit{Agr} val+a’ expresses \textit{+/- recent} witnessed imperfect past.

As for the timeline of these changes, the marking of recent past emerged as a secondary function of \textit{-a/e} in documents related to Eastern Hungary in the late Old Hungarian period. This means that the semantic development outlined in (30) must have taken place at least in Eastern Hungary by the 16th century. The Middle Hungarian data show the gradual fading of the general past marking role of \textit{-a/e} and the areal spreading of its new ‘mirative past’, ‘witnessed mirative past’ and ‘witnessed recent past’ marking functions. In the Middle Hungarian period mirativity, direct evidentiality and recency were still pragmatic aspects of the use of the \textit{-a/e} past; they were not evoked in all contexts. These functions grammaticalized as inherent parts of the meaning of \textit{-a/e} in Early Modern Hungarian. At present, only the last two stages of the evolution in (30) survive, and they are restricted to the easternmost dialects of the language.

5 Conclusion

In the Moldavian dialect of Hungarian, the complex tense system of Old and Middle Hungarian, encoding tense and aspect, has developed into a tense system also encoding evidentiality and mirativity. Moldavian Hungarian evidentiality is atypical in at least three respects. First, it is a two-term evidentiality system based on the opposition of direct evidentiality and the lack of evidentiality – whereas other two-term evidential systems involve firsthand versus non-firsthand (A1 type), non-firsthand versus everything else (A2), reported versus everything else (A3), sensory evidence versus reported (A4), and auditory versus everything else (A5) oppositions (Aikhenvald 2004). Second, mirative meaning has the same exponent as direct evidentiality – whereas in small evidential systems usually non-firsthand acquires a mirative overtone (Aikhenvald 2012: 465). Third, the mirative function of the \textit{-a/e} past appears to have emerged before its evidential interpretation, whereas it is evidentials that generally develop mirative extensions and not the other way round (Aikhenvald 2012: 465).

The atypical properties of Moldavian evidentiality must be consequences of its historical evolution. The first and second of these properties follow from the third one, the primacy of the mirative function of the \textit{-a/e} past. As for the second property, mirativity can, in principle, be associated with new information independently of whether the information has been obtained by direct witnessing or inference.
Therefore, the mirative -a/e could have assumed a meaning component of either direct or inferential evidentiality. However, the -a/e-past-tense suffix was a competitor of -t, originally the marker of the perfect. It was the -t suffix, encoding past events with a present result or present relevance, that had a latent inferential component, a potential source of indirect evidentiality. Hence the option open for the evidential extension of the mirative -a/e past was direct evidentiality.

The unusual two-member evidentiality system based on the opposition of direct evidentiality and the lack of evidentiality must be a consequence of the same facts. That is, when the mirative and evidential functions of the -a/e past emerged, the perfect, which is the most likely source of inferential evidentiality, was still associated with the suffix -t, which started developing into a general past-tense marker. The loss of the general past-tense marking role of -a/e helped it assume new mirative and evidential functions. In the case of -t, the opposite happened: the generalization of -t into a general past-tense marker neutralized the feature that could have developed into inferential evidentiality.

**Glossing abbreviations**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Abbreviation</th>
<th>Meaning</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ACC</td>
<td>accusative</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>APST</td>
<td>-a/e-marked past</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DAT</td>
<td>dative</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>INF</td>
<td>infinitive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PL</td>
<td>plural</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>POSSIB</td>
<td>possibility suffix</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>POSSPL</td>
<td>possessive plural</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PRF</td>
<td>perfect</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PRT</td>
<td>particle</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PST</td>
<td>past</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PSTPTCP</td>
<td>past participle</td>
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<tr>
<td>Q</td>
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<td>singular</td>
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<td>SUP</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

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