Experimental testing of the processing of evidential constructions in Bashkir

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Our hypothesis

Sociolinguistic data which we collected in Bashkortostan shows that Bashkir speakers of all ages are not monolingual as they are strongly exposed to Russian.
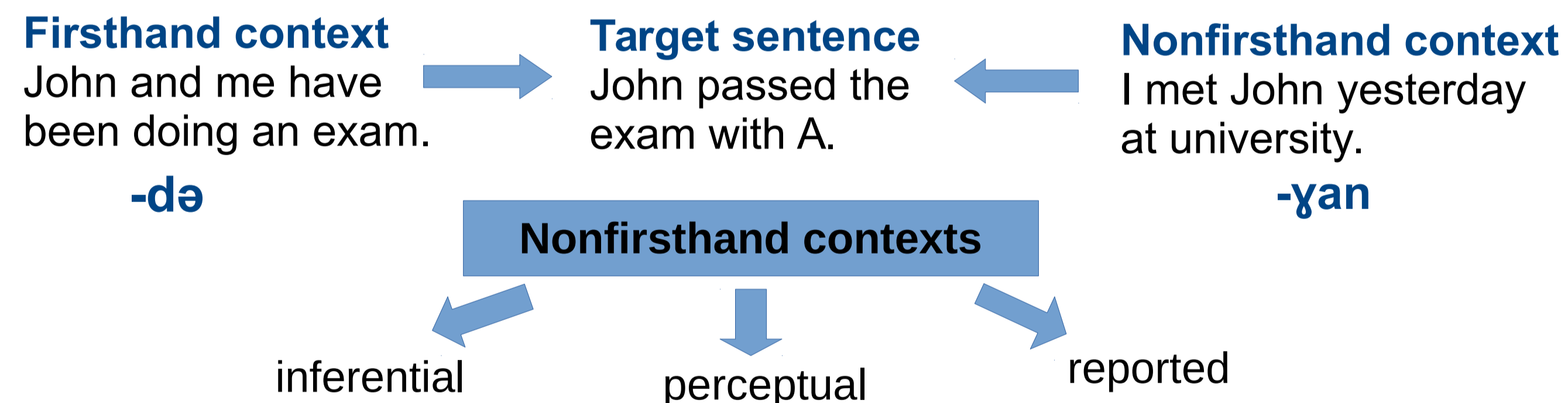
Russian
[no morphological marking of evidentiality]

influence →

Bashkir
[morphological marking of evidentiality]

Hypotheses:

- Evidential constructions in Bashkir tend to be processed with difficulties due to the influence of Russian language
- There are differences in processing of evidential constructions of different types

Experimental methods

48 situations with a pair of contexts: firsthand and nonfirsthand.

Firsthand context
John and me have been doing an exam.
-də

→ **Target sentence**
John passed the exam with A. ←

Nonfirsthand context
I met John yesterday at university.
-ɣan

Nonfirsthand contexts

inferential   perceptual   reported

Evidentiality in Bashkir

Bashkir ← Turkic branch of Altaic language family.

For more details on Bashkir visit
http://www.ethnologue.com/language/bak

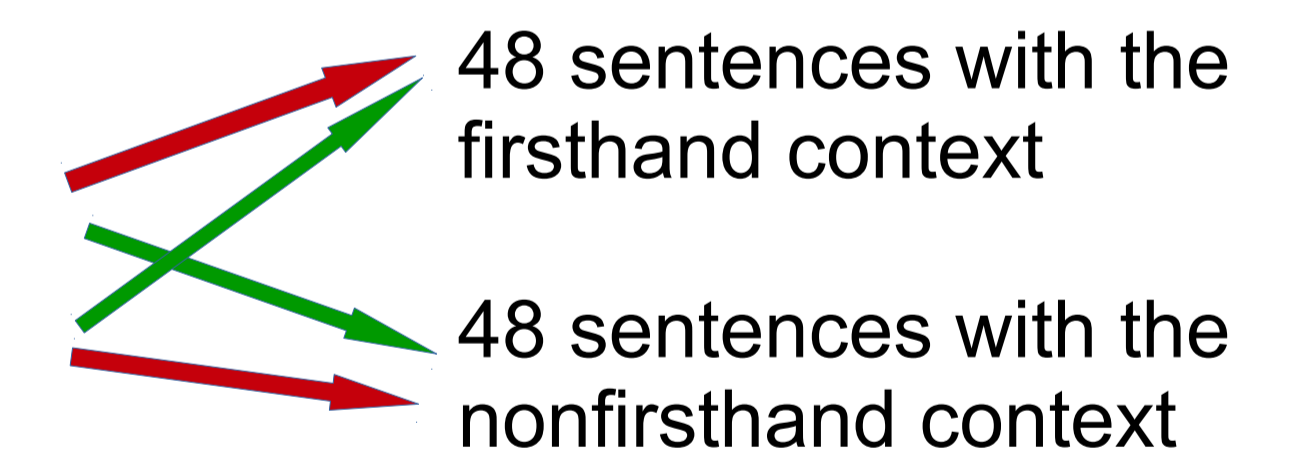evidentiality in Bashkir – a clear-cut two-term system

Firsthand information source (seeing) – past definite time, verbal ending **-də**

Nonfirsthand information source (hearing, inference, verbal report) – past indefinite time, verbal ending **-ɣan**

For every sentence we made a pair by swiching **-ɣan** to **-də** and vice versa.

All in all, two experimental blocks:

- 96 sentences with the **-ɣan** ending
- 96 sentences with the **-də** ending

48 sentences with the firsthand context

48 sentences with the nonfirsthand context

Grammaticality judgement: results

After reading each sentence, a participant was asked whether the sentence was grammatically correct.
There were no significant difference between match and mismatch cases in the participants' answers.

Discussion: sentences with the mismatch between the context and the verb form are not considered incorrect. At the same time, the speakers react more slowly in the case of mismatch.

Self-paced reading: results

context   target   tail

Arslandəŋ fatirənəŋ təðrələrendə ut qabəndə. Arslan eštən qajt**qan** da, ħəm əle kiske aš ašaj.
'There was light in Arslan's windows. He came home from work and was eating his dinner.'

Expected: in mismatch condition the reaction time in the area of target and tail should be significantly bigger.
Found: no significant differences in the tail region, but in the verb region the mismatch significantly affected reaction times ($\chi^2 = 59.82$, $p > .001$)