How to distinguish semantically close cases : A case study on Mordvin illative and lative

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2021-10-22

http://hdl.handle.net/10138/338806

unspecified
publishedVersion

HOW TO DISTINGUISH BETWEEN SEMANTICALLY CLOSE CASES

A case study on Mordvin illative and lative

BACKGROUND

- Mordvin languages (Erzya and Moksha) have two spatial cases expressing GOAL of an action

- The variation has been explained in various ways

    - Lative is not a case, but a derivational affix (e. g. Wiedemann 1865) or an allomorph of illative (e. g. GMJa 1962)

    - The difference between illative and lative lies in the meanings/semantic roles they convey (e. g. GMJa 1980; Bartens 1996; EK 2000; MK 2000)

    - In addition to the meanings the difference has something to do with the properties of the landmark noun (e. g. Ahlquist 1861; Alhoniemi 1985; EMJa 2018; Erkkilä 2019)

- In this paper I will explore different parameters that affect the choice between GOAL-cases in Mordvin languages

MORDVIN SPATIAL CASE SYSTEM

- Productive inflection makes a four-way distinction

  - In content nouns GOAL-marking varies between two cases

  - Relational nouns inflect according to one of the case series according to their lexical preference

Content nouns	
LOCATION	inessive
SOURCE	elative
GOAL	illative/lative
PATH	prolative

Relational nouns		
LOCATION	inessive	locative
SOURCE	elative	ablative (partitive)
GOAL	illative	lative
PATH	prolative	

THEORETICAL BACKGROUND (COGNITIVE LINGUISTICS)

- Conceptualization of situations

  - Based on generalizations made from recurring events and general world knowledge

  - Categorized based on similarities with previous situations

- Relations expressed by cases and relational nouns

  - Relation between trajector and landmark

    – Trajector = entity that is located

    – Landmark = entity in relation to which trajector is related

  - Can be situated in various cognitive domains (e. g. spatial, temporal, causal)

THEORETICAL BACKGROUND (COGNITIVE LINGUISTICS; CONT.)

- Meanings of cases

  - One case can have several meanings

  - Different meanings are activated in different contexts

  - Meanings have proto-scenes (schematic "skeletons" abstracted from actual situatons)

    – Proto-scenes (and meanings) are differentiated by a functional element (an element in the proto-scene which when changed changes the whole proto-scene)

- Relational nouns (postpositions/adverbs)

  - Focus the attention to some part of the landmark noun

  - Difference between inflected content nouns and relational noun constructions it that of conceptualization and scope of attention, not one of meaning → content nouns and relationa nouns can be studied together

THEORETICAL BACKGROUND (PROPERTIES OF THE LANDMARK NOUN)

- The properties of the landmark noun have been proven meaningful in studies of cognitive psychology

  - Humans have pre-linguistic spatial prototypes which help the categorization of entities (Azañón 2020)

  - The shape of the landmark noun affects the acceptance of spatial expressions containing *über* 'above' and *unter* 'below' in German (Kluth et. al. 2019)

  - The size of the landmark affects the acceptance of the use of *near* in spatial descriptions (Carlson & Covey 2005)

DATA

- 200 examples of both illative and lative in Erzya and Moksha
  - Data includes both content nouns and relational nouns that have productive inflection (I. e. no lexicalized forms)
- MokshEr corpus (University of Turku)
  - Standard literary language
  - Mostly newspaper texts and prose

MEANINGS OF GOAL-CASES IN MORDVIN LANGUAGES

meaning	conextual variant (submeaning)	Erzya		Moksha	
		ill.	lat.	ill.	lat.
TARGET	TARGET	X	X	X	X
	PATH	X	X	X	X
	COGNITIVE	X	X	X	
	APPEARING	X		X	
	MEASURE			X	
DIRECTION	DIRECTION	X	X	X	X
	PATH	X	X	X	X
	COGNITIVE		X		X
STAYING		X		X	X
PLACE		X	X	X	X
LOCATION		X	X	X	X
TEMPORAL		X	X	X	X
RESULT		X		X	X
REASON		X	X	X	X
PART				X	

CLASSIFICATION OF LANDMARK NOUNS

- Spatial landmarks
  - Functionally 2-dimensional or 3-dimensional
  - Bounded or unbounded
- Other landmarks
  - Objects, institutions, abstract entities, temporal entities
- Examples

bounded 2D	bounded 3D	unbounded 2D	unbounded 3D	object	institution	abstract	temporal
kalməlanga 'graveyard' (M)	*vel'e* 'village' (E)	*moda* 'earth' (E)	*meńel'* 'sky, heaven' (E)	*šufta* 'tree' (M)	*mil'ićija* 'militia' (E)	*t'ev* 'work' (M)	*il'äd'* 'evening' (M)

CLASSIFICATION OF LANDMARK NOUNS (CONT.)

- Prototypicality of the landmark noun as a representative of its category

  - A four-point scale for spatial landmarks

  - No prototypicality assessment for objects, institutions, abstract entities, and temporal entities

- Examples (bounded 2D, Moksha)

prototypical	less prototypical	less unprototypical	unprototypical
šra langa 'top of table'	*šama* 'face'	*ulav* 'load'	*iŕd'əz* 'rib'

RESULTS (LANDMARK TYPE; ERZYA)

ill		bounded 3D	unbounded 3D	bounded 2D	unbounded 2D	object	institution	abstract	time	total
	target (target)	7	9	21	5	15	0	27	0	84
	target (path)	11	4	3	3	1	4	13	0	39
	target (cognitive/communication)	1	0	4	3	8	0	4	1	21
	target (appearing)	0	0	0	0	0	0	8	0	8
	target (measure)	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
	direction (direction)	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
	direction (path)	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
	direction (cognitive/communication)	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
	staying	1	0	2	0	0	0	1	0	4
	place	6	1	6	0	1	0	0	0	14
	location	3	0	2	0	0	1	1	0	7
	temporal	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	8	8
	result	1	1	0	0	2	0	3	0	7
	reason	0	0	0	0	1	0	5	0	6
	part	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
	total	30	17	38	11	28	5	62	9	200

lat		bounded 3D	unbounded 3D	bounded 2D	unbounded 2D	object	institution	abstract	time	total
	target (target)	6	14	1	3	0	6	0	0	30
	target (path)	21	14	2	2	0	6	0	0	45
	target (cognitive/communication)	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
	target (appearing)	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
	target (measure)	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
	direction (direction)	2	16	0	1	1	0	0	0	20
	direction (path)	29	41	2	3	1	3	1	0	80
	direction (cognitive/communication)	0	12	0	0	0	0	0	0	12
	staying	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
	place	1	3	0	0	0	0	0	0	4
	location	0	3	0	1	0	0	0	0	4
	temporal	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1
	result	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
	reason	1	0	0	1	0	0	1	0	3
	part	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
	total	61	103	5	11	2	15	2	1	200

RESULTS (LANDMARK TYPE; ERZYA)

ill		bounded 3D	unbounded 3D	bounded 2D	unbounded 2D	object	institution	abstract	time	total
	target (target)	7	9	21	5	15	0	27	0	84
	target (path)	11	4	3	3	1	4	13	0	39
	target (cognitive/communication)	1	0	4	3	8	0	4	1	21
	target (appearing)	0	0	0	0	0	0	8	0	8
	target (measure)	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
	direction (direction)	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
	direction (path)	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
	direction (cognitive/communication)	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
	staying	1	0	2	0	0	0	1	0	4
	place	6	1	6	0	1	0	0	0	14
	location	3	0	2	0	0	1	1	0	7
	temporal	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	8	8
	result	1	1	0	0	2	0	3	0	7
	reason	0	0	0	0	1	0	5	0	6
	part	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
	total	30	17	38	11	28	5	62	9	200
		bounded 3D	unbounded 3D	bounded 2D	unbounded 2D	object	institution	abstract	time	total
lat	target (target)	6	14	1	3	0	6	0	0	30
	target (path)	21	14	2	2	0	6	0	0	45
	target (cognitive/communication)	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
	target (appearing)	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
	target (measure)	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
	direction (direction)	2	16	0	1	1	0	0	0	20
	direction (path)	29	41	2	3	1	3	1	0	80
	direction (cognitive/communication)	0	12	0	0	0	0	0	0	12
	staying	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
	place	1	3	0	0	0	0	0	0	4
	location	0	3	0	1	0	0	0	0	4
	temporal	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1
	result	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
	reason	1	0	0	1	0	0	1	0	3
	part	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
	total	61	103	5	11	2	15	2	1	200

RESULTS (LANDMARK TYPE; MOKSHA)

		bounded 3D	unbounded 3D	bounded 2D	unbounded 2D	object	institution	abstract	time	total
ill	target (target)	7	9	19	2	16	2	18	0	73
	target (path)	4	6	8	1	0	0	12	1	32
	target (cognitive/communication)	1	3	3	0	22	0	1	0	30
	target (appearing)	0	0	0	0	0	0	8	0	8
	target (measure)	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	1
	direction (direction)	0	2	2	1	2	0	0	0	7
	direction (path)	1	1	1	0	0	0	1	0	4
	direction (cognitive/communication)	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
	staying	0	0	1	2	0	0	2	0	5
	place	7	1	3	0	0	0	0	0	11
	location	1	1	2	1	3	0	6	0	14
	temporal	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	9	9
	result	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	1
	reason	0	0	0	0	1	0	3	0	4
	part	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	1
	total	21	23	39	7	44	2	54	10	200
		bounded 3D	unbounded 3D	bounded 2D	unbounded 2D	object	institution	abstract	time	total
lat	target (target)	21	6	2	0	0	14	2	0	45
	target (path)	24	7	2	4	0	7	1	0	45
	target (cognitive/communication)	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
	target (appearing)	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
	target (measure)	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
	direction (direction)	6	13	0	0	0	3	0	0	22
	direction (path)	26	22	3	2	0	6	1	0	60
	direction (cognitive/communication)	0	6	0	0	0	0	0	0	6
	staying	4	3	0	0	0	0	0	0	7
	place	3	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	4
	location	3	1	0	0	0	1	0	0	5
	temporal	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	2
	result	0	0	0	0	0	2	1	0	3
	reason	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	1
	part	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
	total	87	58	7	6	0	33	7	2	200

RESULTS (LANDMARK TYPE; MOKSHA)

ill		bounded 3D	unbounded 3D	bounded 2D	unbounded 2D	object	institution	abstract	time	total
	target (target)	7	9	19	2	16	2	18	0	73
	target (path)	4	6	8	1	0	0	12	1	32
	target (cognitive/communication)	1	3	3	0	22	0	1	0	30
	target (appearing)	0	0	0	0	0	0	8	0	8
	target (measure)	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	1
	direction (direction)	0	2	2	1	2	0	0	0	7
	direction (path)	1	1	1	0	0	0	1	0	4
	direction (cognitive/communication)	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
	staying	0	0	1	2	0	0	2	0	5
	place	7	1	3	0	0	0	0	0	11
	location	1	1	2	1	3	0	6	0	14
	temporal	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	9	9
	result	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	1
	reason	0	0	0	0	1	0	3	0	4
	part	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	1
	total	21	23	39	7	44	2	54	10	200

lat		bounded 3D	unbounded 3D	bounded 2D	unbounded 2D	object	institution	abstract	time	total
	target (target)	21	6	2	0	0	14	2	0	45
	target (path)	24	7	2	4	0	7	1	0	45
	target (cognitive/communication)	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
	target (appearing)	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
	target (measure)	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
	direction (direction)	6	13	0	0	0	3	0	0	22
	direction (path)	26	22	3	2	0	6	1	0	60
	direction (cognitive/communication)	0	6	0	0	0	0	0	0	6
	staying	4	3	0	0	0	0	0	0	7
	place	3	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	4
	location	3	1	0	0	0	1	0	0	5
	temporal	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	2
	result	0	0	0	0	0	2	1	0	3
	reason	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	1
	part	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
	total	87	58	7	6	0	33	7	2	200

RESULTS (LANDMARK PROTOTYPICALITY; ERZYA)

										total
ill	prototypical	14	3	8	3	4	0	0	0	32
	less prototypical	6	6	20	5	12	0	0	0	49
	less unprototypical	8	3	8	2	5	0	0	0	26
	unprototypical	2	5	2	1	7	0	0	0	17
	N/A	0	0	0	0	0	5	62	9	76
	total	30	17	38	11	28	5	62	9	200
		bounded 3D	unbounded 3D	bounded 2D	unbounded 2D	object	institution	abstract	time	total
lat	prototypical	27	6	3	5	0	0	0	0	41
	less prototypical	26	15	2	5	0	0	0	0	48
	less unprototypical	8	60	0	1	2	0	0	0	71
	unprototypical	0	22	0	0	0	0	0	0	22
	N/A	0	0	0	0	0	15	2	1	18
	total	61	103	5	11	2	15	2	1	200

RESULTS (LANDMARK PROTOTYPICALITY; ERZYA)

						object	institution	abstract	time	total
ill	prototypical	14	3	8	3	4	0	0	0	32
	less prototypical	6	6	20	5	12	0	0	0	49
	less unprototypical	8	3	8	2	5	0	0	0	26
	unprototypical	2	5	2	1	7	0	0	0	17
	N/A	0	0	0	0	0	5	62	9	76
	total	30	17	38	11	28	5	62	9	200
		bounded 3D	unbounded 3D	bounded 2D	unbounded 2D	object	institution	abstract	time	total
lat	prototypical	27	6	3	5	0	0	0	0	41
	less prototypical	26	15	2	5	0	0	0	0	48
	less unprototypical	8	60	0	1	2	0	0	0	71
	unprototypical	0	22	0	0	0	0	0	0	22
	N/A	0	0	0	0	0	15	2	1	18
	total	61	103	5	11	2	15	2	1	200

		bounded 3D	unbounded 3D	bounded 2D	unbounded 2D	object	institution	abstract	time	total
ill	prototypical	8	2	12	3	8	0	0	0	33
	less prototypical	4	6	13	4	24	0	0	0	51
	less unprototypical	9	12	12	0	7	0	0	0	40
	unprototypical	0	3	2	0	5	0	0	0	10
	N/A	0	0	0	0	0	2	54	10	66
	total	21	23	39	7	44	2	54	10	200
		bounded 3D	unbounded 3D	bounded 2D	unbounded 2D	object	institution	abstract	time	total
lat	prototypical	31	9	3	0	0	0	0	0	43
	less prototypical	49	19	3	4	0	0	0	0	75
	less unprototypical	7	23	1	2	0	0	0	0	33
	unprototypical	0	7	0	0	0	0	0	0	7
	N/A	0	0	0	0	0	33	7	2	42
	total	87	58	7	6	0	33	7	2	200

RESULTS (LANDMARK PROTOTYPICALITY; MOKSHA)

ill										
	prototypical	8	2	12	3	8	0	0	0	33
	less prototypical	4	6	13	4	24	0	0	0	51
	less unprototypical	9	12	12	0	7	0	0	0	40
	unprototypical	0	3	2	0	5	0	0	0	10
	N/A	0	0	0	0	0	2	54	10	66
	total	21	23	39	7	44	2	54	10	200

		bounded 3D	unbounded 3D	bounded 2D	unbounded 2D	object	institution	abstract	time	total	
lat	prototypical	31	9	3	0	0	0	0	0	43	
	less prototypical	49	19	3	4	0	0	0	0	75	
	less unprototypical	7	23	1	2	0	0	0	0	33	
	unprototypical	0	7	0	0	0	0	0	0	7	
	N/A	0	0	0	0	0	33	7	2	42	
	total	87	58	7	6	0	33	7	2	200	

CONCLUSIONS

- Illative and lative in Mordvin languages are two different cases with variation of usen on different levels

  - Differences in the attested meanings of illative and lative within and between Mordvin languages

  - The landmark type seems to affect the choice of GOAL-case

  - The prototypicality of the landmark seems to affect the choice of GOAL-case

- The exact reason for this, and the interaction between the parameters should be studied further

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26/10/2021

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