The Typology of Local Expressions in Uralic

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Abstract

In this paper I shall look at local expressions in Uralic. First, I look at their structure and then turn to the question whether and how they are similar or different to expressions in other languages.

1 Local Expressions

Local expressions consist of several layers ([6]). They can be clearly separated using standard type-theoretical analysis ([4]). From a morphological point of view languages differ in how clearly they separate them.

(1) \[ \text{PathP \ Path PPlaceP \ AxPartP \ AxPartP \ [LocP \ PLoc \ DP]]} \]

1. DP denotes an object, the so-called landmark.
2. LocP denotes a point. It is the location of the landmark.
3. AxPartP denotes a certain axial system.
4. PlaceP denotes an area (in terms of the landmark).
5. PathP denotes a motion pattern.

This is a refined version of [3] where I used the standard division into two heads: M(odaliser) and L(ocaliser). L is decomposed here into a succession of three heads, while M is simply another name for Dir.

In Uralic languages, we find evidence for inflection both with respect to L and M, e.g. in Finnish:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>static</th>
<th>to</th>
<th>from</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>inner</td>
<td>talo-s-sa</td>
<td>talo-on</td>
<td>talo-s-ta</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>outer</td>
<td>talo-1-la</td>
<td>talo-1-le</td>
<td>talo-1-ta</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Modulo some morphophonemics, we can identify the morphemes /s/ (the “inner” L), /l/ (the “outer” L), as well as /Ca/ “no motion” (= static mode), /Vn/ “motion to” (= cofinal mode), and /tA/ “motion from” (= coinitial mode).

This double dependence on L and M is found in Hungarian, through historically it is of different origin. In Proto-Uralic there is only evidence of a single level of morphological differentiation, with respect to mode. The case system merely distinguishes static, (al)lative and ablative cases.

2. **Diminished Paradigms**

There are some noteworthy consequences of the structure (1), which I shall review below.

2.1 **Standard Cases**

If an expression already denotes a location, there is no inflection for L, only for M. This standardly includes
Table 1: Inflecting Adpositions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Stasis</th>
<th>Motion</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Source</td>
<td>Goal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hungarian</td>
<td>mögött</td>
<td>mögül</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vakh Khanty</td>
<td>čönŋo</td>
<td>čönčōογγ</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Estonian</td>
<td>taga</td>
<td>tagant</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M. Mordva</td>
<td>ftalð</td>
<td>ftaldð</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F. Nenets</td>
<td>punn¹aana</td>
<td>punn¹aatt</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Komi</td>
<td>sajin</td>
<td>sajįš¹</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


In Finnish, /missä/ “where” is derived from /mitä/ “what”, but functions like /hol/. Also, persons form a special category; for example, Fi. /luona/, best translated as French /chez/, is used only with people, not things.

2.2 Inflecting Adpositions

A typological specialty of Uralic languages are the adpositions, see Table 1. They inflect for mode, e. g. Hu. /alatt/ “under”, /alá/ “to under” and /alól/ “from under”. The reason is that inflection for L is historically secondary while inflection for M has always been possible. Typically, the postpositions are former nouns (cf. [5] for Hungarian P’s and nominal cases).
Table 2: Two Paradigms in Mari

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Case</th>
<th>Nominative</th>
<th>Genitive</th>
<th>Dative</th>
<th>Accusative</th>
<th>Comparative</th>
<th>Comitative</th>
<th>Inessive</th>
<th>Illative</th>
<th>Lative</th>
<th>Elative</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>kit</td>
<td>olămbal</td>
<td>kiδn</td>
<td>kitlan</td>
<td>kiδım</td>
<td>kitla</td>
<td>kitke</td>
<td>kiδšte</td>
<td>kiδoke</td>
<td>kiδeš</td>
<td>—</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>olămbal</td>
<td></td>
<td>olămbalön</td>
<td>olămballan</td>
<td>olămbalı̈m</td>
<td>olămballa</td>
<td>olămbalye</td>
<td>olămbalne</td>
<td>olămbake</td>
<td>olămbalan</td>
<td>olămbač(ın)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

2.3 Superimposed Inflection

[1] has noted that certain nouns in Mari and Finnish are actually of local origin. His example is /olămbal/ “bench”, consisting of /ol/ and /ămbal/. The original meaning is rather “place to sit on”. /ămbal/ is analogous to Fi. /pāalla/ and derives from a noun meaning “head”, but has effectively become a postposition. Fitting such a construction into the declension paradigm produces an interference between the original Uralic paradigm and the present one.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Case</th>
<th>Form</th>
<th>Meaning</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Inessive</td>
<td>ămbalne</td>
<td>(&lt; *nA) static</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Illative</td>
<td>ămba(l)ke</td>
<td>(&lt; *k) goal 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lative</td>
<td>ămbalan</td>
<td>(&lt; *n) goal 2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Elative</td>
<td>ămbač</td>
<td>(&lt; *tA) source</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

3 Agreement

Uralic languages tend to use directional forms more often than Indo-European languages. Most extreme cases are Finnish and Mari. In the combination V + DP, where V is a verb of change, Uralic tends to express the fact of change also in the
DP. This is very often unnecessary, and can lead to ambiguities.

(2) (Fi.) Rakennamme uuden hotellin Turkuun
build-we new hotel Turku-illa
We are building a new hotel in Turku.

(3) (Fi.) Ukko väsyi tie-lla.
old.man got.tired way-ALL
The old man got tired on (lit. onto) the road.

(4) (Fi.) Somap' on sota-han kuolla.
sweet is war-ALL to.die
It is sweet to die in (lit. into) war.

(5) (Fi.) Tää-ltä pyrkii haviämään tavoita.
this-ABL tends disappear things
From here, things tend to disappear.

(6) (Fi.) Metsästäjä ampui karhun metsä-än.
hunter shot bear forest-ILL
The hunter shot the bear in (lit. into) the forest.

(7) (Mari) w reassuringkiško ł̮̃oš̩̃̄wo išk.
The animal died in (lit. into) the water.

Examples (3), (4), (5), (6) show a directional that is quite unexpected from the standpoint of Indo-European. For example, in (3) the allative does not signal motion of the trajector (the man) onto the road; it signals merely a change of state. Likewise, the directional in (5) is not to be interpreted that the bear moves into the forest. In both cases therefore the cofinal M contributes not the meaning of change of place, as it normally does.

To resolve this, I propose here to view Finnish and Mari as languages exhibiting fact of change agreement. This means that the fact that something changes in these languages is expressed not only in the verb but also in DPs or PPs expressing the state (or place) of the trajector. Hence, that the DPs or PPs contain a directional makes no contribution to the pattern of motion (or change), it only signals that change occurs. Space limitations do not permit me to discuss the excellent [2]. Suffice it to say that the use of a directional in these ‘agreement’ construction does not signal motion of the trajector, but rather modify the aspect or the structuring of the event, or sometimes even future tense (Janne Saarikivi, p.c.).
4 Comparison

- Local Case Systems are similar to those found in Caucasian and Eskimo-Aleut, having a systematic three way distinction in mode.

- Inflecting postpositions I have not been able to attest elsewhere.

- A distinction between spatial and nonspatial nouns is found quite frequently and is a common source of adpositions and case endings.

- Uralic languages seem to put a strong emphasis on the distinction between stasis and change. Indo-European languages by contrast are happy to have lost the distinction.

- The preponderance for using directionals even when the meaning of change is already present in the verb is unique to some Uralic languages.

References


