

Transitivity pairs in Baltic: between Finnic and Slavic?

Languages differ as to which technique they prefer for marking (or not marking) an opposition of verbs including/excluding an external Causer in the event structure. This observation, first made by Vladimir Nedjalkov (Nedjalkov 1969; Nedjalkov & Silnitsky 1973: 26-27), has inspired several typological investigations (Haspelmath 1993; Nichols 1993; Nichols et al. 2004; Haspelmath et al. 2014; *Atlas of Transitivity Pairs* 2014).

In this paper we will examine transitivity pairs in the two modern Baltic languages Lithuanian and Latvian and compare them to neighboring Finnic (Finnish, Estonian) and Slavic (Russian, Polish) languages. Previous investigations as those cited above and preliminary work by these authors found that the main strategy in Slavic is to derive the intransitive (inchoative, non-causal) verb from the transitive (causal) verb, while Finnic often has a derived causative. The Baltic languages seem to be in a transition zone, where causative and anticausative strategies are of roughly equal importance. In some cases, the Baltic languages pattern with the Finnic ones (causative strategy), while in other instances the Baltic languages behave like Slavic ones (anticausative strategy). In addition, the Baltic languages stand out by a higher number of equipollent markings where either both verbs are underderived from a synchronic point of view, or both are overderived. Data for the six languages under investigation will be gathered and selected by the same method and principles, using dictionaries, questionnaires, corpus data, and interviews with native speakers. The point of departure is a set of twenty concepts inspired by the lists used in Haspelmath (1993) and Nichols et al. (2004). It has been designed in order to cover several semantic features that have been found to influence the choice of strategy, especially (i) typically human undergoer ('wake up') / typically inanimate undergoer ('open') / both types of undergoers ('change'), and (ii) typically spontaneous vs. non-spontaneous change of state ('melt' vs. 'open'). We also aim to account for the variation of strategies with regard to semantics and frequency in individual languages when the same or different roots are used.

In addition, the Baltic languages stand out by a higher number of equipollent markings where either both verbs are underderived from a synchronic point of view, or both are overderived. Data for the six languages under investigation will be gathered and selected by the same method and principles, using dictionaries, questionnaires, corpus data, and interviews with native speakers. The point of departure is a set of twenty concepts inspired by the lists used in Haspelmath (1993) and Nichols et al. (2004). It has been designed in order to cover several semantic features that have been found to influence the choice of strategy, especially (i) typically human undergoer ('wake up') / typically inanimate undergoer ('open') / both types of undergoers ('change'), and (ii) typically spontaneous vs. non-spontaneous change of state ('melt' vs. 'open'). We also aim to account for the variation of strategies with regard to semantics and frequency in individual languages when the same or different roots are used.

Data for the six languages under investigation will be gathered and selected by the same method and principles, using dictionaries, questionnaires, corpus data, and interviews with native speakers. The point of departure is a set of twenty concepts inspired by the lists used in Haspelmath (1993) and Nichols et al. (2004). It has been designed in order to cover several semantic features that have been found to influence the choice of strategy, especially (i) typically human undergoer ('wake up') / typically inanimate undergoer ('open') / both types of undergoers ('change'), and (ii) typically spontaneous vs. non-spontaneous change of state ('melt' vs. 'open'). We also aim to account for the variation of strategies with regard to semantics and frequency in individual languages when the same or different roots are used.

References

Haspelmath, Martin. 1993. More on the typology of inchoative / causative verb alternations. In [Studies in Language Companion Series, 23] Comrie, Bernard & Maria Polinsky (eds), 87-120. Amsterdam-Philadelphia: John Benjamins.

Haspelmath, Martin & Calude, Andreea & Spagnol, Michael & Narrog, Heiko & Bamyacı, Elif. 2014. Coding causal-noncausal verb alternations: a form-frequency correspondence explanation. *Linguistics* 50 (3): 587-625.

Nedjalkov, Vladimir. P. 1969. Nekotorye verojatnostnye universalii v glagol'nom slovoobrazovanii. In *Problemy i lingvističeskaja tipologija*, Igor' F. Vardul' (ed.), 106-114. Moskva: Nauka.

Nedyalkov, V. P. & G. G. Silnitsky. 1973. The typology of morphological and lexical causatives. In \_\_\_\_\_, Ferenc Kiefer (ed), 1–32. Dordrecht: Reidel.

Nichols, Johanna. 1993. Transitive and causative in the Slavic lexicon: Evidence from Russian. In \_\_\_\_\_, [Studies in Language Companion Series, 23] Bernard Comrie & Maria Polinsky (eds), 69–86. Amsterdam-Philadelphia: John Benjamins.

Nichols, Johanna, David A. Peterson & Jonathan Barnes. 2004. Transitivity and detransitivizing languages. \_\_\_\_\_ 8: 149–211.

\_\_\_\_\_. 2014. Tokyo: National Institute for Japanese Language and

<http://watp.ninjal.ac.jp/en/Linguistics>. (Available online at: \_\_\_\_\_).