

Verbs of falling in some Finno-Ugric languages through the lens of lexical typology

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The talk will be devoted to a subclass of motion verbs, namely to the verbs of falling. Falling is understood as an uncontrollable downward meaning without contact with a surface in the course of motion (cf. in English *fall*, *drop*, *plummet*, *plunge* etc.). Although this domain is part of the broader motion domain, it develops many specific semantic oppositions that are understudied in dictionaries and in the descriptive lexicological tradition.

Methodologically, I rely on the frame-based approach to lexical typology which suggests describing lexical semantics and comparing it cross-linguistically by studying lexical combinability and its constraints (see Rakhilina, Reznikova 2016 for details). The typological background for verbs of falling comes from Rakhilina et al. (eds.) 2020, Ryzhova et al. 2024, among others.

My sample includes those languages and language varieties, for which I have first-hand field data, mainly obtained by elicitation (as for secondary sources, they are taken into account where available, but contain many gaps). These are Hill Mari, Izhma Komi, Tatyshly Udmurt, and Shuryshkary Khanty. For Moksha and Kazym Khanty, I will quote some data from publications by other authors using the same theoretical approach (Zhornik, Egorova 2018; Vaneyan et al. 2020).

The semantic parameters that will be discussed in the talk include (but are not limited to) the following:

- Falling down from an upper surface vs. falling of a vertically oriented object located on the ground, cf. Tatyshly Udmurt *us'änä* for the former vs. *pögranâ* for the latter.
- Falling of liquids and free-flowing substances: colexification patterns of these frames with each other, with motion frames beyond falling and with falling of multiple objects, e.g. Hill Mari *viläš* related to free-flowing substances, or to overflowing liquids, or to small multiple objects of natural origin (leaves, apples etc.).
- Starting point of falling, cf. Hill Mari analytic item *läkt-än vaz-aš* (go_out-CVB lie_down-INF) which specifies falling out of a container.
- Frontness, e.g. Tatyshly Udmurt *kâmas'kânâ* which is restricted to falling on the front side.
- Relation between the domains of falling and other semantic domains, primarily sound (e.g. Izhma Komi ideophone-based verbs, such as *z'il'gys'ny* 'fall with clinking (glass, small metal

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objects)', *grimgys'ny* 'crash down (heavy object)') and destruction (e.g. Tatyshly Udmurt *kuaškanâ* 'collapse' or even three quasi-synonyms in Shuryshkary Khanty — *ărkəmtti*, *rəxhəmtti* and *laknəmtti*).

In the talk, I will elaborate on these points and discuss some more semantic oppositions, both comparing the systems within my language sample and evaluating them from a typological perspective.

References

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