

Actional classification of verbs in Kildin Saami

Maria Kosheleva (independent researcher, Moscow), whereamiactually@gmail.com

Sofya Rachinskaya (independent researcher, Moscow), sophya.rach@gmail.com

Our talk is devoted to the actional classification of verbs in Kildin Saami. We base our research on the procedure suggested by Tatevosov (2003, 2016). All the data were gathered by elicitation (translation and judgement tasks) in the village of Lovozero (Murmansk Oblast, Russia) in 2022-2024.

According to Tatevosov (2003, 2016), the actional class of a verb can be determined by analysing the range of interpretations available to it in the imperfective and perfective forms. We chose the Nonpast form as the prototypical imperfective form, and the Preterite form – as the perfective form (the Preterite can also have imperfective and habitual uses, so we had to additionally control the context). We did not use the Present Perfect verb form because it exhibits a range of highly diverse readings and demonstrates significant restrictions in its use.

The resulting set of actional classes of Kildin Saami verbs based on isolated lexemes (115 in total) shows little diversity: <ES, -> (achievement), <S, S> (state), <ES, S>, <ES S, S>, <EP, ->, <P, P> (activity), <ES, P> (accomplishment), <ES P, P> (accomplishment). Moreover, classes <ES, S>, <ES S, S> and <EP, -> are represented only by one lexeme each.

Such results suggest that the actional classification in Kildin Saami should be based on actional pairs or groups of verbs (as proposed by Sergei Tatevosov (2016) for Russian). Therefore, in Kildin Saami, aspect is lexical, but is, however, guided by principles other than those characteristic of many Slavic languages. Whereas in Slavic languages telic and atelic interpretations cannot be combined in one lexeme, in Kildin Saami the combination of ES and P interpretations is widely attested (about thirty verbs from our set). At the same time, in Kildin Saami, the combination of ES and S interpretations is quite marginal, whereas the combination of EP and P interpretations is not attested at all. Lexical aspect is not a widespread phenomenon in the Uralic languages and can be found only in Samoyedic languages (Bradley, Klumpp, & Metslang 2022). However, according to the authors, “development towards aspect proper in Uralic languages of Russia is a prospect”, of which Kildin Saami may be an instantiation.

Two or more verbs can constitute an actional group if they differ only in one aspectual derivation and no additional semantic component is added to the derived form. We will show that some of the aspectual derivations in Kildin Saami satisfy this principle and there are

certain tendencies observed in their distribution with respect to the actional class of a verb. For instance, suffix *-s-* forms ES interpretations from stative verbs, but derives delimitative interpretations from process verbs.

This classification also offers crucial insights into the behaviour of tenses and the inchoative suffix *-škued'd'-*. For instance, verbs with telic interpretation are able to have future time reference in the Nonpast form whereas atelic verbs have to use either the *al'l'ke* 'to begin' plus infinitive construction or the inchoative form of the verb (*-škued'd'-*). Additionally, the behaviour of the Present Perfect and the range of its possible interpretations hinges crucially on the actional classification.

In our talk, we will delve deeper into the actional classification of Kildin Saami verbs based on the actional pairs and groups and highlight peculiarities of their interaction with different tenses.

List of abbreviations

P – process, S – state, EP – entry into a process, ES – entry into a state.

References

- Bradley, J., Klumpp, G., & Metslang, H. (2022). TAM and evidentials. In Bakró-Nagy, M., Laakso, J., & Skribnik, E. (Eds.), *The Oxford Guide to the Uralic Languages* (pp. 904-923). Oxford University Press.
- Tatevosov, S. G. (2003). The parameter of actionality. *Linguistic Typology*, 6(3).
- Tatevosov, S. G. (2016). *Glagol'nye klassy i tipologija akcional'nosti. [Verbal classes and the typology of actionality]*. Moscow: Jazyki slavjanskoj kul'tury.