

### Variation and the development of Estonian parallel functional categories

The focus of this contribution is the parallel semantic development of the evidential and aspectual category and the variations of (historical) case at the interfaces. I propose to represent the gradient character of grammaticalization phenomena in terms of features and constraints in Lexical Functional Grammar, illustrated by an analysis of the aspectual and evidential partitive in Modern Estonian as in example (1).

(1) *Mari kuulis Jüri-t koju tule-va-t.*  
M[NOM] hear-3S.PST J.PART home.ILL come-PERS.PRES.PTCPL.PART  
'Mary heard how George came home/heard George come/coming home.'

Although a partitive agreement pattern (George - coming) may seem to be the most plausible synchronic analysis, I argue that while an agreement pattern may well be the historical starting point, in Modern Standard Estonian, two related but distinct developments explain the rise of the two instances of partitive in (1):

1. The partitive on the present personal participle *tule-va-t* is an instance of an evidential partitive: a marker in the Estonian evidential category that encodes the modal opposition between full (maximal) and insufficient (non-maximal) degree of evidence. Recently, the evidential category has developed an additional opposition based on perception types as illustrated by (1) and (2). A sentence with a base verb with the partitive evidential is anomalous if it combines with a visual perception matrix verb. Visual—but not auditory—evidence is full. The effect disappears with a base verb in the infinitive (2).

(2) *Mari nägi Jürit koju #tulevat / tulemas.*  
M[NOM] see-3S.PST J.PART home.ILL come-PPPPART come-MA\_INF  
Intended meaning: 'Mary saw George come home.'

2. The second ongoing development is the replacement of genitive with partitive on singular objects (Larjavaara 1991). It is exactly the opposition between maximal and non-maximal degree—in this case, the degree of the realization of an event—that underlies the Estonian aspectual category and the aspectual object case alternation (Tamm 2007). Instances of the aspectual partitive are the NPs *Jürit* 'George' in (1), (2), and (3).

(3) *Mari kuulis/nägi/uskus \*Jüri/Jürit.*  
M[NOM] hear/see/believe -3S.PST J.GEN/PART  
'Mary heard/saw/believed George.'

The data from the related Finnic languages and Estonian dialects suggest the following:

1) The development of the partitive evidential and the aspectual object has affected the Standard Modern Estonian more than its related languages or dialects. The Estonian NP partitive has spread into the abstract predicate categories (evidentiality, aspect) and has lost its original part/whole NP semantics, which prevails in several related languages and dialects. Therefore, several additional mapping details are required to supplement the previous Finnic accounts (Kiparsky 1998, Ackerman&Moore 2001, Asudeh 2003). Subsequently, several issues about functional categories emerge, such as whether predicate related functional categories should be represented as functional features or as semantic constraints attached to the entries representing the morphemes.

2) The grammaticalization of the category opposing the semantics of maximal versus non-maximal degree occurred first in the aspectual and only then in the evidential category (cf. Ikola 1953, Campbell 1991). Intuitively, the representation of the evidential and aspectual categories should be similar at a certain level.

3) The object in atelic sentences, which do not describe the maximal realization of an event, is partitive (3); however, the morphological encoding of the common argument in sentences with atelic mental epistemic verbs allows variation with genitive (4).

- (4) *Mari uskus Jüri/Jürit koju tulevat.*  
 M[NOM] believed-3S.PST J.GEN/PART home.ILL come-PPPPART  
 ‘Mary believed (thought) that George came/would come/was coming home.’

The morphological change replacing the genitive on aspectual objects with partitive has not affected all objects (4). Since the tests show that the argument is an object and the sentence atelic, the data leads to the question of how to account for the variation.

I propose the following approach to the related questions about functional categories, semantic parallels between functional categories and variation in case encoding.

1) I consider evidentiality and aspect as categories in Estonian on the basis of three criteria: their intuitive salience for native speakers, morphological encoding, and interaction with other morphologically encoded categories in Estonian, such as the mood categories. Grammaticalized meanings are represented by functional specifications that are associated with the lexical entries of the morphemes. The relevant information in the lexical entries is illustrated in (5) and (6).

- (5) **[partitive evidential]** (↑MOOD) = INDICATIVE  
 (↑EVIDENCE) # MAX  
 (6) **[aspectual partitive]** (↑CASE) = PARTITIVE  
 ((OBJ↑)EVENT) # MAX

The information attached to the lexical entries is mapped via the c-structure to the f-structure, which interfaces with semantics (s-structure) (Butt e.a. 1997).

2) The parallels in the evidential and aspectual categories are also represented as a peculiarity of Estonian. On the one hand, the parallel is represented in the functional specifications: there is a similar “non-maximal” value in the feature for both categories (5), (6). The feature fixes the lack of maximal evidence in evidentiality and the lack of maximal realization of the event in aspect. On the other hand, semantic co-descriptions can be added to the lexical entries of the two items, encoding several semantic and pragmatic meanings (indirectness, modality, etc) regardless of their perceived grammaticalization, including those that pertain to the grammaticalized opposition of maximal versus non-maximal degree of evidence or event realization.

3) Variation in the forms can be accounted for by case-related formal constraints on lexical predicate entries in the lexicon. For mental epistemic verbs, the constraint on the common argument that fixes the historical genitive for singular is optional. Perception verbs without variation include no case form related constraints.

These questions about the exact relationship between variation, the historical development of case semantics transferring to higher functional categories and the emergence of parallel semantics, the volatile relationship between aspect and mood/modality are unresolved issues in many frameworks. The presentation proposes an account of ongoing changes in Estonian that illustrate these problems. The proposal is to capture the historical developments, variation and parallel semantics by formal constraints on the forms in the lexicon, semantic co-descriptions on lexical items, and functional features associated with lexical items encoding the grammaticalized meanings.