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Verbs of Closing and Opening: Towards a Lexical Typology[11]

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This paper deals with the lexical typology of verbs which refer to closing (cf. English *close, shut, lock, cover,* etc.) and opening (*open, uncover, unlock, unwrap,* etc.). The former domain includes situations of preventing access to a static object by creating a barrier, whereas the latter deals with creating access to a static object by removing a barrier.

We adopt the frame-based approach to lexical typology (Rakhilina, Reznikova 2013, 2016; Koptjevskaja-Tamm et al. 2015), clustering the lexemes and the extralinguistic situations they describe by carrying out collocational analysis. Our current sample (to be enlarged) includes English, Swedish, Russian, Polish, Komi, Khanty, and Hill Mari. Our data sources are typological questionnaires, dictionaries and corpora.

This domain has not been studied in lexical typology so far with the exception of some initial contribution in Bowerman, Choi 2001; Bowerman 2005. However, this lexical area is important primarily due to its wealth of interacting arguments. Previous research on lexical typology mostly embraced situations with one or two participants, cf. all projects on qualities (e.g. Koptjevskaja-Tamm (ed.) 2015) focusing on the variation of a noun in an attributive construction, or on posture with Figure and Ground (Newman 2002), as well as animal sounds with Sound source (Rakhilina et al. (eds.) 2017), etc. For some domains their complicated argument structure was partly outside the research scope, cf. the discussion of cutting & breaking in Majid et al. 2007. Our domain includes a vast inventory of arguments: in addition to Subject ('**Mother** closed the house', '**The tree** obstructs the house') and Object ('to close **the door**'), it includes Blocked space ('to lock **the room**'), Instrument ('to cover a child **with a blanket**'), Type of access ('to close the room **to strangers**' – motion vs. 'to block **someone's view** of the entrance' / 'to hide the entrance **from sb's eyes**' – visual perception). In addition, these arguments may be tied in various relations, cf. contact of Blocked space and Instrument ('[to cry and] cover one's face with hands') vs. distance between them ('to cover one's face with hands [to protect it from a ball]'). Finally, different frames can have various argument sets,

cf. no Instrument for "self-closing" eyes or mouth. We will discuss how lexical typology can handle such patterns both with respect to our data and in a more general perspective.

In particular, we have singled out the following situations involved in lexical oppositions:

- Barrier in a building (door, window), sometimes requiring Instrument (cf. English *lock*).
- Barrier for the motion, cf. a special Russian verb *perekryt'* (*perekryt' vodu* 'to cut off the water', *perekryt' dorogu* 'to block the road').
- Barrier for the visual perception of a functional part (book, newspaper): cf. the use of Swedish dominant *öppna* 'to open' about a book and impossibility of *stänga* 'to close' (also dominant) in this context.
- "Self-closing" body parts (eyes, mouth), cf. Hill Mari *kəmaš* 'to close (eyes)' or Russian *zažmurit'* applicable only to eyes with the additional semantics of intensity.
- Covering (in contact with a surface), with further distinctions between complete and partial coverage, flexible and inflexible Instrument (see Khanty *laŋkti* 'to cover' requiring a flexible Instrument).
- Containers (pan, bag): sometimes the same verb as used for covering with sth. flexible.
- Hole (cf. Izhma Komi *tupkyny* for this frame only), with a possible difference between filling in a 3-D space (English *to plug*) and just covering a split or fracture in a flat surface (English *to seal*).
- Barrier for the visual perception or for impact, e. g. Polish *osłonić*

Some situations of closing can be conceptualized by lexemes from other domains, cf. the references to the same situation in Russian with a verb which primarily describes creating a barrier (*zakryt' zontik* 'lit.: to close an umbrella') or with a verb of changing shape (*složit' zontik* 'lit.: to fold an umbrella'). Examples of this kind (to be elaborated on in the talk) contribute to the discussion on how different domains are related and on the lexicalization process in general, see some background in Langacker 2013: 27–54.

Verbs of opening, as will be shown in the talk, are often asymmetrical to verbs of closing, which provides a cross-linguistic confirmation and some new perspectives to the idea of asymmetry between antonyms (Apresjan 1995; Croft, Cruse 2004). In our case the asymmetry concerns particular lexical collocations, the general structure of semantic oppositions, and constructional patterns.

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Language Change without Innovation

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In this paper, I would like to argue for an emergent view on language and language change as sketched by Hopper 1987. In contrast to structuralist tenets, which see language as a pre-established system that exists prior to usage ('langue', 'competence'), Emergent Grammar implies that the linguistic system "is always deferred, always in a process but never arriving, and therefore emergent" (Hopper 1987: 141).

While recent approaches to language change have taken the variability and the dynamic character of language into consideration, they have remained structuralist in spirit in that they still see language change as a transition between default stages ('while A becomes B, there is a transitory period in which A and B coexist'). Concepts like 'bridging contexts', 'switch contexts' (Heine 2002; Diewald 2002) and the idea of invited inferences (Traugott/Dasher 2002) suggest that, when a linguistic form changes its function or meaning, this requires contexts in which both, old and new function form part of the interpretation of an utterance. For example, English *since*, usually encodes causality on the basis of a temporal relation on the propositional level. This view has been a great advantage over earlier accounts on language change, in which change is simply seen as a difference between an earlier and a later "stage" in a language's history without making any statement on how form or meaning of expressions change.

This view, however, does not account for the fact (among other things) that those attestations of *since* which are unambiguously either exclusively temporal or exclusively causal, are extremely rare. In my talk, I would therefore like to go a step further. I will argue that the linguistic sign is inherently negotiable, underspecified and subject to interpretation. Rather than striving for logical clarity, interlocutors generally handle ambiguities through clues provided by the respective context. Language change, then, does not require innovation but 'recontextualization' – that is, the use of an existing sign / construction in a different context (rather than the use of a new or altered sign). I will discuss well-documented cases of language change and demonstrate that canonical types of changes (e.g. the grammaticalization / reanalysis in *I'm going to Zurich > I'm gonna like Zurich*) do not require any innovative behaviour on part of a speaker, but reflect the use of one and the same construction being