The interplay of conceptualization and case marking in the directional cases of Udmurt

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In this paper I investigate the conceptualization and marking of starting and endpoints in Udmurt (Uralic). More precisely, I investigate the conceptualization of starting and endpoints of events, and how the differences in conceptualization are reflected in the case marking in Udmurt.

The spatial case system of Udmurt has in addition to a four-way division between LOCATION, SOURCE, GOAL, and PATH a division in its SOURCE- and GOAL-cases, i.e. there are two SOURCE-cases (elative and egressive) and two GOAL-cases (illative and terminative). The previous literature has used the concept of "limit" to distinguish between the primary function of egressive/terminative from elative/illative (e.g. Bartens 2000: 104–109; Edygarova 2022: 512; Kondrat'eva 2011: 161–193). "Limit" is the spatial or temporal starting or endpoint of an action coded as a Landmark and marked by the appropriate case. Additionally, Kondrat'eva (2011: 174¬¬–175, 193) mentions the limit of scalar changes, e.g. temperature or price. An example of the spatial use of terminative is given in Example 1.

(1)   Udmurt dunne 16.03.2016 (Arkhangelskiy 2018)
*Karakulov-jos   Kazań-įśen   pįrak   **Śimferopol'-oź**   lob-izį   samol'ot-en.*
[name]-NOM.PL [name]-EGR   all.the.time **[name]-TERM**   fly-pst1.3pl plane-ins
'The Karakulovs flew all the time with a plane from Kazan' to Simferopol'.'

In Example 1 the movement expressed by the predicate ends when the Landmark is reached, and therefore terminative is expected. However, cases like Example 2 are also abundant. In this example, too, the movement ends when the Landmark is reached, but, unlike in Example 1, the endpoint is coded by illative. Similar pairs can also be given for elative and egressive.

(2)   Udmurt dunne 09.01.2016 (Arkhangelskiy 2018)
*No   mon   kot'ku   tod-i: odno   bert-o   **Iž-e,**   mįnam*
CNJ   1SG   always   know-PST1.1SG sometime   return-FUT.1SG **[name]-ILL** 1SG.GEN
ot-įn   anaj_ataj-e.
DMST-INE mother_father-POSS.1SG
'But I always knew that I will return to Izhevsk someday, I have my parents there.'

The difference between Examples 1 and 2 cannot be explained by invoking some limit that is reached in Example 1 but not in Example 2. Instead, I suggest that the difference between the use of "limit" and "non-limit" cases lies in the conceptualization of the situation, which has grammaticalized to a distinction made by cases. "Limit" cases tend to be used in contexts where the starting or endpoint needs to be explicitly coded, whereas "non-limit" cases are used when these can be inferred from the context.

I will concentrate on two phenomena affecting the conceptualization and their effect on the choice between the cases. These are:

1. The boundedness of the action (cf. Croft 2012: 70–126; Depraetere 1995). If the action has a natural starting or endpoint (or both), a "non-limit" case suffices to code the boundary of the action, as the starting or ending is expressed by the verb. This explains the difference between Examples 1 and 2, as the movement in Example 1 is not naturally bounded, whereas in Example 2 it is.

2. The properties of the Landmark (e.g. Coventry et al. 2010; Vandeloise 2007). The case is chosen depending on whether the Landmark has clear boundaries that can express the boundaries of the action, or not. Example 3 has a relational noun construction expressing a relational area (cf. Carlson 2010) as its Landmark. The Landmark does not have clear boundaries and gets marked by terminative.

(3)   Udmurt dunne 31.03.2010 (Arkhangelskiy 2018)
*Tulkįm-jos   vįl-ti   kat'er-en   Vajobįž kar ńimaśk-iś   **gureź***
wave-NOM.PL   top-PRL   motor.boat-INS [name]   city name-PRS.PTCP **mountain**
dor-oź   *širja-zį.*
vicinity-TERM wander-pst1.3pl
'They went [lit. wandered] with a motorboat along the waves up to the mountain that gives city of Vajobyzh its name.'

The proposed explanation generalizes over the previous analyses, as all the proposed "limits" (spatial, temporal, and scalar) can be seen as instances of a more universal tendency of grammatically coding similar conceptualizations in a unified manner.

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