



ELTE | FACULTY OF  
HUMANITIES

**International workshop on  
“Finite verbs as constructions. Usage-based  
cognitive linguistic perspectives”**

Program and Abstracts

Edited by Ágnes Kuna and Fruzsina Krizsai

24–25, June 2024

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Supported by NKFIH K 129040 Verbal constructions in Hungarian. Research in usage-based construction grammar (PI: Gábor Tolcsvai Nagy)

Organized/Hosted by ELTE DiAGram Research Centre for Functional Linguistics

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## PROGRAM

### 24 June 2024

9.45–10.00: Opening

*Chair: Szilárd Tátrai*

10.00–10.40 Jaakko Leino: The Finnish finite verb inside out

*10.40 Discussion*

11.00–11.40 András Imrényi: Self-similarity and multiple dimensions. The verb in a cognitive dependency grammar of Hungarian

*11.40 Discussion*

### 12.30 Lunch break

*Chair: Mária Ladányi*

14.00–14.40 László Palágyi: Describing verbal word-formation patterns. From generalizations to morphological metaconstructions

*14.40 Discussion*

15.00–15.40 Nikolett F. Gulyás: Challenges in the description of Komi-Permyak verbal categories

*15.40 Discussion*

16.00–16.40 Bernadett Modrián-Horváth: Productivity and paradigmaticity of a German construction: the case of the stative passive

*16.40 Discussion*

### 17.30 Workshop meeting

### 25 June 2024

*Chair: Krisztina Laczkó*

10.00–10.40 Tuomas Huumo: Epistemic grounding in the Finnish finite verb construction

*10.40 Discussion*

11.00–11.40 Gábor Tolcsvai Nagy: Semantic integration and epistemic grounding in the Hungarian verb constructions

*11.40 Discussion*

### **12.30 Lunch break**

*Chair: András Imrényi*

14.00–14.40 Ilona Tragel: The role of finite verbs in directing behaviour and organising interpersonal relations: the case of Estonian verbs on public signage

*14.40 Discussion*

15.00–15.40 Gábor Simon: Word form or lemma? Methodological case study with the from–to construction

### **Closing**

Nikolett F. GULYÁS (Eötvös Loránd University)

## Challenges in the description of Komi-Permyak verbal categories

The present talk aims at providing a brief overview on certain Komi-Permyak verbal categories using the recent results of the Typological Database of the Volga Area Finno-Ugric languages (VolgaTyp, see Havas et al. 2023) in order to increase the cross-linguistic visibility of the language which is still less described compared with its closest cognates, Komi-Zyrian and Udmurt.

Komi-Permyak verbs are inflected for person and number (of the S/A argument), tense, mood, evidentiality, and polarity. A single verb form can take five category markers; tense and mood markers may not appear at the same time (F. Gulyás 2023):

- (1) sija abu mun-öm(a)  
(s)he NEG go-PST2.3SG  
'(they say) (s)he did not go' (L. P.)

My talk will focus on both tense and mood categories, and I will try to answer the following questions:

- i) Is there a distinct synthetic future tense?
- ii) How many past tenses can we account for and what are their functions?
- iii) Is there a difference between the optative and the conditional?

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- Havas, Ferenc, Erika Asztalos, Nikolett F. Gulyás, Laura Horváth & Bogáta Timár 2023. Typological Database of the Volga Area Finno-Ugric Languages (VolgaTyp). Budapest: ELTE Finnugor Tanszék. (volgatyp.elte.hu) DOI: doi.org/10.21862/volgatyp

Tuomas HUUMO (University of Turku)

## Epistemic grounding in the Finnish finite verb construction

In the narrowest sense, the Finnish finite verb is a morphological word-form construction that combines a verb stem with certain inflectional affixes arranged in a rigid order. These affixes mark tense, mood, and person (with number). In a broader sense, the Finnish finite verb is a morphosyntactic construction that, besides the lexical main verb, comprises other elements in a multi-word predicate. These include the auxiliary *ole-* ‘be’, used in periphrastic tense and (some) modal constructions, the person-inflected negation verb *e-* used in negation, and some nonfinite verb forms which together with the finite verb constitute a multi-word verb predicate known as a *verb chain* (Hakulinen et al. 2004). In the most recent comprehensive account of Finnish syntax, Shore (2020) uses the notion *verb phrase* for such verb predicates, excluding the nominal arguments of the verbs.

After briefly addressing this layered nature of the Finnish finite verb construction, I focus on epistemic grounding as expressed by tense and mood in Finnish. I start with Langacker’s well-known epistemic model (e.g., Langacker 2008: 301; 2023; see also Brisard 2013) to illustrate the grounding functions of Finnish tense and mood markers. I present two elaborated versions of the epistemic model, the first one (#1) taking into account the conceptualizer’s (C) degree of certainty of the epistemic status of a profiled occurrence (as real vs. unreal), the other (#2) demonstrating how C has acquired information about the profiled occurrence (evidentiality). Lastly, I take a closer look at Finnish modal verbs, which (unlike their English counterparts) are inflected for tense/mood and person. I argue that their function is not merely that of grounding but the profiling of the epistemic assessment as a process, which is itself grounded by the morphological markers.

### References

- Brisard, Frank 2013. An account of English tense and aspect in Cognitive Grammar. In Kasia M. Jaszczolt & Louis de Saussure: *Time: Language, Cognition & Reality*. Amsterdam: John Benjamins.
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- Shore, Susanna 2020. *Lauseita ja vesinokkaeläimiä. Perinteisestä funktionaaliseen lauseoppiin*. Helsinki: SKS.

András IMRÉNYI (Eötvös Loránd University)

## **Self-similarity and multiple dimensions.**

### **The verb in a cognitive dependency grammar of Hungarian**

The talk discusses the role of Hungarian finite verbs as analysed in the cognitive dependency grammatical framework proposed by Imrényi (2017a,b). This approach characterises Hungarian finite clauses as self-similar, multi-dimensional networks. Here, self-similarity pertains to the observation that a Hungarian finite verb (or a small set of interconnected elements including it) acts as a 'clause within the clause', with its function resembling that of the clause as a whole. More specifically, in its unmarked default realisation, it serves as a schematic positive declarative clause. Thus, in addition to designating a grounded instance of a process type in what is called the D1 dimension of the clause, it is also central for determining illocutionary force and polarity in D2. The proposed multi-dimensional analysis of Hungarian finite clauses exhibits several parallels with Halliday's (2014) Functional Grammar and also with recent developments in Cognitive Grammar (Langacker 2015).

## **References**

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Jaakko LEINO (University of Helsinki)

## **The Finnish finite verb inside out**

The paper aims to present a grammatical construction (e.g. Hoffman & Trousdale 2013), at a high level of abstraction, which brings together the morphology and syntax (in terms of complements and adjuncts) of the Finnish finite verb, and to consider what such an approach would lead in terms of grammatical description.

The approach is threefold. First, the construction presents the internal structure of the Finnish finite verb, in terms of its morphological structure and morphotactic restrictions, largely as described in traditional grammars (notably Hakulinen et al. 2004) and loosely in the spirit of Construction Morphology (Booij 2010). Second, it addresses the external structure of the verb complex, i.e. the syntactic combinatorics of the verb, both in terms of its complements (in relation to the verb's valency, cf. Goldberg 1995) and possible adjuncts (which are largely independent of the valency and, therefore, the specific verb; cf. Fillmore 1994). Third, it makes some predictions concerning the ordering of the verb and its complements and adjuncts, and the associated information structural implications (cf. Kuningas & Leino 2006).

While such a construction may be claimed to be a generalization of a sentence rather than a verb, the paper specifically assumes the finite verb as the focus and point of departure, and represents all the aforementioned elements as extensions or, indeed, parts of the finite verb complex.

Needless to say, the presentation can only offer a provisional picture of the highly complex construction. The aim is to provide a proof of concept, rather than a comprehensive description, and also to discuss the problem of delimitation in morphosyntactic description.

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Bernadett MODRIÁN-HORVÁTH (Eötvös Loránd University)

## **Productivity and paradigmaticity of a German construction: the case of the stative passive**

German finite verbs are traditionally seen as expressing five categories: person/number, tense, mood, and voice. They, simplistically put, open up a position in a paradigmatic system that needs to be filled. From a usage-based perspective, however, paradigmaticity is modelled more in terms of connection strength (cf. Bybee 1985, among others).

This presentation examines the paradigmaticity of the German stative passive from a usage-based point of view. This type of passive (known as Zustandspassiv) seems to occupy a unique position. Historically, it was the default German passive construction until the Middle High German period (see Eroms 1992). Today, however, it is widely considered a marginal type of passive (Welke 2024) or not part of the verbal paradigm at all (Maienborn 2007; Lasch 2016; Duden 2022, etc.). The presentation aims to empirically investigate this issue. The underlying hypothesis is that there is a strong relationship between productivity and paradigmaticity, partially confirmed by Gaeta (2007). The method adopted here is a global productivity measure of the German passive forms.

### **References**

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László PALÁGYI (Eötvös Loránd University)

## **Describing verbal word-formation patterns.**

### **From generalizations to morphological metaconstructions**

In recent decades, the concept of a paradigmatic organization of derivational structures has become increasingly widespread (Becker 1993; Booij 2023; Bonami & Strnadová 2019; Fernández-Domínguez et al. eds. 2020; Furdík 2004; Hathout & Namer 2019, 2022). A usage-based, construction grammatical theory of morphological structures is also gaining ground, according to which derivatives are instances of word-level, schematic form-meaning pairings (i.e. constructions) (Booij 2010; Booij & Audring 2017). While approaches that emphasize networking and paradigmaticity foreground the fact that a derivative can have multiple base words, the schema-based approach is also appropriate for describing how a derivative can elaborate a schema without direct reference to other words or other (more common, more regular) ways of elaboration (see Nessel 2017). The paradigmatic approach investigates motivation in the coherent pattern of derivational structures. The constructionist one other, by contrast, focuses on the motivation behind a particular schema, which different words may elaborate differently. This duality can be grasped by a distinction between source-oriented and product-oriented generalizations (Bybee 1985, 2001; Kapatsinsky 2009), which will be outlined in the presentation. I also argue that verbal derivational constructions can be classified according to the varying importance of these generalizations. E.g., Hungarian compound verbs, English compound verbs, and nominalized Dutch particle verbs may be characterized by predominantly source-oriented generalizations that concern the scope and the nature of mapping. However, the relevant constructions generalize very little information about the formal output of the words in question. Accordingly, there are derivational constructions, for instance, some Hungarian onomatopoeic verbs, that represent the other end of the scale. These verbs may predominantly be characterized by product-oriented formal generalizations.

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## Word form or lemma? Methodological case study with the from–to construction

The paper discusses the methodological question of what level of data sampling and data analysis provides more precise results in corpus-based construction extraction: the word form or the lemma? (Cf. Brunner & Steyer 2009) The latest collostructional analyses of Hungarian verbal constructions (e.g. Simon 2022; Kalivoda et al. 2024) demonstrated that the analyst might arrive at more general patterns on the lemma level, which makes it easier to description of the variability of the construction under analysis. Still, these results hide some specific but not irrelevant details (like the differences between the *szeret* 'love' lemma and its conditional form *szeretne* 'would love' in terms of word order patterns).

As an illustrative example, I sample all the verbal elements occurring in the “from–to” construction (e.g., *nézi kerettől keretig* 'look it from frame to frame', *lehallgatástól kihallgatásig gyalázod* 'you vilify her/him from interrogation to interrogation', *akinek a neve ismerősen cseng Ausztráliától Amerikáig* 'whose name sounds familiar from Australia to America') from the new version of the HNC corpus both as verb forms and as lemmata. Then a simple collexeme analysis (Stefanowitsch & Gries 2003) is performed on these two groups of potential collexemes of the construction. The construction seems to be an ideal candidate for investigating the optimal level of generalisation in data sampling since it occurs in the corpus with a relatively small number of instantiations, and its meaning is specific enough on the one hand, and on the other hand, it has some extent of semantic variability. Thus, the differences in data will potentially lead us to observe the consequences of the alternative sampling methods and make it possible to define the optimal level of generalisation.

### References

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## **Semantic integration and epistemic grounding in the Hungarian verb constructions**

The Hungarian finite verb form expresses a complex grammatical content: its inflectional elements indicate tense, mood, person, and number. These grammatical elements have a grounding function, they designate a specific instance of the temporal process marked by the verb. However, the grounding elements do not have the same ontological status (the internal structure of the base is heterogeneous). While, for example, tense refers to the specific relationship between conceived time and processing time (a relationship between durations), person and number refer to things, i.e. for something that corresponds to one of the schematic figures of the verb, in some elaboration relationship. Therefore, in the Hungarian finite verb form, person and number are not only grounding elements, but also semantic components that denote things, because in the case of Hungarian it is not necessary to name the thing separately with a noun or a pronoun. In Hungarian, person and number also fulfil a function similar to the personal pronoun, as a result of semantic integration:

- (i) they play a nominal role in the clause (marking the participants named or implied in the clause or discourse section),
- (ii) name a thing schematically, with the highest level of semantic abstraction, and at the same time
- (iii) function as a grounding element, refer to an instance accessible in the discourse (often in an anaphoric relation).

The features listed show that in the Hungarian finite verb form person and number marked grammatically (with an inflectional element) are schematic elaborations of the schematic figures of the verb, and semantic integration takes place between them in addition to instantiation. The first and second persons are intrinsically deictic, i.e. they can only be named and grounded as things deictically. This determines the complex grammatical characteristics of the two forms, while the third person is not necessarily deictic.

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Ilona TRAGEL (University of Tartu)

## **The role of finite verbs in directing behaviour and organising interpersonal relations: the case of Estonian verbs on public signage**

Public signs function as speech acts which have an illocutionary force to organise the world. Since the texts on the signs are usually short, the verbs and their grammatical markers have a particularly important role in conveying the meaning and influencing the reader's behaviour (Tragel & Pikksaar 2023). Behavioural directives are usually issued in the imperative, the singular form of which has zero marking in Estonian (e.g. *tule!* 'come:IMP2SG') – but despite the lack of overt morphological marking, they are still grounded in the speech act pragmatically (Langacker 2008: 474). On the other hand, some of the first person forms of verbs like *palun/palume* 'ask', *tänan/täname* 'thank' and *vabandan/vabandame* 'apologise' are gradually becoming more lexicalised (Tragel & Habicht 2023) and thus losing their grounding (e.g. *Vabandame ebamugavuste pärast* 'We apologise for inconveniences').

Over the past four years, I have gathered and analysed different grammatical phenomena on the public signs: grammatical person, imperative, lexicalisation of finite verbs, interpersonal relations, perception of commitment, and crosslinguistic differences. The pandemic with its abundance of public restrictions and requirements (e.g. wearing a mask or maintaining social distance) offered plenty of material for quantitative grammatical research of signs. Those results can be expanded to other written messages in the public space. In the talk I will give an overview of some relevant lines of research regarding finite verbs on public signs. I will also briefly share my experiences from compiling a linguistic database with artefacts from public space.

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