Expressing Space in Estonian

Synonymous Locative Constructions in Estonian

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Parallell Use of Locative Cases and Adpositional Constructions

“The vase is on the table”

1) Locative Case Cx: Vaas on laual.
vase:nom be:prs:sg3
table:ade

2) Adpositional Cx: Vaas on laual peal.
vase:nom be:prs:sg3

Grammatical Synonymy

  => there is no (absolute) synonymy in language

• The Principle of No Synonymy:
  “If two constructions are syntactically distinct, they must be semantically or pragmatically distinct” (Goldberg 1995: 67)

• The concept of construal: one and the same situation may be construed in alternative ways (Langacker 1987: 138-141, 2008: 55-89).
  – It may be hypothesised that locative cases and adpositions are means to express one and the same situation from a different perspective.
**General Prediction**

- Case affixes are used to express more abstract relations and adpositions more concrete ones:
  - **Adpositions** are semantically more specific than cases and they are used to express the less predictable spatial meanings;
  - **Cases**, on the other hand, are more abstract and used to express more frequent spatial meanings.


**The Data**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Adessive</th>
<th>Peal</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Synonymous occurrences</td>
<td>300</td>
<td>300</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-synonymous occurrences</td>
<td>1397</td>
<td>268</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total nr of instances analysed</td>
<td>1697</td>
<td>568</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**The Variables Coded**

Total number of variables coded: **32**

- 1 dependent variable → realization of the locative phrase: “ade”, “peal”
- 31 independent variables:
  1. **Semantic (21 variables)**: properties of Tr and Lm (animacy, countability, mobility, size, number, meaning group, type), type of relation between Tr and Lm, relative size between Tr and Lm, type of contact between Tr and Lm
  2. **Morpho-phonological (3 variables)**: lexical complexity of LmP, length of the LmP in words and syllables
  3. **Syntactic (7 variables)**: word order, clause type, verb, syntactic function of LmP, word class of Tr/Lm

**Length of the Lm phrases in syllables**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>ade</th>
<th>peal</th>
<th>shorter Lm phrases</th>
<th>longer Lm phrases</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 syllable</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>125</td>
<td>91</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 syllables</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>71</td>
<td>129</td>
<td>105</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 syllables</td>
<td>61</td>
<td>93</td>
<td>158</td>
<td>108</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 syllables</td>
<td>63</td>
<td>98</td>
<td>163</td>
<td>112</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 syllables</td>
<td>76</td>
<td>127</td>
<td>169</td>
<td>119</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\[ c^2(18, N = 600) = 88.79, p < .001 \]

**Length of the Lm phrase in words**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>ade</th>
<th>peal</th>
<th>shorter Lm phrases</th>
<th>longer Lm phrases</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 word</td>
<td>102</td>
<td>123</td>
<td>114</td>
<td>114</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 words</td>
<td>113</td>
<td>129</td>
<td>119</td>
<td>119</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 words</td>
<td>114</td>
<td>133</td>
<td>123</td>
<td>123</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 words</td>
<td>114</td>
<td>132</td>
<td>120</td>
<td>120</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 words</td>
<td>114</td>
<td>130</td>
<td>119</td>
<td>119</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\[ c^2(6, N = 600) = 50.2, p < .001 \]

(1) **MU: A**: **Kai peal** oli meeletu trigmine...
(2) **IJU1980vykki0105**: Ja seal need isandad tal divinantoolide on. And there his masters are, on the couch chairs.

(3) **MU: A**: **Kai peal** oli meeletu trigmine...
(4) **IJU1980vykki0105**: ... seisaab mingi kirikut meenutava hoone trepil ... he/she is standing on the steps of some building that looked like a church.
**Lexical complexity of the Lm**

compounds -> *adessive*

\[ c(1, N = 600) = 56.57, p < .001 \]

**Type of Lm**

location -> *adessive*

object -> *peal*

\[ c(3, N = 600) = 11.86, p = .007 \]

(5) ILU1980\stkt0063: Hele kolmnurk rüdupirandal suurenes tasapisi.

The light triangle on the balcony floor was slowly growing.

(10) ilu1980\stkt0038: Järve liikumatuses hakkab inimene *tenet koldet* kohe silma.

In the stillness of the lake you notice the person on the other side immediately.

(11) PB_S: Istusin *laupa peal*.

I was sitting on the desk.

**Mobility of Lm**

mobile *Lms* -> *peal*

static *Lms* -> *adessive*

\[ c(2, N = 600) = 29.07, p < .001 \]

(6) HK_L: Elektripliidi kõrval kapi peal oli veekeetja.

There was a kettle on the cupboard next to the stove.

(7) ILU1980\stkt0063: Hele kolmnurk rüdupirolal suurenes tasapisi.

The light triangle on the balcony floor was slowly growing.

(12) ILU1980\stkt0111: Kohiramm veetis suurema osa ajast *üksikul saarel*...

Kohiramm spent the majority of his time on an isolated island.

**Relative Size between Tr and Lm**

large *Lm* -> *adessive*

small *Lm* -> *peal*

\[ c(5, N = 600) = 21.77, p < .001 \]

(13) KR_M: "Lülitage sinna eemale, selles *kiiste peal* on mõnis itedla..."

"Let's walk there, it is nice to sit there on the rocks..."

**Plural vs. singular Tr**

plural *Tr* -> *adessive*

\[ c(2, N = 600) = 15.81, p < .001 \]

(14) ILU1980\stkt0023: Paigald *küünarnukid* ja *kõlmedel* tükiksid lahti...

Patches on the elbows and flaps started to come apart...
Conclusions (1):

- **Adposition peal** tends to be used when:
  - the Lm phrase is shorter than 5 syllables
  - the Lm phrase is shorter than 3 words
  - Lm is mobile
  - Lm ≤ Tr
  - Lm is small
  - Lm is an object
  - Lm is animate
  - Lm and/or Tr is a pronoun

> Adpositions are more specific than case

Conclusions (2):

- **Adessive** is used more frequently when:
  - the Lm phrase is longer than 5 syllables
  - the Lm phrase is longer than 3 words
  - Lm is a compound
  - Lm is static
  - Lm > Tr
  - Lm is large
  - Lm is a location
  - Tr is plural

> Cases are more abstract than adpositions

Further Issues:

- **Correlational analysis**
- **More corpus data**: spoken language
- **Further experimental studies** — both linguistic and meta-linguistic
- **Other factors**:
  - Language acquisition (both L1 and L2)
  - Idiolect & dialect
  - Register
  - Language history

(16) Krüus, S: ... laev, mille peal nad seal lõunas lõbusõitu tegid, läks põhja ...
... the ship, on which they were cruising there on the sea there in the south, sank ...

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>LocPh</th>
<th>comp</th>
<th>lexeme</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ade</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>0.67</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>peal</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.00</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>LocPh</th>
<th>comp</th>
<th>lexeme</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ade</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0.2</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>peal</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>6</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>LocPh</th>
<th>compound</th>
<th>lexeme</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ade</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>0.42</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>peal</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0.18</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
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</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>LocPh</th>
<th>notap</th>
<th>plural</th>
<th>singular</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ade</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.00</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>peal</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0.09</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

skyl vs laul vs laua peal ‘on the table’
References


THANK YOU!

A synonym is a word you use if you can’t spell the other one.

Burt Bacharach (1928 - ) US songwriter