The variation of conjugation types in Erzya perception verbs

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1. Introduction

Transitive verbs have two conjugation paradigms in Erzya: the subjective and the objective conjugation. Verbs in the subjective conjugation agree with the subject in person and number, whereas verbs in the objective conjugation agree with both the subject and the object in person and number. The choice of conjugation type correlates with the definiteness of the object and with aspect. The objective conjugation can be used only with definite objects, and it generally has a perfective interpretation.

According to previous research, the semantics of verbs also influences the choice of conjugation type. Cognitive and perception verbs are used in the objective conjugation, even when they express a continuing state (Alhoniemi 1994: 147–148; Cypkajkina 2007: 60–61). This would suggest that cognitive and perception verbs are always in the objective conjugation with definite objects, since aspect does not play a role in the choice of their conjugation type. Nevertheless, a deeper insight into the corpus of the literary language reveals that the conjugation type of perception verbs does indeed vary even with definite objects. This paper aims to examine this variation and determine the contexts, in which the different conjugation types are used. The research is based on extensive empirical material collected from the corpus of modern literary Erzya. The data suggest that perception verbs in the objective conjugation express an actual state of affairs, whereas the subjective conjugation describes generalized and habitual sentences, and it is frequently used in contexts, in which either the stimulus or the perceiver is not present in the setting. Furthermore, the paper provides an insight into the use of frequentative suffixes and the second past tense to express habituality, as well as their influence on the choice of conjugation type.

The structure of this paper is as follows. I provide a detailed discussion of transitive sentences in Erzya and its devices to express tense and aspect in Section 2, where I outline the background for this paper and highlight the shortcomings of earlier research that should be investigated in more detail. The data and methodology are described in Section 3. In Section 4 I discuss the major findings of this study and present the contexts in which variation between the two conjugation types emerges. Section 5 provides a conclusion for this paper.

2. Background

2.1. Transitive sentences in Erzya

The focus of this paper is on the structure of transitive sentences in Erzya and the variation that occurs in them. In transitive sentences, the case marking of objects and the conjugation of verbs display variation. These variations are primarily influenced by definiteness and aspect. (See Salamon 1989; Alhoniemi 1991; Grünthal 2008.)

Definiteness is to be understood in semantic terms with relation to differential object marking in Mordvinic. In these terms, definite NPs have identifiable referents. The semantic description of definiteness is important, since definite NPs have different formal marking depending on their word class, semantics and even the genre of the text. (See Bernhardt 2020.)

Definite objects are most frequently in the genitive case. The original genitive and accusative cases have fused in Mordvinic; I refer to the resulting case as the genitive case, following the established convention. Indefinite objects are typically left without case marking.

Differential object marking with finite verbs is illustrated in (1).[1] The object is indefinite in (1a) and is in the nominative case. In (1b) and (1c), the object is definite, and is further marked for definiteness and possessivity. Common nouns are typically marked either for definiteness or possessivity; nevertheless, in folklore texts some types of common nouns can also be in the basic declension genitive, which is unmarked for definiteness (Markov 1964: 79–81; Salamon 1989: 92). Proper names and most members of the pronominal category also take the basic declension genitive as objects, which is shown in (1d).

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[1] The case marking of objects follows different patterns with non-finite verbs (see Bartens 1979). As this paper focuses only on finite verb forms, I do not discuss object marking with non-finite verbs here.

(1a)[2] *ram-i-ń*   ***alaša***
         buy-PST-1SG   horse.NOM
         'I bought a horse.'

(1b) *ram-i-ja*   ***alaša-ńt'***
      buy-PST-1SG>3SG   horse-DEF.GEN
      'I bought the horse.'

(1c) *ram-i-ja*   ***alaša-n-zo***
      buy-PST-1SG>3SG   horse-GEN-POSS.3SG
      'I bought his/her horse.'

(1d) *ńe-i-ja*   ***Maśa-ń***
      see-PST-1SG>3SG   M.-GEN
      'I saw Maša.'

As the examples in (1) show, the conjugation type of the verb also varies according to definiteness. The verb in (1b-d) is in the objective conjugation and agrees with both the subject and the object in person and number. The verb can take the objective conjugation with most nominals that are in the genitive case and have identifiable referents and behaves in the same way with all types of definite objects, including personal names and pronouns. Thus, the declension type of the noun does not influence the conjugation type of the verb, but identifiability and case marking does.

Verbs in the objective conjugation can express the person and number of both subject and object. Therefore, using personal pronouns with verbs in the objective conjugation is not necessary. Personal pronouns in these contexts are often used in an emphatic or contrastive sense (Salamon 1989: 97; Bernhardt 2020).

The conjugation type of verbs can vary with definite objects, and this variation correlates with the aspectual interpretation of the sentence, as in (2a-b) (see Koljadenkov 1954: 193). In (2a), both the perfective and the imperfective readings are possible, while (2b) has a perfective reading only.

(2a) *veď-eńť*   ***kand-i-ń***
      water-DEF.GEN   carry-PST-1SG
      'I was carrying the water/I carried the water'

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[2] Aleksandr Danilčev (p.c.)

(2b) *ved'-eńt'*   *kand-i-ja*
water-DEF.GEN   carry-PST-1SG>3SG
'I carried the water' (Koljadenkov 1954: 193)

The definite object can also take the inessive case. The verb can only take the subjective conjugation with inessive objects, and these structures describe imperfective events (Alhoniemi 1991: 27–29; Bernhardt 2016: 63–80). In the literary language, the inessive is most frequently used in analytic constructions, where the case is marked by the postposition *ej-se* and the noun is in the genitive preceding it, e.g. *skal-ońt' ej-se* (cow-DEF.GEN PP-INE) 'in the cow'. Person can be encoded on the postposition with possessive suffixes, making personal pronouns unnecessary with inessive objects, e.g. *ej-se-nze* (PP-INE-POSS.3SG) 'in him'. The genitive object and the postpositional construction with *ejse* are interchangeable without affecting the semantics of the sentence, at least in some contexts (see Bernhardt forthcoming). In Bernhardt 2020, I observe that reference to person is often encoded with the postposition *ejse*, but that this construction is used with pronouns infrequently.

2.2. Tense and aspect

Tense and aspect are closely related categories having to do with time. Aspect is a characterization of the progress of an event in time, whereas tense locates the event in time (Hewson 2012: 511). This section introduces previous descriptions of the Erzya tense and aspect system and its relation to other languages.

Tense is a formal category that locates the event in time with respect to the moment of speech or another reference point. Grammars on Mordvinic distinguish the present,[3] the first and second past tenses and the future tense (Cypkajkina 2000: 158–164). The present tense refers to actions that occur simultaneously with the present moment or after it. The analytic future tense is formed with the auxiliary *karmams* 'shall; start' and the *-mO* non-finite form of the main verb (Naďkin 1980: 293; Cypkajkina 2000: 164). The ana-

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[3] In Mordvinic grammatical descriptions the term for 'present' varies. Grammars written in Russia prefer the term 'present (future) tense' (Russian *настоящее (будущее) время*, Erzya *неень (сыця) шкась*, e.g. Naďkin 1980; Cypkajkina 2000; 2007). In the Western research tradition, the term 'present tense' is used more widely (e.g. Alhoniemi 1994; Bartens 1999; Keresztes 2011). The present tense of Mordvinic languages can be considered a 'non-past tense' typologically, as it encodes both present and future time reference.

lytic future tense is not discussed in this paper, as the variation of conjugation type is displayed only in the auxiliary.

Aspect is characterized in previous research in different ways, focusing on either its semantic features or formal expression. Languages may have distinct grammatical or syntactic devices to express aspectual oppositions, which characterize the progress of an event in time (Comrie 1976: 6). Previous research on Mordvinic focuses on the formal marking of aspectual oppositions and describes the semantics of these elements. According to previous research, aspectual oppositions can be marked by the variation of verbal conjugation, which is within the scope of this paper, and by verbal derivation, which is touched upon only briefly in this study (Naďkin 1980).

It must be noted that verbal conjugation correlates with other factors as well, especially with the definiteness of the object. As mentioned in 2.1, the objective conjugation can occur only if the object is definite. With definite objects, the subjective conjugation expresses a continuous, ongoing event, whereas the objective conjugation expresses a completed one (Naďkin 1980: 283; Matjuškin 1980: 317). However, several semantic classes of verbs do not follow this pattern. According to previous research, cognitive and perception verbs can be in the objective conjugation with reference to ongoing situations occurring simultaneously with the time of speech (Alhoniemi 1994: 147–148; Cypkajkina 2007: 60–61). For this reason, perception and cognitive verbs are considered exceptional, as the present tense of the objective conjugation encodes essentially future time reference in other verb classes (Naďkin 1980: 290; Cypkajkina 2007: 51–60).

Previous research on Mordvinic shows that the variation of conjugation types correlates with the completedness of the action, with the objective conjugation focusing on the result of the action. This interpretation of aspect is unsatisfactory to describe the behavior of perception verbs, as these verbs do not characterize events that could be completed. Furthermore, it falls short of explaining why perception verbs are most frequently in the objective conjugation with definite objects. Thus, I propose that aspect should be considered in a different way to obtain a more profound view on the strategies for encoding aspectual oppositions in Mordvinic.

In this paper, I consider aspect as a semantic category, where the lexical aspect of verbs and the boundedness of the situation correlate. A similar approach is introduced in Salamon (1989: 105), who observes that the objective conjugation focuses on the temporariness and boundedness of the event, whereas the subjective conjugation typically describes a general state of affairs. Situations can thus be either bounded or unbounded. Bounded situa-

tions have a starting or an ending point or both, and they are temporary. Unbounded situations are conceived as persistent situations without boundaries. The boundaries of situations are represented in different ways depending on the semantic classes of verbs. To reveal the semantic distinctions expressed by verbal conjugation, I first consider how the boundaries of the situation are expressed. Second, I consider cases where the boundaries are unexpressed and define the possible interpretations of the two conjugation types in these sentences. This approach leads to a better understanding of how perception is expressed in Erzya.

The properties of perception verbs are also a central issue in this paper. Markov (1964: 71) observes that cognitive and perception verbs in the objective conjugation are typically used in an inchoative meaning, i.e. they express events that are bounded from their starting point. This approach clarifies some issues related to the choice of conjugation type for perception verbs, but it also has some shortcomings.

In this section and in the following sections of this paper, I consider tense and aspect marking together, as they are often intertwined. In the following subsections, the time reference of the present and past tenses is considered first (2.1.1. and 2.1.2). Furthermore, genericity, habituality and iterativity are discussed in 2.1.3, which also relate to the interpretation of aspect.

2.2.1. The present tense

The present tense typically refers to situations that start before the present moment and continue afterwards. This is unsurprising, as the present moment is a single moment on the timeline. Nevertheless, situations that are encoded with a verb in the present tense cover the present moment as well (Comrie 1985: 36–41). In languages that only have a past vs. present distinction, the same tense encodes both present and future time references (Comrie ibid. 48–50).

In Erzya, the present tense is formally unmarked. It encodes a situation that occurs either simultaneously or following the present moment. Nevertheless, verbal conjugation also influences the interpretation of time reference. The subjective conjugation carries both present and future time reference, whereas the objective conjugation typically refers to situations occurring in the future (Naďkin 1980: 290; Cypkajkina 2007: 51–60).

The correlation between the conjugation type and tense can be explained by the fact that present time reference is essentially imperfective, as it denotes events in progress. Therefore, in languages that systematically mark

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aspectual oppositions, e.g. Russian, perfective forms in the present tense are interpreted as having a future time reference (Comrie 1976: 66).

Depending on context, the present tense in Erzya can also refer to events occurring in the past. This function is referred to in previous literature as the 'historical present' (Russian *настоящее историческое*) (Cypkajkina 2007: 31). The two conjugation types have different interpretations with regards to past time reference.

The objective conjugation in the present tense often occurs together with the conjunction *kodak* 'when' in past contexts. Typically, punctual verbs are used in these contexts and they express a sudden event, as in (3) (Alhoniemi 1994: 149; Cypkajkina 2007: 60).

(3) *Kodak*   **vačkoď-si**   *ćora-ńť*   *pŕa*   *langa,*
     when   strike-PRS.3SG>3SG   boy-DEF.GEN   head   on

     tona-ń   *śeske*   *mašť-ś*   *jožo-zo.*
     that.one-GEN   immediately   lose-PST.3SG   sense-POSS.3SG
     'When he struck (lit. strikes) the boy on the head, he lost consciousness immediately.' (Cypkajkina 2007: 60)

The present tense of the subjective conjugation is used to refer to slightly different types of events. According to Cypkajkina (2007: 31), using the present tense in past contexts enlivens the action. In Bernhardt (2016: 65), I observe that completed and punctual events are expressed with a verb in the past tense, and the subjective conjugation in the present tense expresses an ongoing event in these contexts. In (4), the verbs in the present tense describe continuing events, while the verb in the past tense implies that the situation occurred in the past.

(4) *T'ejt'eŕ-eś*   *t'eje-v-ś*   *kiľej-ks,*   *Pandaj –*   *viŕ-eń*   *van-ića*
     girl-DEF   make-PASS-PST.3SG   birch-TRSL   P.   forest-GEN   guard-PTCP

     aťa-ks,   *keď-se-nze*   *užeŕ-ńe,*   *jak-i*   *viŕ-ga-ńť'*
     old.man- TRSL   hand-INE-POSS.3SG   axe-DIM   walk-PRS.3SG   forest-PROL-DEF

     di   **ćapo-i**   *al-do*   *ašť-ića*   *tarat-ke-ť-ńe-ń.*
     and   chop-PRS.3SG   below-ABL   be-PTCP   branch-DIM-PL-DEF-GEN
     'The girl turned into a birch tree, and Pandaj into a forest guarding man, who walks through the forest with an axe in his hands and chops the low-hanging branches.' (Bernhardt 2016: 65)

The present tense refers to events occurring in the present, future or past. The verbal conjugation in the present tense correlates with both aspect and time reference. Perception verbs in the present tense are discussed in Section 4.1.

2.2.2. The first and the second past tenses

The past tense refers to situations that take place before the present moment. Situations in the past can be either bounded or unbounded. The variation of the conjugation type does not influence the interpretation of time reference. The objective conjugation refers to completed events (see e.g. Cypkajkina 2007: 65–66), whereas the subjective conjugation can refer to both completed and incomplete events in the past. With definite objects, the subjective conjugation refers to incomplete actions as a rule.

The first and second past tenses express aspectual oppositions instead of a difference in time reference, as both past tenses refer to events that occurred prior to a reference point in time. The first past tense characterizes events that happen before the reference point, which may be either the present moment or a moment in the past (Cypkajkina 2007: 43–45).

The second past tense is a marker of past habituality in Erzya. Habituality describes situations that are characteristic features of a person or object for a certain period of time. Habituality may include the meaning of repetition, but it can also express a situation that is a characteristic feature for the time period (a more detailed discussion of habituality is provided in Section 2.2.3). According to Cypkajkina (2007: 48–50, 68–69), these are the typical functions of the second past tense in Erzya. Past habituality including a repetitive meaning is illustrated in (5) and with a prolonged meaning in (6).

(5) *Veľe-ń   eŕ-ića-ť-ńe   sval   **jak-ś-iľ-ť'**   tov*
    village-GEN   live-PTCP-PL-DEF   always   go-FREQ-PST2-PL   there.LAT

   tundo-ń   iľťa-mo,   kize-ń   vasto-mo.
   spring-GEN   escort-INF   summer-GEN   meet-INF
   'The villagers always used to go there to see the spring out and to welcome summer.' (Cypkajkina 2007: 48)

(6) *Śeχťe   pek   son   **večk-iľ'**   tundo-ń   ška-ť-ńe-ń.*
    SPRL   very   3SG   love-PST2.3SG   spring-GEN   time-PL-DEF-GEN
   'He used to love spring times the most.' (Cypkajkina 2007: 50)

The subjective and objective conjugations are also distinguished in the second past tense. However, previous research does not shed much light on the difference between the two conjugation patterns (see e.g. Cypkajkina

2007: 68–69). The second past tense is not discussed in detail in this paper either, although it is touched upon briefly in 4.3.

2.2.3. Genericity, habituality and iterativity

Genericity, habituality and iterativity encode the generalization or repetition of events over a time period, and do not characterize one actual occurrence of an event. They differ from one another in the nature of the generalization they involve (Bertinetto – Lenci 2012; Carlson 2012).

Genericity can be examined at the level of NPs or sentences. According to Krifka et al. (1995: 2–3) generic NPs do not refer to individual entities but to a kind (***The potato*** *was first cultivated in South America*). Generic sentences, on the other hand, describe a generalization over events or over properties of entities. Generic sentences frequently contain generic NPs, as in the example cited above, but specific NPs can also be used in generic sentences (***John*** *smokes a cigar after dinner*).

Generic sentences are intrinsically characterizing, and they express a stative state of affairs. Generics are often claimed to represent timeless events and are not typically marked for tense and aspect. There is a strong tendency for languages to refer to generic events with verbs exhibiting imperfective aspect. In some languages, nevertheless, forms encoding the perfective aspect also occur in generic sentences if the event can be considered bounded (Dahl 1995: 415, 419–420).

Erzya does not have a separate marker of genericity. The verb is in the present tense in these sentences, as in (7) and (8) (Cypkajkina 2007: 28). As shown in (8), transitive verbs with definite objects can be in the objective conjugation in generic sentences in Erzya. This suggests that generic events can be captured in Erzya with both conjugation types. The objective conjugation in this case expresses that the event that is generalized is bounded. Generics are further discussed in Section 4.3.

(7) *Valdaśke-ś   sval   ašť-i   peľeve   jono.*
  North.Star-DEF   always be-PRS.3SG midnight   towards
  'The North Star is always in the north.' (Cypkajkina 2007: 28)

(8) *Keŕa-ź   kši   pečť-eńť,   nať,   alkuks=kak   a   **vejsend'a-sak**.*
  cut.off-GER bread slice-DEF.GEN presumably indeed=and NEG unite-PRS.2SG>3SG
  'You, in all probability, cannot indeed unite the bread slice that has been cut off.'
  (Cypkajkina 2007: 59)

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Habituals, similarly to generics, do not describe current state of affairs, but characterize a generalization based on an actual state of affairs. Krifka et al. (1995: 30–36) consider habituals a subtype of generic sentences. Nevertheless, there is a substantial difference between habituals and generics, namely, that some languages have a formal marking which corresponds to a habitual interpretation on the verb, while verbal marking corresponding to a generic interpretation is rare (Carlson 2012: 831).

Habituals can express frequently repeated events over a time period. This interpretation is most prevalent for events that cannot be protracted *(The old professor used to arrive late)*. In situations that can be protracted over time, the sense of iterativity is not included, and the event is seen as continuing over a time period *(The Temple of Diana used to stand at Ephesus)* (Comrie 1976: 30–32).

As habituality often includes the implication of repetition, it is semantically close to iterativity. Habituality presupposes a more or less regular iteration of an event within a time period. The resulting habit is regarded as a characteristic property of a given referent *(Every year, Luc loses his umbrella three times)* (Bertinetto – Lenci 2012: 852). Iterativity, on the other hand, describes the repetition of an actual state of affairs within a closed time period *(Last year, Luc lost his umbrella three times)* (Bertinetto – Lenci ibid. 858).

Languages that formally distinguish perfective and imperfective aspects often use imperfective forms to describe habitual events. Such a use captures the progress of the repetition of events in time (Carlson 2012: 832). Nevertheless, habitual situations include events that are essentially perfective, since the event can be reiterated only if it has already been carried out (Bertinetto – Lenci 2012: 875).

Habitual and iterative events are not discussed separately in grammatical descriptions of Mordvinic languages; nevertheless, it is remarked upon that frequently repeated events may be expressed with different forms than individual realizations of events. Alhoniemi (1994: 148) proposed that in sentences that include the sense of repetition, the boundedness vs. unboundedness of single representations of events seem to correlate with verbal conjugation. This is shown in (9).

(9) ***Purom-il'***   *latk-ińe-s* *veď-eś,* *kona* *keńeŕ-i*
accumulate-PST2.3SG trench-DIM-ILL water-DEF which manage-PRS.3SG

valske *marto* *ľiśe-me,* *vedra-s* *keč-se* ***pešťa-si***
morning with exit-INF bucket-ILL scoop-INE fill-PRS.3SG>3SG

di	**kanci**,	*ľija-ť-ńe-ń*	*araś,*	*a*	**kado-v-iľ**.
and	carry.PRS.3SG>3SG	other-PL-DEF-GEN	NEG	NEG	leave-PASS-PST2.3SG

'Water used to accumulate in the trench; the one who managed to go out in the morning filled his bucket with a scoop and carried it (home), but others had none, none was left.' (Alhoniemi 1994: 148)

(9) describes a situation, where the repeated event consists of several micro-events: the accumulation of the water in the trench, the filling of the bucket and taking the water home, and that no water is left for others. On every repetition of the event, one micro-event must be completed for the other one to take place. The transitive verbs in the objective conjugation describe these situations. This example also shows that repetition is not marked systematically on the verb. The first and the last verbs are in the second past tense, which is a marker of habitual aspect in the past. The other verbs are in the present tense.

It is not uncommon for languages to have a separate marker of habituality in the past tense. Mordvinic, furthermore, has an extensive system of verbal derivation. In Erzya, repetition can be expressed with the suffix -*kšn*- and continuous events with -*ľ*, -*ń* and -*ś* (Ščemerova 1980: 339–344). Alhoniemi (1993) notes that these suffixes are the primary means to express aspectual oppositions in certain classes of verbs, and verbal conjugation only correlates with these suffixes. The derivational suffixes are not the main focus of this paper; nevertheless, in Section 4.3, I introduce some observations on their possible correlation with conjugation type and aspectual interpretation.

Even though habitual and generic sentences correlate with imperfective interpretation, since they describe characterizations; these events can be described with the objective conjugation in Erzya. This point is elaborated in more detail in Section 4.3 and illustrated with empirical data.

2.3. Perception verbs

Perception verbs encode two participants: the perceiver and the perceived. These participants are not fully involved in the action, which can result in a different case marking pattern than that of other transitive verbs. The Erzya perception verbs are shown in Table 1.

	Two-place predicates		One-place predicates
	Agentive	Non-agentive	
Sight	*vanoms*	*ńejems*	*ńejavoms*
Hearing	*kunsoloms*	*maŕams*	*maŕavoms*
Touch	*tokams*		
Taste	*varčams*		
Smell	*ńikśems*		

Table 1.
The perception verbs in Erzya[4]

Perception verbs do not constitute a homogeneous group regarding transitivity. The object is more attained in the case of non-agentive perception verbs, such as the English *see, hear,* which encode an experiencer agent. In the case of agentive perception verbs, e.g. the English verbs *look* or *listen,* the object is less attained.[5] Non-agentive perception verbs typically show a higher degree of transitivity than agentive ones (Tsunoda 1981: 392–397, 426–427).

Erzya perception verbs also have similar features. Agentive perception verbs, e.g. *vanoms* 'look', are not always formally encoded as transitive verbs. Furthermore, agentive and non-agentive perception verbs have different features regarding lexical aspect. Agentive perception verbs typically capture dynamic situation types, whereas non-agentive ones describe achievements or states (see Smith 1997). States remain consistent at every moment of the time interval, i.e. there is no change or development from one stage of the state to another (Smith ibid. 32). Achievements, on the other hand, capture the initiation of the state (Smith ibid. 56–57).

I discuss only non-agentive perception verbs in this paper, and from now on I will use the term 'perception verbs' to refer only to them. Erzya distinguishes two sense modalities among them: sight, and all other types of physical and mental perception. The verbs that encode these meanings are *ńejems* 'see' and *maŕams* 'hear; feel'. According to previous research on Mordvinic, these verbs are in the objective conjugation with definite objects, even when they express states that are continuing in the present (Koljadenkov 1963: 438–439; Naďkin 1980: 283; Alhoniemi 1994: 147–148). The objective

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[4] The information in Table 1 is based on dictionaries and translations of examples in Viberg (1984).

[5] For a detailed classification of perception verbs cross-linguistically see Viberg (1984).

conjugation is a marker of high transitivity, as it occurs only with definite objects and it correlates with perfective aspect (Grünthal 2008).

Perception verbs displaying different lexical aspects are shown in (10a) and (10b). In (10a), the verb describes an achievement, where the focus is on the moment of perception. This interpretation is enhanced by the adverbial *koda* 'when' and the change of state described in the second clause. (10b), on the other hand, characterizes a state that remains consistent at every moment of the time interval, i.e. there is no change or development from one stage of the state to another. As the examples show, the verb can be in the objective conjugation in both cases.

(10a)[6] *Koda   son   **maŕa-sińźe**   narmuń-t́-ńe-ń   moro-st,   son*
        when   3SG   hear-PRS.3SG>3PL   bird-PL-DEF-GEN   song-POSS.3PL   3SG

        śeske   aŕśe-źev-i   ava-do-nzo.
        quickly   think-INCH-PRS.3SG   mother-ABL-POSS.3SG
        'When she hears the birds singing, she quickly thinks about her mother.'

(10b) *Son **maŕa-sińźe**   narmuń-t́-ńe-ń   moro-st   park-so ašťe-mste.*
        3SG   hear-PRS.3SG>3PL   bird-PL-DEF-GEN   song-POSS.3PL   park-INE   be-GER
        'She hears the birds singing while in the park.'

The perfective forms of verbs, especially those of stative ones, can be used to imply the beginning of a situation instead of its end in many languages (Comrie 1976: 19). Markov (1964: 71) remarks that the objective conjugation of perception verbs is used in an inchoative meaning, i.e. it implies that perception has been initiated. Nevertheless, as the examples show, the objective conjugation does not cover only the initiation of perception but can also refer to states.

3. Data

The core of the data used for this study is collected from the MokshEr corpus, which contains written texts in literary Erzya. The material was further complemented with information provided by native speakers.

The MokshEr corpus includes literary texts in Erzya from between 2002 and 2008, including both original texts and translations. The corpus consists of 2 784 587 tokens and does not contain morphological annotations. I searched the corpus for the finite forms of the perception verbs *ńejems* 'see'

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[6] Examples are provided by Aleksandr Danilčev (p.c.)

and *maŕams* 'hear; feel' and excluded forms that are identical in the two conjugation types, e.g. E *ńe-i-t'* 'see-PST-2SG' and 'see-PST-2SG>3PL', as they fail to provide information on the variation of conjugation types. Only objects that can stand with verbs in the objective conjugation and behave in these contexts like definite NPs were included in the material, i.e. reciprocal, indefinite, and interrogative pronouns, and the *maŕams pŕa* -construction are excluded (for more detail on these pronouns see Bernhardt 2020).

The material was analyzed on the level of sentences, and larger context was considered when it was necessary. I also consulted with Nina Agafonova and Aleksandr Danilčev on the use of the two conjugation types. The informants are native speakers of Erzya and are either staff or previous students of Ogarëv Mordovia State University. Both speakers have at least basic training in linguistics. My work with the informants included showing them examples from the data and asking how changing the conjugation type would influence the interpretation of the sentence.

4. Analysis

In this section, I discuss how conjugation types correlate with time reference and aspectual oppositions in the data. I present the data in Table 2. The table shows that perception verbs occur most frequently in the objective conjugation with definite objects.

The two conjugation types are not equally represented in the different tenses. The subjective conjugation is more frequent in the present tense than in the past tense. This agrees with Alhoniemi's (1996: 69) observations, according to which the two conjugation types have different proportions in the two tenses and the objective conjugation is more frequent in the past tense.

Tense	Conjugation type	Occurrences
Present	Subjective	176 (39%)
	Objective	274 (61%)
Past	Subjective	111 (11%)
	Objective	897 (89%)

Table 2.
The conjugation of perception verbs in the data

The discussion of the data is divided according to formal and semantic features. First, I discuss verbs that are in the present (4.1) and past (4.2) tense. Dividing the sections according to tense is a convenient solution, as

tense is formally marked on Erzya verbs. Sections 4.1 and 4.2 focus on the representation of actual events that occur only once. Section 4.3, on the other hand, focuses on repeated and generalized events. Repetition and generalization are not necessarily marked separately on the verb; therefore, this division is based on semantics.

4.1. Present tense

4.1.1. Present time reference

Present time reference is essentially imperfective, as events occurring during the present moment encompass a wider time reference: the event starts before the present moment and lasts for some period of time into the future. Infrequently, the present tense refers to events occurring during the present moment in the data. Both conjugation types can be used with present time reference, although their interpretations are slightly different. The objective conjugation expresses an actual state of affairs in the present tense, while the subjective conjugation is used with more general statements. In the data, the use of the subjective conjugation is prominent in sentences where one of the participants is not present in the setting, making actual perception impossible. This is illustrated in (11–14).

(11)   *Vana*   *ńej=gak*   *śormad-an*   *ej-ste-nze –*   *moń-ś*
       here   now=even   write-PRS.1SG   PP-ELA-POSS.3SG   1SG-EMPH

       ťeke   ***ńej-an***   *sonze*   *eś*   *śeľme-ń*   *ikeľ-ďe.*
       as.if   see-PRS.1SG   3SG.GEN   own   eye-GEN   in.front-ABL
       'Here, I write about her now as well, as if I could see her in front of my eyes.'
       (Syatko-2004_3_116-127: 25–26)

(12)   *Oš-ońť*   ***ńe-sa,***   *Mokša-ńť*   ***ńe-sa –***
       city-DEF.GEN   see-PRS.1SG>3SG   M.-DEF.GEN   see-PRS.1SG>3SG

       aerodrom-oś   *araś.*
       airfield-DEF   NEG
       'I see the city, I see the Moksha (river), but the airfield is not there.'
       (Syatko-2008_8_28-36: 281–282)

(13)   *A*   *ton,*   *ava-j,*   ***maŕ-at***   *ej-se-ń?*
       and   2SG   mother-VOC   hear-PRS.2SG   PP-INE-POSS.1SG
       'And you, mother, can you hear me?' (Syatko-2008_10_10-19: 361)

(14) ***Ńe-sak***   *ćićina-ń*   *piŕavks-ońť?*
　　　see-PRS.2SG>3SG   pole-GEN   fence-DEF.GEN
　　　'Do you see the pole fence?' (Syatko-2008_1_110-117: 306)

In (11), the subjective conjugation is used in a context in which the writer almost sees the person he is writing about. The verb, thus, does not capture actual state of affairs, which is further reinforced by the adverb *ťeke* 'as if'. In (12), on the other hand, the objective conjugation expresses actual perception, where the pilot sees the city and the Moksha river from above.

Present time reference is most frequent in interrogative sentences, such as (13) and (14). The objective conjugation in these sentences directs the attention of the participant to an entity in the surrounding situation, as in (14). In (13), on the other hand, the addressed is the deceased mother of the speaker, and the speaker asks whether his mother can hear him or not, on a general basis, not only now. These findings are in line with Salamon's (1989: 105) observations. According to her, the objective conjugation generally expresses concrete facts, and it highlights the temporariness of the state of affairs. Nevertheless, in sentences, such as (14), the event of perception cannot be considered as temporary or bounded. The present data suggests that the objective conjugation is used in contexts, where actual perception occurs, while subjective conjugation is frequent in abstract settings, where actual perception does not take place due to the absence of either the perceiver or perceived.

4.1.2. Past time reference

I distinguish the present and past time references of the present tense. While there are certain similarities in both uses, the interpretation of the conjugation types is slightly different. In both functions, the present tense refers to an event that is simultaneous with a reference point in time. With present time reference, the reference point is simultaneous to the moment of speech – for this reason, it is mostly used in dialogues. With past time reference, the reference point is in the past. This interpretation is anchored by other verbs in the context that are in the past tense. The past time reference of the present tense is illustrated in (15) and (16). In these sentences, the verb captures visual perception that is simultaneous with other events in the past. The objective conjugation in (15) implies that there is a change in the state of affairs: the speaker saw his mother, shouted out and threw herself at her. The subjective conjugation in (16) describes the event of perception as continuing in time. The sentences following the event of visual perception describe the actions of other people; therefore, the state of affairs introduced in the first

sentence is continuing and there is no implication of change in the following context.

(15) *Meks-buťi*   *maŕa-v-ś*   *ťeń:*   ***ńe-sa***   *mejeľće-ďe.*
why-INDF   feel-PASS-PST.3SG   1SG.DAT   see-PRS.1SG>3SG   last-ABL

Piže-ožo   *vajgeľ-se* *śeŕgeď-i-ń*   *di*   *kaja-v-i-ń*   *ej-z-enze.*
green-yellow voice-INE shout-PST-1SG and throw-PASS-PST-1SG PP-ILL-POSS.3SG
'Somehow, I felt that I saw [lit. see] her for the last time. I shouted
in a stentorian voice and threw myself at her.' (Syatko-2006_11_30-36: 228–230)

(16) *Śeďej-eś*   *maŕa-ś,*   *ťe*   *maziči-ńť*   ***ńe-i***   *ostatka-do.*
heart-DEF   feel-PST.3SG   this   beauty-DEF.GEN see-PRS.3SG   last-ABL

Lomań-ť-ńe   *šumbrakśť-ńe-śť*   *marto-nzo.*
person-PL-DEF   greet-FREQ-PST.3PL   with-POSS.3SG
'In his heart he felt that he saw [lit. sees] this beauty for the last time.
People greeted him.' (EP-2005_3-mart_6: 85–86)

With past time reference, thus, the objective conjugation correlates with the temporariness of the situation and is used most frequently in contexts where the situation is bounded. This interpretation can be captured and illustrated best with sentences such as (15) and (16). Nevertheless, events that describe a change in the state of affairs are not always present in sentences where the perception verb is in the objective conjugation. Therefore, in the case of perception verbs, it seems that the objective conjugation does not serve to highlight the temporariness of the event, but rather that the subjective conjugation is used to highlight the fact that the event is proceeding in time.

4.1.3. Future time reference

In the data, only the objective conjugation is attested with future time reference. The future time reference often focuses on the starting point of the event, as is illustrated in (17) and (18). (17) is from a dialogue and indicates that perception can take place at any moment, unless there is a change in the situation, i.e. if the addressee does not stop shouting, they will be heard. The context in (18), on the other hand, is in the past, and the present tense describe the thoughts of the soldier. The objective conjugation in the present tense implies that perception could have taken place after the situation described in the previous sentence. The narration continues in the past tense after the sentences cited in (18). These sentences show that future time refer-

ence is encoded in the same way regardless of the location of the reference point in time, i.e. whether it is simultaneous with the time of speech or anchored in the past.

(17) *Ton, iďemevś, lotka-k pižńe-ma-do, śeke-ń vant **maŕa-samiź.***
2SG devil stop-IMP.2SG yell-INF-ABL same-GEN look hear-PRS.3PL>1
'You, devil, stop yelling, or we will be heard!' (Syatko-2008_7_62-86: 198)

(18) *Źardo ava-ś kuź-ś vaks-oz-onzo, soldat-oś*
when woman-DEF climb-PST.3SG beside-ILL-POSS.3SG soldier-DEF

śolg-i-źe vagon kenkš-eńť. Iśťa śeďe paro,
shut-PST-3SG>3SG car door-DEF.GEN like.this CPR good

*a to jut-i konduktor, **ńe-sińźe** di,*
or else go-PRS.3SG guard see-PRS.3SG>3PL and

śeke-ń vant, pań-sińźe=jak.
that.same-GEN look drive.off-PRS.3SG>3PL=and
'When the woman climbed beside him, the soldier shut the car door. It is better like this, otherwise the guard would have come [lit. comes], seen [lit. sees] them (the woman and her child) and immediately ordered [lit. orders] them to get off.' (Syatko-2004_11_34-49: 56–57)

The verb in (17) and (18) describe events where the stimulus has not yet been perceived at the reference point, but perception can take place at any moment following it. The verb in these cases focuses on the initial phase of the perception. (18) implies, furthermore, that as soon as perception takes place, the situation is bound to change as well: the ticket inspector would make the woman get off the train. Thus, the event expressed by the verb in (18) is bounded by its endpoint as well.

Most perception verbs in the present tense of the objective conjugation seem to be used in an inchoative meaning in the data, and there are only a couple of examples that do not presuppose an inchoative interpretation. This is illustrated in (19), where the event is not bounded from its starting point. Nevertheless, the verb is still used in a future time reference: the event has not yet occurred, but the speaker plans to visit his parents after his time in the army.

(19) *No jalaťeke armija-do mejľe vaśńa=jak moľ-an kudo-v, Dubjonka*
but anyway army-ABL after first=and go-PRS.1SG home-LAT D.

veľe-v. **Ńe-siń** *ťeťa-ń-ava-ń.*
village-LAT see-PRS.1SG>3PL father-POSS.1SG.GEN-mother-POSS.1SG.GEN
'Anyways, after the army, I will go home first, to Dubjonka village. I will see
my parents.' (Syatko-2008_12_52-59: 63–64)

Perception verbs are in the present tense objective conjugation when they
express an actual state of affairs occurring simultaneously with the reference
point in time or after it. The objective conjugation does not correlate with the
boundedness of the situation, as it can be used in both bounded and un-
bounded contexts. The subjective conjugation is used in contexts, where ac-
tual perception does not happen or can highlight that perception is ongoing.

4.2. Past tense

The past tense refers to events that occur before a deictic point in time.
The conjugation type of the verb does not influence the interpretation of time
reference. In the past tense, the objective conjugation is used more frequently
than the subjective one: out of 1008 verbs in the past tense, only 111 are in
the subjective conjugation, i.e. only 11%. This is likely due to the fact that in
the past tense, most of the situations described with a perception verb are
bounded, and in these cases the verb is always in the objective conjugation.
This is illustrated in (20). The first clause of the sentence, which describes
the arrival of the dragon, frames the event from its starting point: visual per-
ception can start only once the dragon has arrived. The last clause provides
an ending point, as it describes a change in the state of affairs.

(20) *Sa-ś* *ińeguj-eś,* **ńe-i-ńźe**
    come-PST.3SG dragon-DEF see-PST.3SG>3PL

    ćora-ńť *čeŕ-en-ze,* *kežija-vť-ś.*
    man-DEF.GEN hair-GEN-POSS.3SG get.angry-CAUS-PST.3SG
    'The dragon came, saw the man's hair and got angry.'
    (Syatko-2007_4_112-115: 95)

The boundedness of the event is often further reinforced with conjunc-
tions such as *koda, kodak, žardo* 'when' or *ańśak* 'only', which is illustrated
in (21).

(21) *Abungaď-ś,* *žardo* **maŕ-i-že** *kenkš-eńťeń* *gaj-ńe-vťe-ma-ńť.*
    be.startled-PST.3SG when hear-PST.3SG>3PL door-DEF.DAT ring-FREQ-CAUS-
                                                      NMLZ-DEF.GEN

    'He was startled when he heard the ringing at the door.'
    (Syatko-2006_5_45-51: 217–218)

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The objective conjugation typically describes bounded situations that have either a starting or an ending point or both. The subjective conjugation is not accepted in these contexts.

The objective conjugation is used in other contexts as well. In the following example, I discuss unbounded states of affairs and the variation of conjugation types in them. (22) and (23) describe similar events, but nevertheless, the conjugation type varies. In both examples, the perception is ongoing, which is implied in the second sentence, which complements the image of visual perception in both cases. This shows that perception verbs in the objective conjugation do not necessarily describe bounded or temporary events.

(22)   *Ńej,*   *pojezd-se*   *ardo-msto,*   *ťeťa-n-zo*   *orta*   *ikeľe*
       now   train-INE   drive-GER   father-GEN-POSS.3SG   gate   in.front

       palka   *marto*   *ašť-ića-ks*   **ńe-i-źe.**   *Son*   *sval*
       stick   with   stand-PTCP-TRSL   see-PST-3SG>3SG   3SG   always

       šumbra-ľ-vijev-eľ,   *kolχoz-oń*   *pakśa-ť-ńe-va*
       healthy-PST2.3SG-strong-PST2.3SG   kolkhoz-GEN   field-PL-DEF-PROL

       traktor-t   *veť-ńe-ś,*   *meks*   *insuľt*   *stard-i-źe?*
       tractor-PL   drive-FREQ-PST.3SG   why   stroke   catch-PST-3SG>3SG
       'Now, riding on the train, he imagined (lit. saw) his father as someone standing with a stick in front of the gate. He has always been healthy and strong, drove tractors on the fields of the kolkhoz, why did the stroke catch him?' (Syatko-2008_1_4-22: 77–79)

(23)   *Isťamo-ks*   *Sťopa-ń*   **ńe-ś,**   *kodamo-ľ*   *son*   *vokzal-ońť*
       like.this-TRSL   S.-GEN   see-PST.3SG   such.as-PST.2SG   3SG   station-DEF.GEN

       ikeľe –   *keľej*   *šińeľ-se*   *di*   *lomań-eń*   *kartuz-so.*   *Sťopa*
       in.front   wide   greatcoat-INE   and   person-GEN   cap-INE   S.

       vań-ś   *čama-zo-nzo*   *śiźe-ź,*   *ťeke*   *peńaća-ś:*
       look-PST.3SG   face-ILL-POSS.3SG   tire-GER   as.if   complain-PST.3SG
       'He saw Sťopa as he was in front of the station – in a wide greatcoat and in someone else's cap. Sťopa looked into his face tiredly, as if he were complaining:' (Syatko-2004_7_49-64: 484–485)

In the data on perception verbs, the subjective conjugation seems to correlate with imperfective aspect and unbounded situations more closely than the objective conjugation with bounded aspect. The subjective conjugation is not used in contexts where a change is implied in the setting. It can only oc-

cur in sentences that describe unbounded events, as in (23). In these sentences the continuation of perception is more clearly expressed than in (22), as the objective conjugation is accepted in both contexts.

4.3. Repeated and generalized situations

Generic sentences are not distinctly marked in Erzya, and the verb is typically in the present tense in these sentences. As mentioned in 2.2.3, in languages that mark aspectual oppositions on verbs, imperfective forms are typically used to express a generic state of affairs. In Erzya, the conjugation of the verb varies in generic sentences. This is illustrated in (24) and (25).

In (24), the verb is in the subjective conjugation. The verb describes a feature of the subject, namely that townsmen do not know the earth as well as villagers. A similar comparison is presented in (25), where the verb is in the objective conjugation.

(24) *Oš-oń*   *eŕ-ića-ś*   *čurosto*   **maŕ-i**   *moda-ńť*   *iśťa,*
city-GEN   live-PTCP-DEF   seldom   feel-PRS.3SG   earth-DEF.GEN   like.that

      koda **maŕ-i**   *sonze*   *veľe-se*   *kaso-ź-eś.*
      how   feel-PRS.3SG   3SG.GEN   village-INE   grow-PTCP-DEF
      'Townsmen seldom know[7] the earth as well as those who grew up
      in the village.' (Syatko-2007_4_59-65: 28–29)

(25) *Vejens-t-ne*   *sonze*   *večk-siź*   *di*   *lamo*   *jars-iť*
      one-PL-DEF   3SG.GEN   love-PRS.3PL>3SG   and   much   eat-PRS.3PL

      ej-ste-nze   *ľija-ť-ńe*   *sudo-st*   *purť-ń-iť,*
      PP-ELA-POSS.3SG   other-PL-DEF   nose-POSS.3PL   turn-FREQ-PRS.3PL

      kodak   **maŕa-siź**   *kinza-ńť*   *čińe-n-ze.*
      as.soon.as   feel-PRS.3PL>3SG   coriander-DEF.GEN   smell-GEN-POSS.3SG
      'Some like it and eat it often, others turn their nose away as soon as they smell
      coriander [lit. they feel the smell of coriander].' (EP-2007_29-nojabr'_12a: 6–7)

Based on the data and previous research on Mordvinic, it seems that the conjugation type correlates with the boundedness vs. unboundedness of the micro-events in generic sentences. (24) and (25) express generalized events that characterize a group of people. These sentences do not describe actual

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[7] Perception verbs can also refer to cognitive processes, as in (24). Nevertheless, the data did not reveal whether the choice of conjugation type would depend on the semantics of these verbs.

events that occur at a given time, but they capture events that have the possibility to occur at any time. The important difference is between the possible single occurrences of these events. In (24), the verb describes a state that continues unchanged throughout the life of a random townsman who fits this description. In (25), on the other hand, there is a change in the state of affairs whenever the event occurs, i.e. the micro-event has a starting and ending point. The verb *maŕasiź* is used in an inchoative meaning, where the person who does not like coriander turns their nose away as soon as they smell it. The inchoative reading is emphasized by the presence of the adverb *kodak* 'when' and the change in state provides an end point for the event.

Generic sentences, thus, can be divided into two subtypes. First, they can refer to events that describe certain characteristic features of the subject that remain unchanged. Second, they can generalize over such events that have a starting and or ending point. The subjective conjugation in generic sentences correlates with the first reading, whereas the objective conjugation is used the second one.

Habitual sentences, which describe the repetition of events over a time period, have slightly different features. As shown in (26) and (27), these sentences can describe events that occur with relative frequency either in the present or in the past. In (26), the author sees themselves in their dream. Naturally, this vision does not occur during the time of speech, even though the state of affairs, which includes the separate event of the speaker seeing himself in his dreams cuts through the present moment as well. In (27), it is described how Sergei used to see his home every night during a past period.

(26) *On-sto-n=gak*   *eś*   *pŕa-m*   **ńej-an,**   *koda*
dream-ELA-POSS.1SG=and own REFL-POSS.1SG see-PRS.1SG   how

ašť-an   *stoľ*   *ekš-se, –*   *keńardo-žev-ś*   *Ńesmejan.*
stand-PRS.1SG table behind-INE rejoice-INCH-PST.3SG Ń.
'I see myself in my dream as well, how I stand at the table – Ńesmejan rejoiced.' (Syatko-2004_6_3-32: 402)

(27) *T'iriń*   *kudo-ńť*   *Śergej*   *Ivanovič*   **ńe-ś**   *on-sto-nzo*
home house-DEF.GEN Ś   I.   see-PST.3SG dream-ELA-POSS.3SG

eŕva   *ve:*
every night
'Sergei Ivanovič saw his childhood home every night in his dream:'
(EP-2007_23- avgust_6b: 27)

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The verb is in the subjective conjugation in both sentences. In habitual constructions the objective conjugation is not used in the data, and it is not accepted by the informants unless frequentative suffixes are attached to the verb. Habituality also belongs to the imperfective domain (see e.g. Carlson 2012: 832), therefore these sentences also exemplify the correlation between imperfective aspect and the subjective conjugation.

Salamon (1989: 105) remarks that the frequentative suffix and the second past tense can neutralize the perfective reading of the objective conjugation. While the subjective conjugation may not always be interchangeable with the objective conjugation of a verb that has frequentative suffixes, in habitual sentences these forms are interchangeable. Cypkajkina (2007: 62) notes that verbs with frequentative suffixes can take the objective conjugation; these verbs describe characterizing or repeating events.

In (28), the verb *ńejems* with the frequentative suffix -*kšn*- is in the objective conjugation, while in (29), the verb is in the objective conjugation of the second past tense.

(28) *On-sto-n=gak*   *eś* *pŕa-m* **ńe-kšńe-sa**,   *koda*
      dream-ELA-POSS.1SG=and own REFL-POSS.1SG see-FREQ-PRS.1SG>3SG how

      ašť-an   *stoľ* *ekš-se,* –   *keńardo-źev-ś*   *Ńesmejan.*
      stand-PRS.1SG table behind-INE rejoice-INCH-PST.3SG Ń.
      'I see myself in my dream as well, how I stand at the table – Ńesmejan rejoiced.' (Nina Agafonova, p.c.)

(29) *T'iriń*   *kudo-ńť*   *Śergej* *Ivanovič* **ńe-iľ-iźe**
      home   house-DEF.GEN S.   I.   see-PST2-3SG>3SG

      on-sto-nzo   *eŕva* *ve:*
      dream-ELA-POSS.3SG every night
      'Sergei Ivanovič saw his childhood home every night in his dream:'
      (Nina Agafonova, p.c.)

It seems that the repetition of events can be expressed in two ways in Erzya. The verb can take the subjective conjugation, which correlates with the unboundedness of the situation. Nevertheless, once the repetition is expressed by frequentative suffixes or the second past tense, the objective conjugation can be used as well. The exact differences between the subjective conjugation and the objective conjugation with frequentative markers in habitual sentences require further study. Based on these examples, I am not convinced that these suffixes are neutralizing the perfective interpretation of the objective conjugation. It seems that these suffixes express the same se-

mantics as the subjective conjugation does in (26) and (27), i.e. habituality. In certain contexts, the subjective conjugation may be sufficient to express habituality.

One probable explanation why verbs with frequentative suffixes or in the second past tense can take the objective conjugation may be that the single occurrences of micro-events that are included in the situation are considered bounded, i.e. they focus on the temporariness of every single event of perception. Based on the present material it can be concluded that the events described in (26–29) are similar, but that the frequentative suffixes and conjugation types focus on different aspects of the expressed state of affairs.

5. Conclusions

This paper shows how verbal conjugation correlates with aspectual oppositions in the case of perception verbs. In previous research, it has been remarked that perception verbs belong to a special verbal group, as their conjugation type does not correlate with aspect in the same way as that of other semantic groups of verbs. Therefore, I focused on the conjugation type of perception verbs in this paper to determine the cause of the variation.

In Erzya, in transitive sentences, verbs can take in two different conjugation types. The objective conjugation can occur only with definite objects, and in this case, the choice of conjugation type correlates with aspect. The subjective conjugation typically refers to unbounded events, while the objective conjugation implies that the event is bounded.

Perception verbs, here understood as non-agentive perception verbs, such as *see* and *hear* in English, express states. These verbs describe the attainment of a stimulus by the perceiver, after which the event continues in the same manner, unless something happens that changes the state of affairs. Erzya typically encodes these events with the objective conjugation if the object is definite.

I have shown that perception verbs occur in the subjective conjugation with definite objects on rare occasions. The most prominent difference between the two conjugation types seems to be that the subjective conjugation is frequently used in contexts where actual perception does not take place or to express generalizations or habitual events. The objective conjugation, on the contrary, captures the actual realizations of perception. Furthermore, the subjective conjugation correlates with imperfective aspect more closely than the objective conjugation with perfective aspect in the case of perception verbs, since the subjective conjugation cannot describe bounded events, but the objective conjugation can express both bounded and unbounded events.

This paper has also revealed that generalized and habitual (repeated) state of affairs can be expressed with different conjugation types. In these situations, the choice of conjugation type depends on whether the micro-event (that is generalized or repeated) is conceived as bounded or unbounded and whether the unboundedness is not marked elsewhere.

Abbreviations

1	first person	INF	infinitive
2	second person	LAT	lative
3	third person	NEG	negation verb
ABL	ablative	NMLZ	nominalizer
CAUS	causative	NOM	nominative
CPR	comparative	PRS	present tense
DAT	dative	PASS	passive
DEF	definite declension	PL	plural
DIM	diminutive	POSS	possessive suffix
ELA	elative	PP	postposition
EMPH	emphatic particle	PROL	prolative
FREQ	frequentative	PST	first past tense
GEN	genitive	PST2	second past tense
GER	gerund	PTCP	participle
ILL	illative	REFL	reflexive pronoun
IMP	imperative	SG	singular
INCH	inchoative	SPRL	superlative
INDF	indefinite element	TRSL	translative
INE	inessive	VOC	vocative

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Az érzékelést kifejező igék ragozásának váltakozása az erzában

Cikkemben az erza érzékelést kifejező igék alanyi és tárgyas ragozásának váltakozását tanulmányozom. Korábbi kutatások kimutatták, hogy csak abban az esetben állhat az ige tárgyas ragozásban, amennyiben a tárgy határozott. Ebben az esetben az igei ragozások váltakozása aspektuális szembenállásokat fejez ki: a tárgyas ragozás befejezett cselekvésre utal, míg az alanyi ragozás rendszerint folyamatos cselekvésre. A nyelvtani leírásokban gyakran megjegyzik, hogy az érzékelést és észlelést kifejező igék – pl. *sodams* 'tud, megtud', *čaŕkoďems* 'ért, megért', *ńejems* 'lát, meglát' – a többi igétől eltérően viselkednek. A különbség abban nyilvánul meg, hogy ezek az igék mind befejezett, mind pedig folyamatos jelentésükben állhatnak tárgyas ragozásban határozott tárggyal. Ez arra enged következtetni, hogy amennyiben a tárgy határozott, ezek az igék szinte kivétel nélkül tárgyas ragozásban állnak, hiszen az aspektuális szembenállások nem befolyásolják ezeknek az igéknek a ragozását. Az erza irodalmi szövegek ezt a feltevést nem bizonyítják, mivel ezen igék gyakran előfordulnak alanyi ragozásban is határozott tárggyal.

Tanulmányomban a tudattalan érzékelést kifejező igéket vizsgálom meg közelebbről, azaz az erza *ńejems* 'lát, meglát' és *maŕams* 'hall, meghall; érez, megérez' igék alanyi és tárgyas ragozású formáit. Csak azokat az igéket veszem figyelembe, amelyek határozott tárgy mellett állnak. Kutatásom kimutatja, hogy ezek az igék főként jelen időben használatosak alanyi ragozásban. Az alanyi ragozást leginkább olyan szövegkörnyezetben használják, amikor vagy az érzékelő vagy az érzékelt nincs jelen a beszédhelyzetben. Az alanyi ragozás gyakran utal továbbá ismétlődő vagy általános eseményekre. A tárgyas ragozás ezzel szemben leginkább valódi eseményekre utal. Folyamatos érzékelést mindkét igeragozással ki lehet fejezni, viszont csak a tárgyas ragozás utalhat olyan eseményekre, amelyeknek van kezdő- és/vagy végpontjuk. Az érzékelést kifejező igék esetében az alanyi ragozás tehát sokkal szorosabban kapcsolódik a befejezetlen aspektushoz, mint a tárgyas ragozás a befejezetthez.

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