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Basic Issues of Using Locative Semantic in Language

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Abstract: The article deals with the important points about basic issues of using locative semantic in Uzbek and English languages. In addition to this, tradition to view all cases as locative expressions by famous linguists were highlighted.

Key points: alternate verbal, locative statements, spatial meanings, scope ambiguities, temporal adverbials, coinitial locative, relative location.

This special issue is devoted to a relatively neglected topic in linguistics, namely the verbal component of locative statements. English tends, of course, to use a simple copula in utterances like ‘‘The cup is on the table’’, but many languages, perhaps as many as half of the world’s languages, have a set of alternate verbs, or alternate verbal, which contrast in this slot[1]. Often these are classificatory verbs of ‘sitting’, ‘standing’ and ‘lying’.

For this reason, perhaps, Aristotle listed position among his basic (‘‘noncomposite’’) categories: Expressions which are in no way composite signify substance, quantity, quality, relation, place, time, position, state, action. To sketch my meaning roughly, examples of substance are ‘man’ or ‘the horse’, of quantity, such terms as ‘two cubits long’ or ‘three cubits long’, of quality, such attributes as ‘white’, ‘grammatical’. ‘Double’, ‘half’, ‘greater’, fall under the category of relation; ‘in the market place’, ‘in the Lyceum’, under that of place; ‘yesterday’, ‘last year’, under that of time. ‘Lying’, ‘sitting’, are terms indicating position, ‘shod’, ‘armed’, state; ‘to lance’, ‘to cauterize’, action; ‘to be lanced’, ‘to be cauterized’.

At their most exuberant (and good examples can be found in the papers in this issue), these systems of contrasting verbs clearly impose some kind of categorization on their arguments, and thus on the world. Let us illustrate with an example. In the Papuan language Ye´lıˆ Dnye there are a set of just three verbs, ‘‘sit’’, ‘‘stand’’ and ‘‘hang’’, which effectively classify both abstract and concrete nominal concepts, according to which verb they take in both existential and locative statements. There is no copula, and no way to avoid such a choice. You simply have to know that the sun ‘sits’, but stars ‘stand’, or hunger ‘hangs’ while sleep ‘sits’, or steam ‘stands’ while smoke ‘hangs’.

There is a tradition to view all cases as locative expressions. This view has been advocated for example by Hjelmslev and, by Anderson, and Cook. Since we are concerned with the spatial meanings of local cases rather than their metaphorical meanings, this line of research is only of peripheral interest to us here. Within the transformational grammar tradition the major work on locatives is Bierwisch , and — in a completely different sense — Bouchard. Wunderlich and Herweg give a survey of the literature on locatives[2]. More recent work on locatives is found in Nam Creary et al., Fong and Zwarts and Winter. Before we begin with our discussion concerning the semantics of local cases, we have to address some terminological and methodological questions. The locative case names are formed typically by a preposition plus the suffix -essive or the suffix -lative. The suffix -essive is used exclusively for the static mode, while the others must be expressed by the suffix -lative. All other information is provided by the preposition. To denote the configuration we use English prepositions (e. g. ‘in’, ‘on’, etc.). The case labels of Hungarian (the most elaborate system of case names we know of) are as follows.

There is a perlative, also called prosecutive, which denoes the transitory mode of the 'in' configuration. Of course, with the help of more prepositions more case names can be created. The case names of Finnish are the same with the exception that the last row is absent. Typically, if only one series exists, people use the trichotomy ablative, allative, locative. However, 'locative' is too general a name to be useful in our setting. Since we use these labels as names for case functions rather than cases, some discrepancy with the existing terminology may arise.

Creary et al. (which is based on) propose a treatment of locative expressions that makes them denote regions. They principally discuss adverbial uses of locatives, as we do here. They build on an insight by Jackendoff that locatives and DPs share a number of properties, in particular the ability to establish discourse referents to which one can refer. The proform there can be used to pick up a contextually salient location, but it can also be used deictically. In that sense, it behaves just like a nominal anaphor. There exist also location quantifiers, such as everywhere, somewhere and nowhere. However, locatives do not induce scope ambiguities. Tina didn't work in New York. Tina didn't drink because of her husband. We may interpret as either saying that Tina's husband was the reason for Tina's not drinking, or — alternatively — as saying that he simply wasn't the reason for Tina's drinking. No such alternative seems to be available in [3]. It cannot be taken to say that there is an event of Tina's not working that took place in New York; it only says that there is no event Tina's working in New York. Moreover, Creary et al. argue in line with Jackendoff that locatives are always arguments. This allows them to deduce that iterated locatives must be taken conjunctively, and predicate over the same event, not just several ones. Al works on Mass. Ave., in Boston. Additionally, the following pattern of upward monotonicity is observed. Al works in Boston. (In) Boston is in America. ∴ Al works in America. So much for the basic claims of the paper. Notice that many of the arguments are valid mutatis mutandis for temporal adverbials. The intersection rule for locatives is also applicable for temporal adverbials. However, similar effects can be reached with almost any major constituent, for example objects.

The generalization in these cases seems to be this: the mover of the complex event is generally the mover of the caused event. Interesting is the verb to shoot. Only if it means cause to fly it tolerates a directional PP modifying the undergoer. In the other meaning (kill by shooting) only a coinitial PP can be used, simply because there is no mover present in the event[4].

- ✓ Alfred shot the arrow through six pieces of cardboard into the target. ?
- ✓ Alfred shot the rabbit into the forest.
- ✓ Alfred shot the rabbit from the balcony.
- ✓ Alfred shot into the forest.

So, says that the arrow is moving through six cardboards and then into the target. In, under the shoot–to–kill reading neither Alfred nor the rabbit are movers, and the sentence is ungrammatical. In, Alfred is the origin of the shooting but not himself moving. Apparently, it is the bullet that is moving, whence (s ok. One explanation for this phenomenon is that shoot might behave like a verb of communication. Verbs of communication are address, speak to, ring up. They generally take a coinitial locative, which denotes the source; the adressee is usually not expressed by a locative.

To sum up all given information above, it should be noted that Most prior work on contrastive locative verbs has been from a language specific, a familial or an areal point of view. Because of their obvious centrality in the workings of languages, contrastive spatial predicates usually receive some attention in descriptive grammars. But these accounts rarely give us more than the briefest sketch of the underlying semantic distinctions involved, and often neglect even the grammatical ramifications of these systems. The Americas however are something of an exception in that there are both relatively good language specific descriptions of the phenomena and areal surveys. In English relative location information is almost entirely packaged in the prepositional phrase with a vacuous locative verb be fulfilling the need for a (tense bearing) predicate. Thus whereas in English we indiscriminately use locative be in The book/cup is on the table or The key is in the lock, or The picture is on the wall, in German we must say Das Buch liegt auf dem Tisch, Die Tasse steht auf

dem Tisch, Das Bild ha¨ngt an der Wand and Der Schlu¨ssel steckt in dem Schloss, the distinctions encoding geometric properties of the Figure (whether the object is flat or has a canonical base etc.) or the Ground (whether it is a container, a vertical surface, etc.) or of the relation between them. Some languages carry such distinctions to the extreme: thus Tzeltal forces a choice between over one hundred commonly used locative predicates, each of which encodes especially properties of the Figure object (shape, disposition, angle etc.) or occasionally of the Ground or the relation between Figure and Ground. This then takes the burden of locative description off the adpositional phrase — in Tzeltal there is a vacuous preposition corresponding to the English vacuous locative verb.

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