

Elatives of Kina Rutul

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Rutul is a Lezgian (East Caucasian) language spoken in southern Dagestan, Russia. As most of its sister languages, it has a wide system of spatial forms comprising two categories, localization (In 'inside', Apud 'near', Sub 'under', and some others) and orientation (static location, motion to, motion from, and some others). Wrt. to the category of orientation, East Caucasian spatial systems may be classified into tripartite, distinguishing between essive (static location), lative (motion towards) and elative (motion from), and bipartite, where essive/lative are merged in one form (usually unmarked) and opposed to the marked elative form. Rutul of Kina is an example of a bipartite system, with most elative forms containing a dedicated marker *-la* and the lative identical to the essive (unmarked). However, in segmental terms, essive, lative and elative are identical for In 'inside' and Apud 'near' localizations - (*-a* and *-da*) respectively.

The situation where spatial forms do not distinguish elative from lative and essive, present in some African languages (e. g. in Wan (Mande), see (Nikitina 2009)), seems to be very unusual for Dagestan. Sources suggest that some of the dialects of Rutul distinguish between In-Essive(Lative) and In-Elative by vowel quantity (Maxmudova 2002: 47; Ibragimov 2004). The language is unwritten, and not all Kina speakers are confident about the nature (or even presence) of the distinction. Perceptually, the difference was not always clear (except in very articulated style of pronunciation); it is also not clear whether the duration or intensity played a role in the distinction (if any).

To check this for Kina, we conveyed the following experiment. We elicited sentences with essive, allative and elative forms. Two types of contexts were used:

1. Noun in a spatial form in a medial position in the sentence
2. Noun in a spatial form in the end of the answer to a 'Where?' question.

The target contexts were supplemented by fillers, different speakers were given the same stimuli in different order, with contexts with phonetically similar forms separated from each other by other contexts and fillers. We then measured the absolute vowel length and intensity of the vowels and compared them within each speaker (see appendix for all measurements; some of the realizations had to be rejected on different grounds). The absolute vowel length was measured from the first to the last visible period. For intensity, the maximum value was taken. An overall number of recorded target contexts is 50. On average, /a/ in elatives appeared to be about 1.5 times longer than in essive and allative form. As expected, there was no consistent or significant difference between the essive and lative forms. Intensity does not seem to play any role, Pearson correlation between intensity and the type of the locative case is 0.1284, which is considered small. However, further statistical analysis is needed to support the conclusions.

In addition to these calculations, we are planning to carry out a perceptive experiment in the next field season (summer 2019). In this experiment, the subjects will be

given audio of the wordforms extracted from the stimuli described above and asked to judge what is, for these forms, the more appropriate spatial context.

Notably, there is some support that the weakening of the salience of the distinction between elative and essive/lative is structurally compensated by an emerging tendency to additionally use postpositional adverbs that disambiguate the forms by formally distinguishing essive/lative from elative.

References

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Appendix. Relative duration of essive, elative and lative across speakers

		Lative to essive	Elative to essive	Elative to lative
speaker1	'house'	0.8	NA	NA
speaker1	'forest'	NA	NA	NA
speaker1	'neighbour'	1.09	1.55	1.43
speaker 1	mean	0.95	NA	NA
speaker2	'house'	0.66	1.13	1.7
speaker2	'forest'	NA	NA	0.5
speaker2	'neighbour'	0.67	1.13	1.68
speaker2	mean	0,67	1.13	1.29
speaker3	'house'	NA	NA	NA
speaker3	'forest'	NA	NA	1.61
speaker3	'neighbour'	0.89	1.22	1.37
speaker3	mean	NA	NA	1,49
speaker4	'house'	NA	NA	1.26
speaker4	'forest'	NA	NA	2.05
speaker4	'neighbour'	1.57	2.24	1.42
speaker4	mean	NA	NA	1,58
speaker5	'house'	6.5	12.17	1.87
speaker5	'forest'	NA	NA	NA
speaker5	'neighbour'	NA	2.87	NA
speaker5	mean	NA	7,52	NA

speaker6	'house'	0.75	1.18	1.56
speaker6	'forest'	NA	NA	1.06
speaker6	'neighbour'	2.1	3.49	1.65
speaker6	mean	1,43	2,34	1,42
median	all speakers	0.89	1.55	1.56