HIDE-and-SEEK: Towards the typology of underspecified verbs

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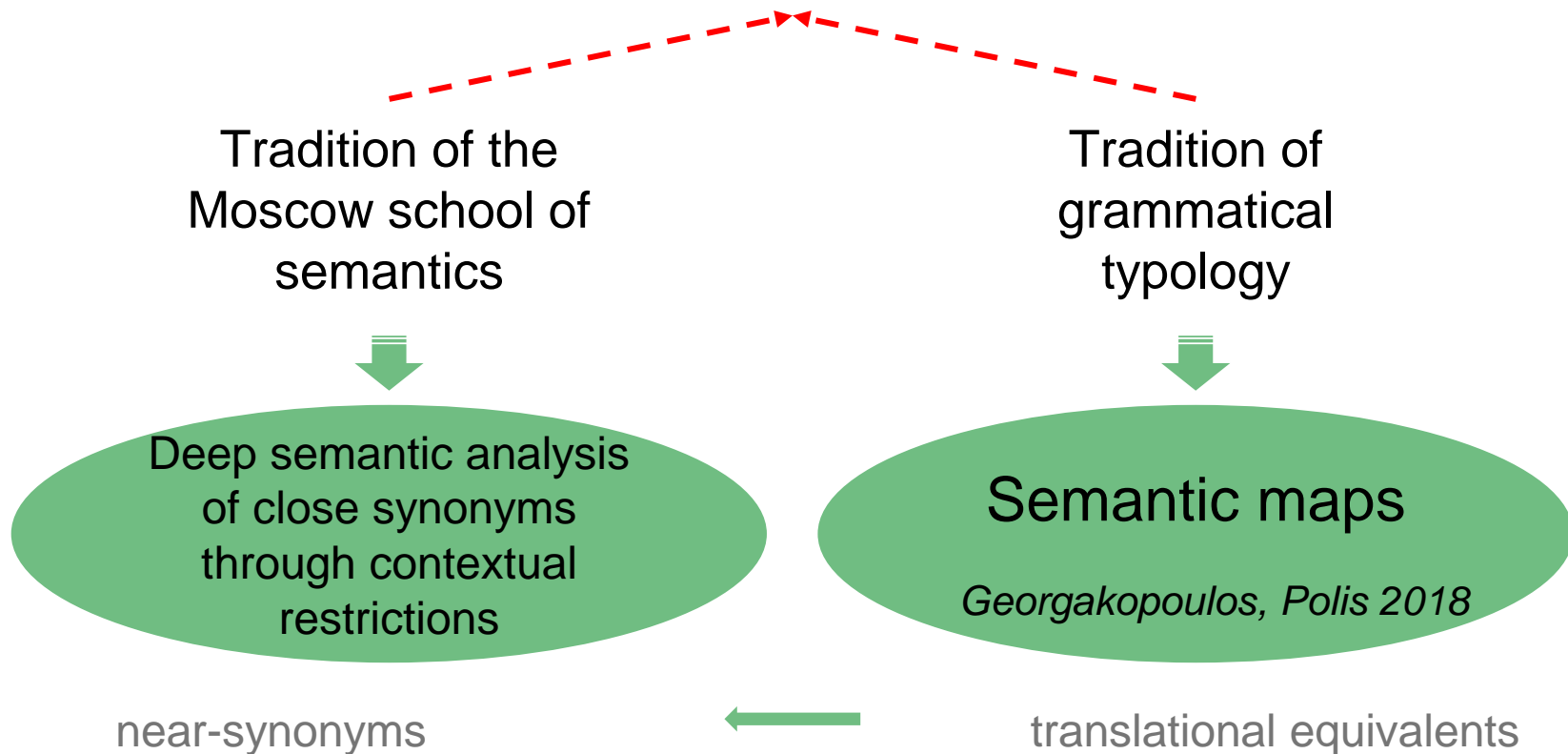SLE 2023, Athens, 31.08.2023

The object of the study

Semantic fields HIDE and SEEK as a next step in lexical typology of physical processes, cf.

- giving (Newman 1998)
- cutting & breaking (Majid & Bowerman 2007)
- eating & drinking (Newman 2009)
- putting & taking (Kopecka & Narasimhan 2012)
- aqua-motion (Lander et al. 2012)
- falling (Rakhilina et al. 2020, 2022)
- bringing & taking away (Margetts et al. 2022), etc.

…with their very special features

The frame approach to lexical typology

Tradition of the Moscow school of semantics

Tradition of grammatical typology

Deep semantic analysis of close synonyms through contextual restrictions

Semantic maps

Georgakopoulos, Polis 2018

near-synonyms   translational equivalents

Rakhilina E., Reznikova T. A frame-based approach to lexical typology, 2016.
Rakhilina E., Reznikova T., Ryzhova D. (Eds.) The typology of physical qualities. John Benjamins Publishing Company, 2022.

Methodology
The central notion: frame

Fillmorian frame + semantic restrictions on the slots

- Frame = an entry for typological **questionnaires**
- Frame = a node for **semantic maps**
- Frame = a **situation** typical for a certain semantic domain

Data sources:

dictionaries – corpora – fieldwork

(context-based questionnaires)

Our methodology: diagnostic contexts

- *He is **looking for** his lost keys*
- *I am **looking for** a John Smith, the bus driver*
- *He was **groping for** a way out of the dark corridor*
- *They **searched** the house for the criminal*
- *Highly qualified secretary **seeks** employment*
- *...*

cf. grammatical typology (questionnaires
for cogrammification)

Language sample: SEEK (being updated)

- <u>Indo-European:</u> Belorussian, Bulgarian, Czech, English, French, German, Italian, Icelandic, Lithuanian, Persian, Polish, Russian, Serbian, Shughni, Spanish, Swedish
- <u>Northwest Caucasian:</u> Abaza, Adyghe
- <u>Northeast Caucasian:</u> Aghul, Andi, Archi, Avar, Bagvalal, Chamalal, Godoberi, Khwarshi-Inkhoqwari
- <u>Uralic:</u> Kazym Khanty, Nganasan
- <u>Turkic:</u> Kazakh
- <u>Tungusic:</u> Nanai, Ulch
- <u>Chukotko-Kamchatkan:</u> Amguema Chukchi
- <u>Australian, non-Pama-Nyungan:</u> Kunbarlang
- Japanese, Mandarin Chinese

For the data on individual languages see (Ryzhova et al. (eds.) 2018)

Language sample: HIDE (being updated)

- <u>Indo-European:</u> Armenian, Czech, English, French, German, Hindi, Italian, Lithuanian, Norwegian, Ossetian, Persian, Polish, Romani, Russian, Shughni, Spanish, Swedish
- <u>Semitic:</u> Arabic, Tigrinya
- <u>Northwest Caucasian:</u> Adyghe
- <u>Austroasiatic:</u> Khmer
- <u>Uralic:</u> Finnish
- <u>Turkic:</u> Kazakh, Turkish
- Basque, Japanese, Khmer, Korean, Mandarin Chinese

See (Reznikova 2022)

List of contributors

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Main oppositions in the field structure
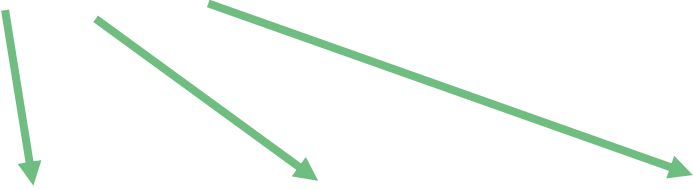
Lexical oppositions in physical processes

Semantic types of arguments / participants, cf. verbs of eating & drinking

- type of a **subject**: Ger. *essen* vs. *fressen* (human vs. animal)
- type of an **object**: Eng. *eat* vs. *drink* (solid vs. liquid), Shughni *θaptow* (bulk substances)
- type of an **instrument**: Russian *jest'* vs. *xlebat'* (with a spoon) vs. *tyanut'* (with a straw)

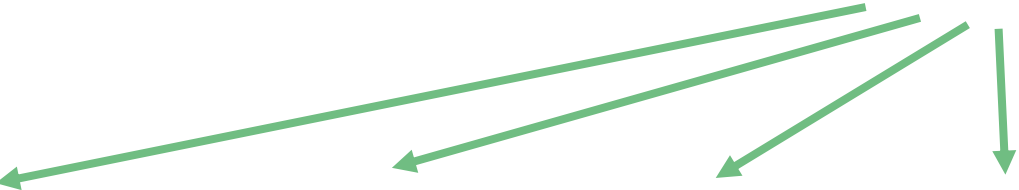The verbs of hiding and seeking generally follow this pattern, **but can also deviate from it**

SEEK

(1) Who? **(2) What?** **(3) Where?**

She is looking for her phone in her bag
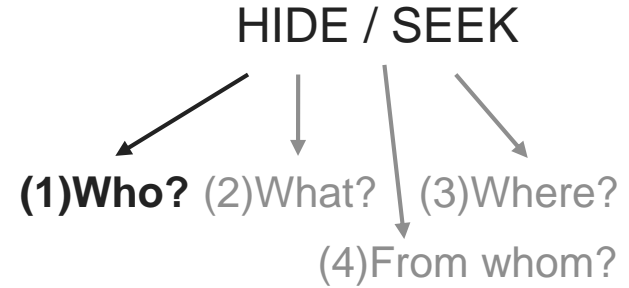
HIDE

(1) Who? **(2) What?** **(3) Where?** **(4) From whom?**

She is hiding the phone in her bag from the child

(1) Who? Human vs. animal

SEEK:
Jap. *sagasu* – general verb
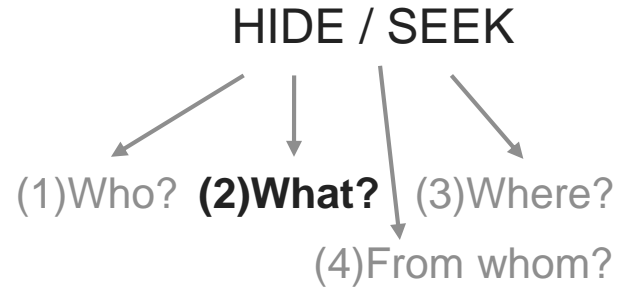*asaru* – looking for food (about animals)

- *Poketto   no   naka   o   sagasu.*
  pocket   GEN   inner.part   ACC   look.for
  'to search in your pocket'
- *Niwatori   ga   mushi   o   asaru.*
  chicken   NOM   insect   ACC   look.for
  'A chicken is looking for insects'

HIDE: Rus. *spryatat'* vs. *pripryatat'*

(2) What? Type of an object

HIDE: physical vs. abstract, human vs. non-human

(2) What? Type of an object

HIDE: physical vs. abstract, human vs. non-human

SEEK: specific vs. non-specific

Quine (1956) 'I want / look for a sloop' – two readings:

- **de re**: 'a desire for a particular sloop'
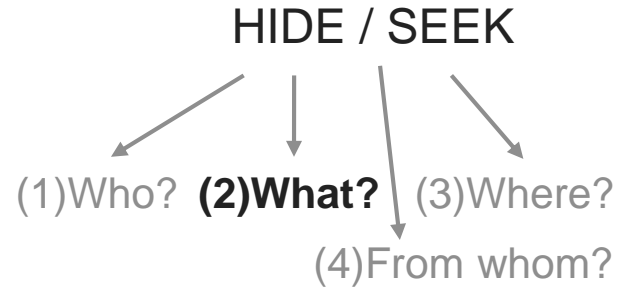- **de dicto**: 'relief from slooplessness'

Lexical level: AGHUL: *arucas* VS. *ǯik'arq'as*

Cf. X + *arucas* /*ǯik'arq'as* + *sus* 'fiancee'

arucas: 'X is looking for *his* fiancee'

(= 'the person X is engaged with')

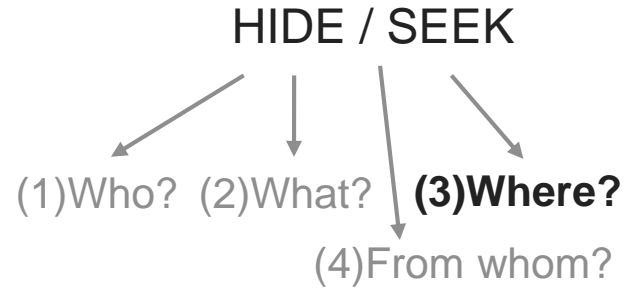*ǯik'arq'as*: 'X is looking for a wife' (=no concrete candidate)

(3) Where?

HIDE: ground as a salient place, cf. *bury*

SEEK: looking for an object vs. searching a place (metonymy)

Eng. *search* vs. *look for*

Police searched the area for clues

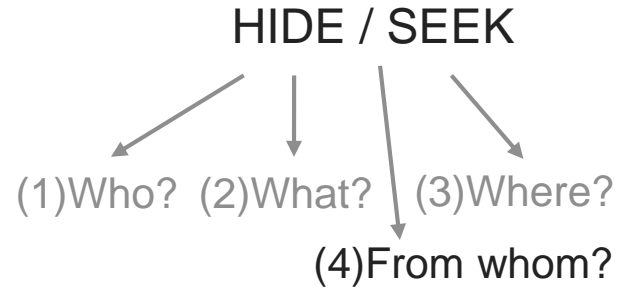*Police is looking for information regarding the identity of this female*

(4) From whom?

From **a human counteragent** (potential observer) vs.
from some **external impact** (wind, sun, etc.):

English:
to hide *money under the pillow* vs. ***to cover*** *one's eyes from the sun*

Adyghe *ʁebəʌə-* vs. *wəχʷəme-,* Basque *ezkutatu* vs. *estali,* etc.

Non-argument semantic oppositions

*They can be trained to **sniff out** drugs, money, even remainders of pesticides on agricultural produce.*

*I **fumble** for my iPad 4 mini, fingering the screen to get to my questions.*

SEEK (and HIDE)

(1)Who? (2) What? (3) Where? How?

SEEK

MAD MAN
looking for a
GOOD WIFE

Which ways of seeking (and hiding) are regularly lexicalized in different languages?

Lexicalized ways of seeking

(1) Perception

Jap. *saguru* '**feel** for smth' [tactile],
Eng. *grope, fumble, sniff out*
Kaz.: *timiskilew* 'smell, sniff' (of a dog) + 'search, dart about'

Diachronically:
Eng. main verb: *look for smth* [>visual]
Czech *hledat* [>visual]

?? listen
?? [*taste]

(2) Following and walking around

●SERB. *tražiti, tragati* 'spoor, trail, follow':

general verb of motion 'walk / go':
●FR: *chercher* , IT: *cercare* < late Latin *circare* 'walk around'
●AGHUL: *gada*   *dada-q*   *aruca-a*
                son   father-**POST**   go/search-PRS
                'The son is looking for his father'

(3) Searching a place:
various manipulations with objects in a space

ABAZA**:**

aqərkṣara, aqrəŝtra '**turn over**'

RUS**:**

perevernut' 'turn over', *sherstit'* < 'fur' (primarily 'to **tumble**'),

perekopat' / pereryt' < '**dig / rootle**',

perebrat' 'run one's fingers over' < 'take'

+ 'to **clean**', 'to **comb**'

KUNBARLANG (Australia):

- *-birrdjuwa* < *birr-* 'hand' and *-djuwa* 'pierce'
  'cleaning with a **broom** or with a **rake**' => 'search a place'

Lexicalized ways of hiding

(1) Putting

- General putting:

It. *mettere*, Arm. *dnel*

- Arranging (putting objects in their places)

It. *riporre,* Fr. *ranger*

- Putting into some specific place:
- ❑ Ground: Eng. *bury*; Fr. *enfouir, enterrer*; Sp. *enterrar*
- ❑ Forest: It. *imboscare* (<*bosco* 'forest')
- ❑ Box: Kaz. *gizlemek* (< *gīŕ* 'box')

(2) Covering

- It. *coprire*
- Sp. *cubrir*
- Ger. *verdecken, verhüllen*
- Pol. *(u)kryć*
- Oss. *æмбæрзын*
- Sw. *täcka, skyla*
- Nor. *dekke*

(3) Making the object homogeneous with the environment

- ❑ Ger. *tarnen*, *maskieren*
- ❑ Fr. *camoufler, masquer*
- ❑ Adyghe *xeʁeḳʷeč'e-* 'mix into'

Underspecification

- Basic (dominant) verbs of seeking and hiding do not specify the physical actions that lead to the desired outcome => such verbs are **underspecified**

- Diachronically, they often evolve from verbs denoting some specific way of seeking/hiding (e.g. *look for*), cf. **bleaching**

Conclusion and discussion

HIDE and SEEK as the domains of underspecification

- Two types of lexical oppositions:
    - Argument oppositions: due to participants of different semantic types
    - Non-argument oppositions: types of physical actions performed to achieve the result
- There is a limited set of lexicalized ways of seeking/hiding

- The verbs that do not distinguish between different ways of seeking/hiding are **underspecified** in this respect

- Specific ways of seeking/hiding serve as sources for underspecified verbs (bleaching)

- There are many other fields that are lexicalized according to similar principles, cf. PRETEND, REVENGE, DECEIVE, etc.

Underspecification in grammar

German verb inflection

		PRS	PST
SG	1	*lach-e*	*lach-te*
	2	*lach-st*	*lach-te-st*
	3	*lach-t*	*lach-te*
PL	1	*lach-en*	*lach-te-n*
	2	*lach-t*	*lach-te-t*
	3	*lach-en*	*lach-te-n*

underspecification analysis

-e	[+1] /–PST
-st	[+2]
-t₁	[ ] /–PST
-(e)n	[+PL]
-t₂	[+2, +PL]
-te	[+PST]

After Wunderlcih 1996, Haspelmath 2023

Underspecification in the lexicon

- Looking
- Touching
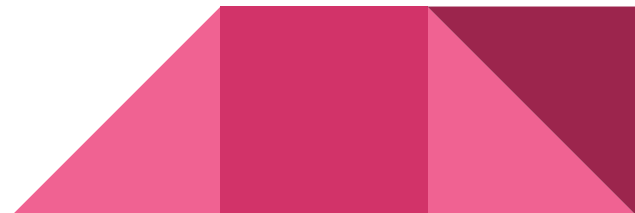- Following
- Digging…

...in order to find

way

purpose

fumble: [+way, +purpose]
look for: [+purpose]

Thank you for your attention!

Coexpression and synexpression

- Looking
- Touching
- Following
- Digging...

→ ...in order to find

colexification

syllexification