Workshop: **Space in diachrony: asymmetries in the space domain and their developments**

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**Workshop description**

The workshop addresses changes in the coding of spatial relations, with a focus on the coding of similarities and differences among spatial relations, or among variants of the same spatial relation, in order to better understand the nature of asymmetries in the encoding of spatial relations and shed light on the relationship between goals, sources, paths, and static locations. Topics that we would like to discuss include the source-goal asymmetry, differential marking of spatial relations, polysemy or lack of polysemy among markers of spatial relations, and the related diachronic developments.

**Asymmetries between goals and sources**

Recent research has demonstrated a number of differences in the encoding of goals and sources of motion. In general, goals of motion are expressed more frequently and in more fine-grained ways than sources ([Stefanowitsch & Rohde 2004; Regier & Zheng 2007](#), inter alia). The asymmetry also shows up in more subtle syntactic phenomena: unlike sources, which often behave as adjuncts, goals tend to share properties with verbal arguments, and they are also more likely than sources to be incorporated in the argument structure of verbal applicatives (Baker 1988; Filip 2003). Patterns of polysemy within systems of spatial marking also point in the same direction: static locations are often coded by the same markers as goals of motion, and in a way distinct from sources ([Blake 1977, Noonan 2009, Nikitina 2009, Pantcheva 2010, Zwarts 2010](#)). Not that this pattern of polysemy means that diachronic mergers of source and location are not attested; much to the contrary, individual locative markers – such as French *dedans* ‘inside’ – often go back to ablative expressions, suggesting an earlier ablative-locative transfer ([Mackenzie 1978 with examples from the Indo-European language phylum, Israeli Hebrew, and Austronesian languages](#)). What seems clear from the evidence adduced by Mackenzie, as well as from other scholars (e.g. [Bennett 1989, Nikitina & Spano 2014, Luraghi 2009 and 2010a](#)), is that once a marker acquires the locative meaning, it loses the original ablative meaning. Thus, while the extension from source to location is attested, polysemy tends to be avoided. Note, however, that special types of landmarks (spatial referents, human beings) often allow some overlap in the use of ablative and locative encoding, and can be at the origin of ablative-locative transfers ([Eckhoff, Thomason, de Swart 2013, Luraghi 2009 and 2014](#)). What accounts for the difference between the observed synchronic patterns of spatial encoding, which tend to conflate static locations and goals, and the frequently attested individual instances of ablative-locative syncretism? How do ablative-locative transfers come about? How do different types of goal-source asymmetry develop historically?
**Differential marking of landmarks**

The encoding of certain spatial relations depends on the type of landmark, and non-conventional landmarks (e.g. human beings) often require special types of encoding (Luraghi 2011). With time, such differential marking may give rise to markers that are no longer obviously related to the original spatial concept. For example, diachronically comitative markers seem to arise from markers of static location; however, synchronic locative-comitative polysemy seems to be avoided, just like the locative-ablative polysemy. What is the possible relation between the comitative, which implies the simultaneous involvement of two entities (often human beings) in a single event, and the locative, which implies physical coincidence or at least proximity? More research is needed on the diachronic relation between spatial and comitative markers, as at present, most evidence comes from Indo-European languages (Stolz, Stroh, Urzde 2006; Luraghi 2014). If location indeed functions as a source of comitatives cross-linguistically, what accounts for the virtual absence of synchronic polysemy between the two semantic roles? And more in general, how do patterns of differential marking of landmarks develop and what are their conditioning factors? What types of spatial relation are more likely to produce such asymmetries?

**Asymmetries in the encoding of path**

As compared to sources and goals of motion, the role of path remains largely understudied. In the light of cross-linguistic coding tendencies, goal (allative), source/origin (ablative), and (static) location (locative) seem to be more ‘basic’ spatial relations than path. As argued in Stolz (1992: 30), there is a tendency for case marking related to spatial relations to exhibit ‘Dreigliedrigkeit’, i.e. a tripartite structure featuring dedicated coding devices for location, direction and source. Indeed, path can often be coded through cases/adpositions that usually indicate location, as in English *Mary walks in the field. / The child is running in the street*. How are different kinds of path encoded, and where does this encoding come from? How is the distinction between unidirectional and multidirectional paths represented in different languages, and how does it develop historically?
References


