

A TYPOLOGY OF NON-VERBAL PREDICATION IN ERZYA

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Abstract: In the domain of non-verbal predication, three predication strategies are identified in Erzya. Predication is expressed in nominal, adjectival and locational predicate constructions by (i) the zero-copula construction, (ii) the predicative suffix construction or (iii) the copula construction. The variation of predication patterns is constrained by at least two factors. The part-of-speech affiliation of the predicate affects the choice of predication strategy. The relative frequency and degree of obligation for using the predicative suffix construction decreases as we move along the scale verb–adjective–noun. Thus, nominal predicates are encoded more often by zero-copula constructions than adjectival and locational predicates are. Another important factor that affects the choice of predication strategy is genre. To encode the present tense, predicative suffix constructions are more frequent in written Standard Erzya, while the zero-copula construction is more typical of spontaneous speech and translations. In written Standard Erzya, the predicative suffix construction occurs more regularly than the copula construction for encoding the past tense, too, whereas in the data coming from folklore, spontaneous speech and translations, the copula construction is clearly preferred.

Keywords: typology, predication strategy, nominal predicate, adjectival predicate, locational predicate

1. Introduction

Non-verbal predicate constructions in Erzya offer an interesting field for conducting language specific typology. The morphosyntactic structure of the constructions occurring in the domain of predication displays substantial variation. Instead of the two predication strategies found in Erzya

non-verbal predication by Stassen (1997, 597, 681), the present study shows that there are actually three, which is quite rare among the world's languages (cf. e.g., Stassen 1997, 336). The three predication strategies of Erzya are, however, not evenly used in non-verbal predicate constructions. The aim of this study is to determine the predication strategies of Erzya non-verbal predication, and show how the part-of-speech affiliation of the predicate affects the choice of predication strategy. Genre turns out to be another important factor affecting that choice.

As Nichols (2007) shows, many of the typological papers published recently concentrate on just a few languages or even a single language. In typological studies such as the present one, theories made on the basis of large sets of cross-linguistic data are tested and new information is provided by detailed description of one specific language. Language internal variation is comparable with cross-linguistic variation. Importantly, studies on language internal variation also provide information about diachronic processes. In sum, cross-linguistic and intralinguistic studies support each other (see, e.g., Greenberg 1995).

The constituent we are interested in here is the main predicate of a category other than verb—which is indicated by the use of the term *non-verbal*. The term *non-verbal predication* is used in Dik (1989, 92–3), Hengeveld (1992, 25–7), Dryer (2007, 224), and Eriksen (2006, 1–10). The terms *stative relation predication* (Hamari 2007, 23) and *predicate nominals* (Payne 1997, 111; Turunen 2006) can be used co-extensively; but here, it has been necessary to make distinctions among nominal, adjectival and locational predicates.

Non-verbal predicate constructions have a general format illustrated in Figure 1. The argument of the non-verbal predicate is the subject of the clause, which is semantically definite. In Erzya, it is often also overtly marked as definite. The subject and the non-verbal predicate may or may not be accompanied by a copula, and thus, the presence or lack of a copula is irrelevant for the determination of non-verbal predication (Hengeveld 1992, 26–7; similarly Kangasmaa-Minn 1971, 255).¹ The actual order of the constituents is irrelevant. In Erzya, in neutral contexts, free subjects precede the predicate, but the opposite word order is not rare, either.

¹ On the contrary, a nominal clause may also be defined as a clause without a copula. See, for example, Pajunen (1998a, 79).

Argument	(Copula)	Predicate
+DEF		-VERB

Fig. 1

The structure of a non-verbal predicate construction

The domain of non-verbal predication can be further classified into constructions that express class membership (proper inclusion), identification (equation), property concept (attribution), and location. The chosen terms are from Stassen (1997); those in brackets come from Payne (1997).² Furthermore, constructions expressing existence or possession are often discussed together with these (e.g., in Dik 1980, 161–80; 1997, 214; Hengeveld 1992; Payne 1997, 111–21; Hamari 2007). In the present study, as well as in Stassen’s, the criterion that the subject has to be semantically definite disqualifies existential and possessive constructions. Stassen also excludes identificational clauses from the domain of predication proper—as, according to him, identificational statements are not predicational (Stassen 1997, 11–2). Eriksen’s (2006, 2) definition of the domain of non-verbal predication is the narrowest: in his book, the term *non-verbal predicate* is used only in connection with adjectival and nominal predicates. Locational predicates are excluded from his study on the basis that, in many languages, “these parts of speech do not form true predicates, but the sentences have a copula verb of location/existence as their main predicate” (Eriksen 2006, 2). The same kind of strict division between predicate nouns or adjectives in the nominative and predicate nouns inflected in some oblique case is made in traditional Finno-Ugric studies as well. Anyhow, as Vilkuna (2003, 93–4) notes, both clause types report stative relations and the division made on the basis of the morphosyntactic behaviour of the nominal predicate is safe rather than semantically clear.

In Erzya non-verbal predicate constructions, which include nominal, adjectival and locational predications with semantically definite subjects, similar morphosyntactic encoding strategies can be used. Non-verbal predicates can be conjugated, whereas in Erzya existential and possessive constructions, non-verbal conjugation cannot be used. Thus, this area of Erzya grammar is, in Laakso’s (1997, 283) words, “syntactico-

² Bergemann (1993, 136) separates two Erzya construction types: those in which Erzya predicate nominals and adjectives are in the nominative, and those in which the predicate is either locational or any other adverbial expression.

semantically determined" (see Turunen forthcoming b), and it is reasonable to exclude Erzya existential and possessive constructions from the present study.

I have followed Stassen in labelling event predicates as *verbal predicates*, class-membership predicates as *nominal predicates*, and property concept predicates as *adjectival predicates*. However, to refer to the locational predicates, I will not use the term *adverb*. The traditional word-class labels 'noun', 'adjective', 'adverb' and 'verb' should be understood semantically and not as distinct formal categories in a particular language (Stassen 1997, 14–5). In recent typological-constructional theories, even the existence of cross-linguistic categories has been denied (e.g., Croft 2001, 50–1), although as suggested by Haspelmath (2007; 2008), typology should be studied by using **comparative concepts**. The comparative concept of *adjective* would be defined in this way: "an adjective is a lexeme that is primarily used to attribute a property to a nominal referent". To emphasise the language specific character of the categories, labels such as Noun, Adjective or Verb are used for word classes of some specific language, written with capital letters. Thus, the words referring to property concepts may surface as Verbs in a particular language, if they still fall under the above definition of comparative concept of adjective. Also, Erzya Nouns may function as adjectival predicates. This does not cause any problems if the determination of non-verbal predicate constructions is based on comparative concepts. As the present study deals only with the lexical classes of a single language, lowercase letters will be employed instead of capitals.

Even though I will mostly concentrate on non-verbal predication, I will, following Stassen, regard the role of intransitive verbal predicates as important for the establishment of the typology of the Erzya predication system. Table 1 gives Erzya key examples of the main intransitive predicate clause types.³ Clause (a) has a verbal predicate. It should be observed that Erzya intransitive verbal predicates are encoded in the present tense in a way similar to non-verbal predicates, using exactly

³ Abbreviations: 1 = 1st person, 2 = 2nd person, 3 = 3rd person, adj = adjectivalising suffix, adv = adverbialising suffix, car = caritive ['without'], conj = conjunctive, def = definite, dim = diminutive, ela = elative, encl = enclitic, freq = frequentative, gen = genitive, ill = illative, imp = imperative, inf = infinitive, ine = inessive, lat = lative, neg = negative, nom = nominalising suffix, ord = ordinal number, pass = passive, pl = plural, pst = past, ptcp = participle, refl = reflexive, sg = singular, tra = translative.

the same person agreement markers. In the non-verbal predicate clauses (b–d), the semantic predicate does not express an action or an event, the contents usually expressed by a verb. In (b), the predicate expresses a property concept, and the predicate is an adjective. In (c), the clause denotes class membership and the predicate is an indefinite noun. Locational predicates in Erzya are either nouns inflected in one of the locative cases, as in (d), or else postpositions or other locational expressions.

Table 1

Key examples of Erzya intransitive predicate clauses

(a)	Verbal predicate Ton mor-at vadřa-sto. 2sg sing-2sg good-ela 'You sing well.'
(b)	Adjectival predicate Ton převej-at. 2sg smart-2sg 'You are smart.'
(c)	Nominal predicate Ton student-at. 2sg student-2sg 'You are a student.'
(d)	Locational predicate Ton kudo-s-at. 2sg house-ine-2sg 'You are at home.'

In the clauses in Table 1, the subject is overtly coded by the free second person singular pronoun *ton*, as well as the bound person marker of the second person singular *-t* (on the use of free and bound person markers, see Turunen (forthcoming b)). In the verbal predicate clause (a), person inflection is obligatory, but as far as non-verbal predicate clauses such as (b–d) are concerned, there is variation with regard to predication strategies and their degree of obligation. The variation found in Erzya non-verbal predicate clauses is the main theme of this study. In brief, this study aims to answer the following questions:

- (i) What are the predication strategies used in Erzya non-verbal predicate clauses?
- (ii) How does the part of speech of the predicate affect the choice of predication strategy?
- (iii) What are the other factors that affect the variation of predication strategies?
- (iv) What is the structure of the semantic map of Erzya non-verbal predication?

Rich variation in the field of non-verbal predication is also typical of some other Uralic languages (see, e.g., Honti 1982), but the Mordvinic languages, Moksha and especially Erzya (see Turunen forthcoming b), vary extremely in this respect. The Mordvinic languages are well documented and descriptions of their grammar have long traditions. However, the syntax of the Mordvinic languages has gained far less attention than their phonology and morphology. A thorough study of Erzya non-verbal predication has not so far been published. Mordvinic predicative clauses are, though, discussed more in detail in two articles by Bartens (1996) and Alhoniemi (1982). Recently, also Hamari (2007) has discussed profoundly the Mordvinic patterns of non-verbal predication, concentrating on negation. Erzya has also been one of the many target languages in two previously mentioned cross-linguistic typological studies by Stassen (1997) and Eriksen (2006). In both studies, one aim has been to describe the possible predication strategies and classify Erzya in a cross-linguistic context. This paper aims to connect the results of cross-linguistic typological studies with a large empirical database on Erzya non-verbal predicate clauses collected by the author. It will be shown that language specific typological research is needed in addition to cross-linguistic typological studies. This also holds the other way round, since many of the cross-linguistic studies are based on such large samples that all the relevant details from all the languages in the sample are impossible to determine and interpret.

The structure of this study is as follows. After presenting the database, the predication patterns found in cross-linguistic studies are discussed, and the morphosyntactic strategies of Erzya are identified. The universal cognitive map of non-verbal predication gives theoretical background to the second part of this study, in which Erzya non-verbal predicate constructions are inspected from the point of view of the various parts of speech functioning as the predicate. This will lead us to a de-

scription of the Erzya semantic map of non-verbal predication, which is structured on the basis of previous typological studies and my own findings. The third aspect of Erzya non-verbal predication strategies discussed here is their use in diverse genres. The last section offers some general conclusions.

2. Data

To obtain an overall picture on Erzya non-verbal predicate constructions, various methods of data collection can be used. This study is more qualitative than quantitative, but the relative frequency of the construction types also plays an important role in the definition of typical predication strategies.

In order to obtain the most extensive and most reliable results possible, many types of data will be employed in this study. The main body of written material has been collected from the Volga server of the Research Unit for Volgaic Languages, University of Turku. The part of the corpus I have used consists of unanalysed texts collected from the Erzya journal *Syatko* (issues 2, 3, 4, 7 and 10 from 2003). I refer to the sources by the number of the issue. Because I used an electronic corpus, page numbers are not available. The advantage of using *Syatko* is that the texts in it have been written by many different authors and thus they represent many idiolects. Furthermore, several different genres are presented: there are short stories, poetry, and articles about literature and history. As a second type of data, I have chosen three novels by three different authors and two books consisting of prose pieces written by several authors. A list of these works is included at the end of this paper. I shall refer to this material using the name of the author and the year of publication of the novel. As a third type of data, folklore material from Mordwinische Volksdichtung I–III, collected by Heikki Paasonen at the end of the 19th century, has been added. The genre of this material is mainly folk poetry. The data collected from all three types of written sources contains a total of about 5000 non-verbal predicate constructions.

The fourth kind of data consists of conversations. Conversations with 16 Erzya women were recorded in Mordovia during the summer 2005 by Svetlana Motorkina for the purposes of the present study. Three conversations were recorded in Hungary with two Erzya and three Moksha informants by the author. All the data on tape were analysed by the author. During the conversations, the informants were asked to speak

about themselves, their family and childhood, as well as the surroundings in which they live. During the conversations, Erzya was used. The total length of the conversations is about five hours. The informants were from 17 to 57-year-old women, and 11 of the informants had an academic education in Erzya. All of them were Erzya-Russian bilingual, and some were clearly more competent in Russian than in Erzya. However, as the data displays relatively homogeneous predication patterns regardless of the possible sociolinguistic factors, the detailed background of the informants is not provided.⁴ The spoken data is unfortunately too limited for statistical generalisations, but it does offer complementary information on present-day language use. Where examples are taken from spoken data, the initials of the informant are shown after the spoken phrase. I have also consulted the Erzya lecturers at the University of Szeged, working now at the University of Saransk, Svetlana Motorkina and Nina Kazaeva.⁵

In addition, in the autumn of 2006 my friend and former colleague Svetlana Motorkina gathered data for the purposes of this study. Research was carried out at the Department of Finno-Ugric and Comparative Linguistics of Saransk University. First, 19 Erzya and 7 Moksha students filled in questionnaires, after which 23 questionnaires were filled in by Erzya and 15 by Moksha students. The Erzya and Moksha students translated Russian sentences with non-verbal predicates into their particular mother tongue. The students were asked to fill in the questionnaires in their own dialect. One of the questionnaires was incomplete, hinting that the informant's skills in Erzya were not good enough to translate the sentences. Presumably all the informants were bilingual in Erzya/Moksha and Russian. Both questionnaires, designed by the author, consisted of 15 different types of non-verbal predicate clauses. The aim of the study assisted by these questionnaires was to collect comparative data to obtain more information about the present-day language. As reported in Turunen (forthcoming b), even though the method of collecting data by translations has many disadvantages, important differences can be observed between Erzya and Moksha by using this method. Most importantly, the differences between the two Mordvinic languages demon-

⁴ The data does, however, offer interesting material for studying other phenomena that are more affected by sociolinguistic factors.

⁵ In addition, I wish to thank Ágnes Felföldi for helping me in this project. I would also like to express my gratitude to Riho Grünthal and the two anonymous referees for their comments on this paper.

strated that even though the data consisted of translations, the predication patterns similar to Russian—which were frequent in Erzya—were not attested in Moksha. Thus, the fact that they were attested frequently in Erzya should not **only** be attributed to the method of data collection.

3. Predication strategies of non-verbal predicate constructions in Erzya

Non-verbal predication has been a target of at least three typologically oriented studies by Hengeveld (1992), Stassen (1997), and Eriksen (2006). Although these works are independent of each other, they also display many common features. All three works identify three main ways of encoding non-verbal predication, even though the correspondences between the strategies identified by Hengeveld, Stassen and Eriksen are not totally one-to-one. In what follows, cross-linguistically identifiable predication strategies will be discussed, and the theoretical background for determining Erzya patterns as well as a semantic map of Erzya non-verbal predication will be presented. The emphasis will be on Stassen's theory, with which I will begin.

In Stassen's typology, predicates are divided into four semantic sets: the predicate categories of verbs, adjectives, nominals and locationals. Moreover, predication strategies are also identified and labelled on the basis of parts of speech. A prototypically verbal strategy is used if predication is expressed by an event predicate (verb), a prototypically nominal strategy is used if the predicate expresses class membership (noun) and a prototypically locational strategy is used if the predicate encodes location (adverb). Adjectives do not have their own prototypical strategy: the encoding of adjectival predicates is carried out using a nominal, verbal or locational strategy. The three predication strategies can be characterised by the following formal features (Stassen 1997, 121):

- (i) the verbal strategy (V) is non-supported and includes person agreement,
- (ii) the nominal strategy (N) is supported and includes zero-copulas, pronominal copulas or participle copulas, and
- (iii) the locational strategy (L) is supported and employs fully verbal support items.

Stassen's definitions of the three strategies are comparable to those of Hengeveld and Eriksen. According to Hengeveld (1992, 192), the absence of a copula may be a sign of two different expression formats. The first one is the type in which the non-verbal predicate shows the same syntactic behaviour as a verbal predicate, that is, a non-verbal predicate allows for the same kind of marking for person/number and tense as an intransitive verbal predicate does (even though the paradigms are asymmetrical, see Turunen forthcoming a). Hengeveld refers to this as the **zero-1 construction**. He suggests that application of the zero-1 strategy in fact boils down to not applying any particular strategy for the expression of non-verbal predications at all, since in this strategy non-verbal predicates are treated in the same way as verbal predicates are. This strategy corresponds to Stassen's definition of verbal strategy. Further, in Hengeveld's theory, the strategy in which the subject and the non-verbal predicate are simply juxtaposed is referred to as the **zero-2 construction**. In this expression format the non-verbal predicate does not show the same morphosyntactic behaviour as an intransitive verbal predicate does. This corresponds to the prototypical nominal strategy in Stassen's typology. Hengeveld continues by stating that if a language does not allow the use of neither a zero-1 strategy nor a zero-2 strategy, a predicativising strategy is needed. Then a copula is introduced that is capable of carrying the distinctions characteristic of main predicates (Hengeveld 1992, 185–6, 188–90). The verbal copulas represent a locational strategy in Stassen's theory.

In Eriksen's (2006, 2, 5, 10) classification, if adjectives and nouns bear the same type of tense, aspect and mood morphology as verbs do, they are **predicative**. The predicate systems of languages differ in how they express their **unpredicative** parts of speech as predicates. Two main routes can be observed: **addition** and **prevention**. Thus, if a part of speech is unpredicative, either some element (a copula) is added, or the expression of some inflectional categories is prevented.

I have chosen the following labels for the Erzya predication strategies, which reveal the morphosyntactic strategy of predication (below my labels, those suggested by Hengeveld, Stassen and Eriksen are also given).

Predication strategies of Erzya non-verbal predication**Predicative suffix construction**

Verbal strategy/zero-1 construction/predicative

- (1) Adjectival predicate encoded by person agreement
 Kodamo kežej-at. . . (Syatko 2003, 4)
 how angry-2sg
 ‘How angry you are. . .’

Zero-copula construction

Nominal strategy/zero-2 construction/prevention

- (2) Nominal predicate encoded by zero-copula
 Ton laborant. (spoken data, S.M.)
 2sg technician
 ‘You are a technician.’

Copula construction

Locational strategy/predicativising copula/addition

- (3) Nominal predicate encoded by verbal copula
 Ška-t-ńe ul-ńe-š-t še-de vešola-t. (spoken data, T.K.)
 time-pl-def be-freq-1pst-3pl it-abl cheerful-pl
 ‘Those times were happier.’

Example (1) illustrates the predicative suffix construction. This construction is non-supported and includes person agreement, which corresponds to Stassen’s verbal strategy, Hengeveld’s zero-1 construction⁶ and Eriksen’s definition of predicative constructions. Example (2) illustrates the zero-copula construction, juxtaposition without any copulative element. Stassen defines this as prototypical nominal strategy, Hengeveld as zero-2 construction and Eriksen as prevention of the use of inflectional items. Example (3) illustrates the copula construction and can be regarded as the locational strategy in Stassen’s theory, given that the construction

⁶ The Erzya construction type in which the predicative suffix occurs could be regarded as a zero copula construction, if the term *copula* is used to refer to verbal copulas only.

is supported and the copula is a Verb.⁷ In Eriksen's terms, Erzya adjectives, nouns and locatives are predicative, as they can be inflected for person and tense, as illustrated in Table 2 below. The non-verbal predicate classes of Erzya are, however, ambiguous in that they can also be unpredicative: inflectional morphology is optional, and in some cases even prevented. In these cases, the copula can be regarded as an additional strategy.

Typical of Erzya, among many other languages, is that more than one strategy may be used in encoding some predicate classes. This phenomenon is called **switching**. When some of these strategies are also used outside their prototypical region, the term **takeover** (of a strategy) is used (Stassen 1997, 29, 121). In this study, I will keep an eye on both phenomena: takeovers and switching. In the next section, I will concentrate on the morphosyntactic encoding of predication, and present the Erzya predication strategies in detail. As I have classified the Erzya constructions in a manner different from that of Stassen, especially concerning the predicative suffix construction, Stassen's classification of the Erzya strategies of predication will be compared to my own. After presenting the predicative suffix construction, Stassen's classification of Erzya is inspected in detail. After that, I continue with the zero-copula construction and, finally, I turn to the copula construction.

4. Predicative suffix constructions

In predicative suffix constructions, predication is indicated by inflectional person/number and tense markers. In other words, in Erzya—as well as in the other Mordvinic language Moksha—it is possible to conjugate nouns, adjectives and locative expressions with person/number and tense markers, concerning which the term *nominal conjugation* has been traditionally used. Here, the use of person/number and tense markers on non-verbal predicates is referred to as **non-verbal conjugation**. This new term has been inspired partly by Comrie (1988, 465), who notes that the term *nominal conjugation*—when used in connection with the inflected non-verbal predicates of Erzya such as locational expressions—is insuf-

⁷ Some linguists use the term *copula* to refer only to the verb 'be' in constructions in which the non-verbal predicate is in the nominative (see, e.g., Lakó 1991, 11, 19–20).

ficient because we are not dealing with a purely nominal category. The structure of the predicative suffix construction is as follows:

(Argument NP) + predicate N/A/Loc + (2pst) + person/number

The subject NP does not have to be overtly coded by free personal pronouns when predicative suffixes are used (see Turunen forthcoming b). In the present tense construction, person agreement markers are fused with non-verbal predicates without further derivational measures being taken. The present tense is morphologically unmarked. In past tense constructions, the development of predicative suffixes differs, as a copula bearing person/number markers is fused with non-verbal predicates. However, synchronically the past tense bears a tense marker *-l* and person/number agreement markers (e.g., Bartens 1999, 108, 129).

Table 2

Predicative suffixes of the present and past tenses, MdE *od* ‘young’
(Cygankin et al. 2000, 109)

	Present		Past	
1sg	od-an	‘I am young.’	od-ol-iń	‘I was young.’
2sg	od-at	‘You are young.’	od-ol-it	‘You were young.’
3sg	od-∅	‘He/She is young.’	od-ol	‘He/She was young.’
1pl	od-tano	‘We are young.’	od-ol-ińek	‘We were young.’
2pl	od-tado	‘You are young.’	od-ol-ide	‘You were young.’
3pl	od-t	‘They are young.’	od-ol -t	‘They were young.’

The Erzya non-verbal conjugational paradigms of the present and second past tenses are identical to verbal conjugational paradigms, the only difference being in the third person singular of the present tense. The third person singular form of the non-verbal conjugation is the zero-morpheme—or, it does not have any formal encoding—but the third person singular of the verbal conjugation is based on participial forms. The third person plural form of the verbal conjugation is diachronically formed by attaching the plural suffix to the participial form (e.g., Bartens 1999, 123, 125). Third-person subjects lead to neutralisation of the predicative suffix construction and the zero-copula construction, since third person singular forms are always zero-copula constructions. This is to be expected as many languages have paradigms with zero expression in the

third person singular (e.g., Siewierska 2004, 24; Croft 2006, 114). According to Haspelmath (2002, 239–40, 245), one of explanations lies in the frequency of the third person: frequent inflectional categories are not expressed overtly at all, but are left to be inferred from the context.

The system in Erzya, in which all predicates can be conjugated regardless of the class of the predicate, is economical. Even so, the fact is that systems of this kind are not attested very often in the world's languages. On the contrary, cross-linguistically person agreement with event predicates alone is far more common than with both event and property predicates, and person agreement with all four classes of predicates is least common. This means that event predicates are particularly favoured in relation to person agreement (Eriksen 2006, 1–2; Siewierska 2004, 132). The use of non-verbal conjugation is, however, common in the Turkic languages and in some other languages of North-Eastern Asia. In the direct neighbourhood of the Mordvinic languages, non-verbal conjugation is used among other predication strategies in Tatar and Bashkir (Berta 1998, 298; Stassen 1997, 283–93; Wintchalek 1993, 85–9). Whether the development of non-verbal conjugation in the Mordvinic languages is influenced by contacts should be the subject of a special study.

4.1. Stassen's classification of the Erzya predicative suffix construction: a critical review

As discussed above in connection with cross-linguistic typologies, the type of non-verbal predicate construction that displays similar morphosyntactic behaviour with verbal predicate construction is regarded either as a zero-1 construction (Hengeveld), or as an instance of the verbal strategy (Stassen). Interestingly, however, Stassen (1997, 39, 77) does not regard the predicative suffix construction in Erzya as a verbal strategy.

According to Stassen, the key Erzya examples in Table 1 display a nominal strategy. Also, Erzya verbal intransitive predicates are encoded by the nominal strategy. Stassen states that even though predicative suffixes are identical to the PNG-markers (person, number and gender markers) of verbal conjugation, they have not emerged from the verbal paradigm, but they are pronominal copulas born in non-verbal predicate constructions. He refers to the phenomenon as **nonverbal person agreement**. (It must be noted here that Stassen did not take into account the possibility of inflecting non-verbal predicates in the past tense.) According to him, Erzya verbal predicates have not been totally taken over by a

nominal strategy, since Erzya also employs other kinds of person agreement markers in its verbal conjugational paradigms, namely, those of object conjugation. The suffixes of the object conjugation are, in Stassen's theory, instances of a verbal strategy. Thus in Erzya, the nominal pattern is combined with the verbal pattern in a way that the nominal pattern is used in subject conjugation, and the verbal pattern in object conjugation (Stassen 1997, 289–91).

Stassen's hypothesis has been criticised previously. It has been noted that the division of labour between subject and object conjugation is diachronically problematic and is not probable (Hamari 2007, 71; Pajunen 1998b). Hamari (2007, 72) suggests that non-verbal and verbal conjugation have arisen in mutual interaction. From a diachronic point of view, the predicative suffix construction is something of a mixture between the nominal and verbal strategies. Further, it could be noted that Stassen's suggestion that the suffixes of Erzya object conjugation are more of a verbal nature than those of its subject conjugation does not seem natural, because Erzya suffixes of object conjugation are closely related to possessive suffixes—clearly more of a nominal than a verbal category.

Even if the diachronic evidence is not taken into account and predicative suffix constructions are classified purely from the synchronic point of view, I still find Stassen's classification problematic. Stassen (1997, 289–91) states that the negation criterion has a crucial role in determining the status of languages that display non-verbal person agreement, including Erzya. Stassen does not even consider the possibility that the predicative suffix construction could be a verbal strategy, insisting that Erzya verbal predicates are encoded by a nominal strategy in subject conjugation. The only matter that Stassen finds problematic is that the non-verbal parts of speech are negated by a different strategy from that applied to verbs. From this he draws the conclusion that Erzya verbs do not totally exhibit a nominal strategy, since they display different kinds of negation strategies.

I believe, however, that Erzya predicative suffix construction could be considered a verbal strategy. According to Stassen (1997, 50), in order to be verbal, the encoding should be indistinguishable from that of the strategy for predicative verbs in three simultaneous respects: it has to parallel the encoding of event predicates on the agreement, auxiliary and negation criteria. The three prototypical features of the verbal strategy are

- the absence of supportive items,
- the presence of person agreement, and
- a specific negation strategy.

In my opinion, Erzya verbs fulfil Stassen's criteria of a verbal strategy, and Erzya verbs display only the features of verbal strategy. The first two criteria are fulfilled also by Erzya non-verbal predicates, as they can be encoded by person agreement markers without supportive items. The crucial difference is that non-verbal predicates can also be encoded without person agreement markers and with supportive items, but verbal predicates cannot.

Also, the negation of non-verbal predicates is, at least partly, similar to the negation of verbal predicates. Attention has previously been drawn to similarities between the encoding of negation in non-verbal and verbal predicate clauses (Pajunen 1998; Turunen 2006, 180–1; Hamari 2007, 70). In these studies, it is shown that the same negation particle *a* can be used in both non-verbal and verbal predicate constructions. Nevertheless, the situation is actually more complicated than this, because the negation system of Erzya stative clauses is extremely complex (for further discussion, see Hamari 2007). In this paper, the negation of non-verbal predicate clauses will be discussed after describing the affirmative patterns (see section **11**). After studying the negative counterparts of Erzya non-verbal predicate clauses, we should be able to determine whether Stassen's negation criterion is fulfilled, and whether the strategies of verbal and non-verbal predication are identical.

5. Zero-copula constructions

The most common pattern found in languages in the encoding of non-verbal predication is to employ juxtaposition to encode the present tense (cf., e.g., Payne 1997, 114). This pattern is found in Erzya as well. In zero-copula constructions the use of a subject pronoun is obligatory for marking subject persons other than the third, and the word order is rigid. The word order shows which part of the construction is the predicate and which is the subject. The structure of the zero-copula construction is as follows:

Subject NP + predicate NP/AP/Loc

In the written language, in zero-copula constructions the subject and the non-verbal predicate are sometimes separated with a dash, as in example (4), for which Russian orthography has served as the model. Of course, in the spoken language, besides word order, prosody also indicates parts of the construction.

- (4) Miška, ton — geńij! (Syatko 2003, 4)
 Mishka 2sg genius
 ‘Mishka, you are a genius!’

It was shown above that third person subjects lead to neutralisation between predicative suffix constructions and zero-copula constructions. The zero-copula construction is the only present tense construction type when the subject is in the third person and thus the distinction between present tense constructions can be made only in 1st and 2nd person subject constructions. The lack of supportive items is characteristic of both zero-copula constructions and predicative suffix constructions. The crucial difference between the two is that the predicative suffix construction displays inflectional morphology similar to that of verbs, but the zero-copula construction lacks such morphology. However, if the subject is in the plural, the nominal and adjectival predicates agree in number, and this is expressed by the plural suffix *-t/-t̃* (see Turunen forthcoming b). Zero-copula constructions can only be used in referring to the present tense, as illustrated in Table 3.

Table 3

The present tense, zero-copula construction
 and the nominal predicate *azor* ‘lord’

1sg	Mon azor	1pl	Miń azor-t
2sg	Ton azor	2pl	Tiń azor-t
3sg	Son azor	3pl	Siń azor-t

The Erzya zero-copula construction is missing from Stassen’s study. This is not surprising, since even though Stassen had used, for Erzya, sources other than the oldest grammars by Wiedemann (1865), he most probably would not have been informed on the existence of a zero strategy, as the zero-copula construction is not usually mentioned in the newer grammars, either. An exception is Kolyadenkov (1959, 252–4; 1954, 178), who notes that either the free subject or the predicative suffix may be dropped at any

time without the construction becoming ungrammatical. Kolyadenkov provides examples of zero-copula constructions with class membership and property concept predicates. According to him, if the subject is emphatic the predicative suffix may be omitted (for further discussion, see Turunen forthcoming b).

6. *Ul'(ń)ems-copula constructions*

As a third possible strategy for encoding the predication in non-verbal predicate clauses, the copulas *ulems* and *ul'ńems* can be used. The paradigm of *ulems* is suppletive: it must always be inflected in the frequentative past tense. The use of a free subject pronoun is not necessary, since the copula is inflected for person, and thus the word order may vary. The structure of the copula construction is

Subject NP + copula + predicate NP/AP/Loc

Table 4 illustrates copula constructions in the present and past tenses; in this table the predicate example is the noun *azor* 'landowner'. In copula constructions, the nominal and adjectival predicates agree in number with the subject, as they do in zero-copula constructions.

Table 4

The *ul'(ń)ems-copula* construction, present and past tenses

Present tense			
1sg	Mon ul'-an azor	1pl	Miń ul'-fano azor-t
2sg	Ton ul'-at azor	2pl	Tiń ul'-fado azor-t
3sg	Son ul'-i azor	3pl	Siń ul'-if azor-t
Past tense			
1sg	Mon ul'-ń-i-ń azor	1pl	Miń ul'-ń-i-ńek azor-t
2sg	Ton ul'-ń-i-ť azor	2pl	Tiń ul'-ń-i-đe azor-t
3sg	Son ul'-ńe-ś azor	3pl	Siń ul'-ne-ś-ť azor-t

The etymology of the copula is important for Stassen's classification of Erzya. According to Stassen (1997, 55, 318, 336), the Erzya *ul'ńems-copula* construction is a locational strategy. The locational predication strategy is typically characterised by the presence of a supportive lexical item that has the morphosyntactic characteristics of a verb; this strategy is prototypically used in locational predicate constructions. Pajunen

(1998b, 481–2) criticised Stassen’s classification of the *ul’iems*-copula with reference to its etymological equivalents in other Uralic languages. She notes that the *ul’iems*-copula is etymologically a noun rather than a verb, and on these grounds it should be regarded not as a locative copula, but as an instance of nominal strategy in Stassen’s classification. Hamari (2007, 74) has regarded *ul’iems* as a **neutral** copula. From a synchronic point of view, I think that the *ul’iems* copula can be regarded as a stative verb, both morphosyntactically and semantically.

In Erzya, there is no inflectional category of future—the present and the future tenses being identical (Cygankin 2000, 164). The present-tense *ulems* copula has special semantic constraints, as this present-tense copula is actually used only in contexts where the meaning of the clause refers to the future (Budenz 1877, 75; Evsevjev 1963, 118; Cygankin 2000, 241). This is illustrated in (5) and (6).

- (5) Sonze marto vačo a ul-at. (Syatko 2003, 4)
 3sg.gen with hungry neg be-2sg
 ‘With her/him you will not go hungry.’
- (6) Vandí-ń čí-ze še-de-jak ul-i valdo... (Doronin 1996, 199)
 tomorrow-gen day-3sg it-abl-encl be-3sg bright
 ‘The day will be brighter tomorrow.’

The borderline between the present and future is somewhat fuzzy and sometimes hard to define. There are, however, some rare but clear examples in my folklore data, wherein the *ulems* copula is, unexpectedly, used for marking the present and **not** the future, as illustrated by examples (7) and (8). The original German translations are also in the present and do not suggest future time reference. In examples (7a) and (8), the predicative suffix could be used as well: there are no morphological constraints that would prevent it. In the construction illustrated in example (7b), the genitive case prohibits the use of a predicative suffix. In modern Erzya, when the predicate is in the genitive, the zero copula construction is used in the present tense (see Turunen forthcoming b). In the construction illustrated in example (9), a predicative suffix construction could possibly not come into play because of the possessive suffix (see Turunen forthcoming b). Corresponding constructions in the data from modern Erzya are all encoded by the zero-copula construction, and not by inflecting the *ulems* copula.

- (7) (a) ton ko-sto-ń uľ-at ton eřza-ń ćora... (MV I, 197)
 2sg where-ela-gen be-2sg 2sg Erzya-gen man
- (b) vaj uľ-an, avaj, mon še mastor-uń...
 oh be-1sg mother 1sg it country-gen
 ‘Where are you from, you Erzya man? I, mother, am from such and such a country...’
- (8) uh a uľ-an ińazoro (MV I, 72)
 oh neg be-1sg tsar
 ‘I am not the tsar.’
- (9) Sinst većke-ma sazor-ost mon uľ-an. (EJ, 68)
 3pl.gen love-inf sister-3pl 1sg be-1sg
 ‘I am their beloved sister.’

In verbal predicate constructions the auxiliary of the future is *karmams*, not *ulems*. In non-verbal predication, the analytic construction type consists of either the *ulems* copula, or the *karmams* copula, which can also be used (Bartens 1999, 128). According to Motorkina (p.c.), the auxiliaries *ulems* and *karmams* are interchangeable in non-verbal predicate constructions. To test the use of the two auxiliaries, the questionnaires (see section 2) contained two clauses with a future reference. In the clause illustrated by example (10), all the Erzyas except one used the auxiliary *karmams* and in example (11), all the Erzya informants translated the clause using the auxiliary *karmams* (in comparison, Mokshas used the two auxiliaries evenly).

- (10) Žardo ton karm-at pokš ćora-ks, ram-at eš-te-ť alkuks-oń mašina.
 when 2sg become-2sg big boy-tra buy-2sg self-to-2sg real-gen car
 ‘When you become a big boy, you’ll buy yourself a real car!’ (questionnaires)
- (11) Si ije-ste mon karm-an Saranskoj-se.
 come.ptcp year-ela 1sg be.fut-1sg Saransk-ine
 ‘Next year I will be in Saransk.’ (questionnaires)

I suggest that *ulems* also has other functions in folklore texts, such as emphasis, and it is furthermore possible that the present tense copula has previously been used to encode the present tense. According to the principle of no synonymy (e.g., Goldberg 1995, 67), if two constructions are syntactically distinct, they must be semantically or pragmatically distinct. The principle of no synonymy may explain the development of

the future category in non-verbal conjugation. It seems plausible that one of the present tense predication strategies specialised in encoding the future tense, namely, the *ulems*-copula. The other two, the zero-copula and the predicative suffix construction, however, continued to encode the present tense (if it can be assumed that the two existed side by side in earlier stages of the language).

Concerning the differences between Stassen's and the new classification, it must be noted that Stassen failed to take into account the fact that there is a restriction on using the *ulems*-copula in the present tense. The predicative suffix construction and the copula construction are not in free variation as suggested by Stassen (1997, 681), but—as illustrated above—the *ulems*-copula inflected in the present tense denotes the future and is not used to denote the present tense in Erzya—except in folklore and lyrics.

7. Conclusions concerning Erzya predication strategies

The three predication strategies vary with respect to their possibilities for use in the present, past and future tenses. Of the three predication patterns, the zero-copula construction can only be used in the present tense. The predicative suffix construction can be used in the present and past tenses. The copula construction can be used to refer to past and future tenses, as well as more marginally to the present tense. It is important to notice that if the mood is other than indicative, a copula construction must be chosen.

The distribution of predicate constructions with respect to tense leads to a situation in which there are always two possible strategies from which the speaker can choose. Table 5 shows that the zero-copula construction and the *ul(ń)ems*-copula construction are in complementary distribution: The zero-copula construction cannot be used in the past tense and the *ul(ń)ems*-copula construction cannot be used in present tense, with the exception of folklore data and lyrics, indicated in the table by (+). This means that predicative suffix constructions offer an alternative to zero-copula constructions in the present tense and *ul(ń)ems*-copula constructions in the past tense.

Table 5

The use of predication strategies according to temporal reference

	Present	Past
Zero-copula	+	-
Predicative suffix	+	+
Copula	-(+)	+

Now I will turn to inspecting the use of strategies that depends on the lexical class of the non-verbal predicate. It will be shown that there are differences between the adjectival, nominal and locational predicates with respect to the use of the three predication strategies, the predicative suffix, zero-copula and *ul'(ń)ems*-copula constructions, in the present as well as the past tense. These tendencies are best described in the form of a semantic map. I start by defining the cognitive space of non-verbal predication.

8. The cognitive map of intransitive predication

Stassen (1997) and Hengeveld (1992) have shown that the lexical class of the predicate affects its morphosyntactic encoding. This paper deals to a lesser extent with verbal predicates in Erzya, concentrating on the rich variation observed in the domain of non-verbal predication. Erzya verbal predicates do not display variation with respect to predication strategies, as they are always encoded by inflectional person/number and tense marking. As discussed above (see section 4.1), it must be acknowledged that inflectional person and tense marking is, in the first instance, prototypical of Erzya verbal predicates. Thus, even though Stassen suggested that predicative suffix constructions in Erzya do not constitute a verbal strategy, I wish to affirm that they should be regarded as a verbal rather than nominal strategy.

On the basis of his data from 410 languages, Stassen (1997, 126–7) makes it one of his main claims that adjectival predicates are in the pivotal region between verbal and nominal, and verbal and locational predicates. Namely, if predicate nouns and/or locatives are encoded by a verbal strategy, then predicate adjectives are also encoded by a verbal strategy. According to Stassen, the explanation for these correspondences lies in the fact that the various parts of speech differ from each other with

respect to their **time stability**. This factor affects their morphosyntactic encoding when they function as predicates.

The original **time stability scale** of Givón (1984, 64, 87) predicts that nouns tend to encode more time-stable states and verbs tend to encode less time-stable experiences, primarily transitory states, events or actions. Stassen's verbalisation scale and time stability scale (1997, 127, 128) are revised versions of that of Givón: they predict that the less time-stable an intransitive predicate is, the better its chances are of being encoded by the verbal strategy. The Revised Time Stability Scale in Figure 2, adapted from Stassen (1997, 128), has the following structure:

Location/Event _____ Property _____ Class

Fig. 2

Revised Time Stability Scale

The time stability scale forms the basis of Stassen's (1997, 577–81) model of intransitive predicate encoding. This model suggests that, along the axis of relative time stability, event predicates and class membership predicates are situated at a maximal distance from each other and property concept predicates occupy an intermediate region. Stassen assumes that the model has a universal general semantic topography. Models or maps such as Stassen's are used in typological-functional linguistics to chart a universally valid **semantic** or **cognitive space**. Usually, different terms are used to refer to similar models (see Haspelmath 2003, 219), although I have here adopted Croft's (2006, 133–4) terminology, in which semantic and cognitive maps are distinct from one another. The **semantic map** is language specific, and it represents the distribution of the particular construction as a bounded region on the diagram. The **cognitive map** is universal: it gives the structure of the underlying diagram itself.

The structure of the cognitive map of intransitive predication was worked out by Stassen by using data from more than 400 languages. It is claimed that the cognitive map of intransitive predication is universal. Thus, the map makes predictions about possible languages, generates implicational universals, and even leads to expectations about diachronic change. Nevertheless, as in the case of any cognitive map, a new language may falsify the map and lead to a revision (for a discussion, see Haspelmath 2003).

The cognitive map of intransitive predication has the structure illustrated in Figure 3. There are two coordinates, vertical and horizontal. The vertical coordinate represents, from top to bottom, an increasing

degree of time stability. Verbal and locational predicates are the least time stable, and they are situated at the top of this axis. Nominal predicates are the most time stable, and they are situated at the bottom, under which are identity statements that are commonly atemporal and therefore optimally time stable. Furthermore, identity statements are non-predicational and thus situated **outside** the domain of predication proper. The adjectives are in the middle field. Predicative adjectives separate all other predicate categories from one another. Thus any path from one region to the other will have to pass through the adjectival area. This connects Stassen's and Hengeveld's (1992, 236) results: the adjectives are in a "no man's land", a "pivotal region" or on a "bridge". Locational predicates are separated from the other three on the other, horizontal axis. According to Stassen, a semantic motivation for this second dimension is that locational predicates are unique in that they refer to position in real, physical space, that is, they require a larger degree of locational specification than other predicate categories do (Stassen 1997, 580–1).

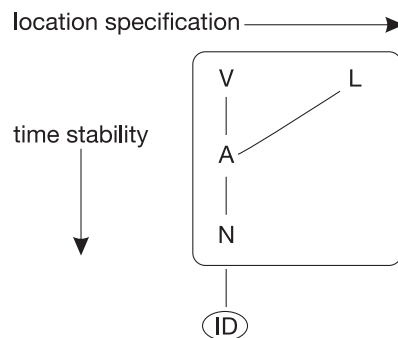


Fig. 3

Cognitive map of intransitive predication (Stassen 1997, 580–1).

V = verb, L = locative, A = adjective, N = noun, ID = identity statement

What ensues from the structure of the universal cognitive map of intransitive predication is that if nominal predicates are encoded in a way similar to verbal predicates, adjectival predicates will have to be encoded using the same strategy as well. Consequently, nouns and verbs are never encoded similarly without the adjectives displaying the same strategy. Adjectives are also pivotal with regard to the encoding of locational predicates: if class membership and locational predication use the same strategy, property predicates will also use this strategy.

In Stassen's typology adjectives do not have their own predication strategy, but are always encoded by a strategy that is more typical of some other class of predicates. I have not identified the predication strategies of Erzya in terms of parts of speech, but independently of them. Nevertheless, it was observed above that Erzya verbal predicates have their prototypical encoding strategy, inflectional person/number and tense marking. This strategy can be used in non-verbal predicate constructions as well, here referred to as predicative suffix constructions. Stassen's model presented above suggests that if nominal predicates are encoded in a similar way to verbal predicates—as is the case with Erzya person agreement—adjectival predicates must be encoded using the same strategy, as well. This holds true in Erzya, where adjectival, nominal and locational predicates can be encoded using the same strategy as in the case of verbal predicates.

Stassen's typology can also be interpreted in such a way that adjectives, being next to verbs, are more likely to be encoded similarly to verbs in comparison with the encoding of nouns similarly to verbs. In what follows, I will consider whether the use of the three predication strategies depends on the part-of-speech category of the predicate in Erzya, and answer the following questions:

- (i) Is variation in the use of the three predication strategies free?
- (ii) Does the part-of-speech affiliation of the predicate affect the choice of predication strategy?
- (iii) What is the structure of the Erzya semantic map of intransitive predication?

The division of labour of the three predication strategies cannot be determined on the basis of the function of the constructions alone, but also on the basis of another factor, **genre**. I have identified four main kinds of genre: written prose, folklore, spoken language and translations. The analysis is made taking the restrictions of the database into account, as the results are, of course, dependent on the prose samples chosen and on the dialects and idiolects of the informants. I will answer the following questions that will arise regarding these genres:

- (i) Are there differences between the genres and, if so,
- (ii) are some of the strategies used typical of certain genres?

The starting point for the analysis is the lexical class of the predicate. Consequently, the differences across genres are discussed in connection

with the three non-verbal predicate classes. After presenting the semantic maps of Erzya intransitive predication, a summary of the differences between the genres is presented.

9. Predication strategies depending on the part-of-speech category of the predicate

In this part of the study, I will inspect the encoding of non-verbal predicates taking the lexical class of the predicate into account, and also pay attention to the differences across genres. Statistical information will be provided in order to illustrate the relative frequency of each predication strategy in the database. I start the description from the bottom of Stassen's cognitive map (see Figure 3 above) with nominal predicate constructions, then go upwards to adjectival predicate constructions and, finally, to locational predicate constructions. It was noted that verbal predicates do not display more than one encoding strategy, as they are always inflected for person and tense, and thus, they will not be discussed here. At the end of this discussion, a summary will be presented.

9.1. Nominal predicates

Nominal predicates are used in two different kinds of construction, those denoting class membership and those denoting identity, in other terms, **equation** (e.g., Payne 1997, 114). However, the division between true nominal predicates and identificational clauses is not straightforward, and often hard to make (cf. Lyons 1979, 197–205; Stassen 1997, 102–5; Kelomäki 1997, 35; see the discussion in Turunen forthcoming b). As illustrated by the cognitive map above, Stassen excludes identificational constructions from predication proper on a semantic basis: in identificational constructions, no predication is made. Other scholars do not necessarily consider the semantic difference between class membership predication and identification so crucial. The borderline between the two is not clear, and consequently, in many languages, identity and class membership predication use the same structural patterns, even though there are also languages that draw a distinction between the two (Payne 1997, 114; Stassen 1997, 105).

The difference between class membership and identificational constructions can be morphologically encoded in Erzya: clauses denoting

class membership have indefinite nouns as predicates and identificational clauses have definite nouns as predicates. The differences between class membership and identificational statements are illustrated in (12) and (13). In example (12), the predicate *azoravazo* is definite, marked with a possessive suffix, and the clause identifies the subject. In example (13), the predicates, inflected by predicative suffixes, are the indefinite nouns *pisateľat* and *kořrespondentan*. They specify the occupation of a subject.

- (12) Mon— fe kudo-ń-ť azor-ava-zo, Jurtava moń leme-m.
 1sg this house-gen-def lord-woman-3sg Jurtava 1sg.gen name-1sg
 ‘I am the hostess of this house, Jurtava is my name.’ (Syatko 2003, 2)

- (13) A: Ton pisateľ-at?
 2sg writer-2sg
 ‘Are you a writer?’

B: AvoĽ. Mon gazeta-sto, kořrespondent-an.
 neg 1sg magazin-ela correspondent-1sg
 ‘No, I am from a newspaper; I am a correspondent.’

- A: Arś-i-ńek, ton pisateľ. (Syatko 2003, 2)
 think-1pst-1pl 2sg writer
 ‘We thought you were a writer.’

It is shown in Turunen (forthcoming b) that in Erzya the encoding of identity statements is generally made with a zero-copula construction, and the constraints on using a predicative suffix construction are partly morphological. For example, possessive suffixes and definite markers preclude the use of the predicative suffix. Identificational statements are discussed in more detail in Turunen (forthcoming b), while in the present paper only nominal predicate constructions that have **no morphological constraints** will be under discussion.

9.1.1. The encoding of nominal predicates in the present tense

It was concluded in the first part of the present study that there are two possible predication strategies for encoding the present tense: if the subject is in the first or second person, non-verbal predicates can be encoded either by a predicative suffix construction or a zero-copula construction. Thus, only clauses with first and second person subjects have been taken into account, since in the present tense third person subjects make no difference between the two predication strategies. In written prose, the

two possible present tense predication strategies are used evenly: the predicative suffix construction occurs 64 times in our corpus and the zero-copula construction occurs 62 times. In example (14), the nominal predicate *komissarat* is encoded by the predicative suffix construction: it is inflected in the second person singular. In example (15), the first phrase displays the zero-copula pattern, because the predicate noun of nationality *ruz* is not inflected. The second phrase is structured by the predicative suffix predicate noun *lomańan* inflected in the first person. In example (16), all the nominal predicates *voran*, *rozbojńikan* and *ćoran* are inflected in the first person singular.

- (14) Ton komissar-at, še-ks tev-eś-kak te— toń. (Syatko 2003, 4)
 2sg commissar-2sg it-tra thing-def-encl this 2sg.gen
 ‘You are a commissar, that is why this thing is also yours.’
- (15) Avoľ, me-ń mon ruz— mon eźa lomań-an. (Syatko 2003, 2)
 No what-gen 1sg Russian 1sg Erzya human-1sg
 ‘No, I am not a Russian, I am an Erzya.’
- (16) Ila peľe, mon avoľ vor-an di rozbojńik-an, (Syatko 2003, 7)
 not fear 1sg neg thief-1sg and outlaw-1sg
 a eźa inazor-oń ćora-n.
 but Erzya lord-gen son-1sg
 ‘Have no fear, I am not a thief and an outlaw, but the son of an Erzya lord.’

In examples (17)–(19), the nominal predicates are zero encoded, even if they could just as well have been encoded with a predicative suffix (Motorkina, p.c.). In example (17), which is from a song, the nominal predicate *lomańt* and the participial predicate *tonavńińcat* agree in number with the first person plural subject, and in example (18), taken from a poem, the predicate *ejďińet* agrees in number with the second person plural subject. Example (19) is from folklore lyrics: in the first clause the predicate noun *äjkaķš* is encoded with a zero-construction, although the nominal predicate *täjhtńran* of the second clause is encoded with a predicative suffix. Example (20) also illustrates a zero-copula strategy; the subject and the predicate noun *tejtet-ka* are simply juxtaposed.

It may not be accidental that zero-copula constructions typically occur in standard written data in lyrics. It has been reported by Bezubova (in Kolyadenkov 1954, 179), that in the works of many Erzya authors, zero-copula constructions have been replaced by predicative suffix con-

- (17) Miń od lomań-t — tonavń-íca-t, (Syatko 2003, 2)
 1pl young human-pl learn-ptcp-pl
 vandi-ń či-v baža-tano.
 tomorrow-gen day-lat long-1pl
 ‘We are young people, students, we long for the days to come.’
- (18) Tiń učaska-v ejd-íne-t, peřka-nk — lamo ki-t. (Syatko 2003, 10)
 2pl luck-adj child-dim-pl around-2pl many road-pl
 ‘You are lucky children, there are many roads around you.’
- (19) mon aul prostoj řat-ka-ń řk’iń äjkakř, (MV I, 325)
 1sg neg simple father-dim-gen only child
 mon stolbovoj řat-ń řäjχ’řir-an.
 1sg noble father-gen daughter-1sg
 ‘I am not a simple father’s only child, I am a noble father’s daughter.’
- (20) Ton eřza-ń teřteř-ka? (Syatko 2003, 2)
 2sg Erzya-gen girl-dim
 ‘Are you an Erzya girl?’

structions by language planners. It may be that in poetry, such strategies are allowed freer use. However, the zero-construction was not typical in my **folklore** data, in which the present tense copula was used equally with the predicative suffix construction in present tense nominal predicate constructions.

In **spoken** data, the interviewers tried to use both predication strategies, which was done partly in order to see whether the strategy used by the interviewer affected the predication strategy of the answers. The predicative suffix was used 15 times in the speech of informants when the interviewer used it in her question. In 14 cases, this question was about nationality, illustrated in examples (21) and (22). The question about nationality was also answered once with a zero-copula construction, as in (23). It is noteworthy that the predicative suffix occurred in the spoken database only three times in a nominal predicate construction when there was no direct question containing a predicative suffix before the answer.

- (21) Tiń eřza-tado? (spoken data, S.M.)
 2pl Erzya-2pl
 ‘Are you Erzyas?’

- (22) Da, miń eńza-tano. (spoken data, O.P.)
 Yes 1pl Erzya-1pl
 ‘Yes, we are Erzyas.’
- (23) Da, miń eńza-t. (spoken data, A.V.D.)
 Yes 1pl Erzya-pl
 ‘Yes, we are Erzyas.’

In the spoken language data, the zero-copula was used five times in the speech of informants in nominal predicate constructions. Besides these, the zero-copula construction was chosen typically in identificational statements when the predicate was a proper name with three occurrences (see Turunen forthcoming b). One of the informants produced a construction denoting nationality in spontaneous speech, which was then encoded with a zero-copula. See example (24).

- (24) mon mon-ś eńza (spoken data, T.G.)
 1sg 1sg-refl Erzya
 ‘I am myself an Erzya.’

Needless to say, the spoken data is insufficient for reliable statistical analysis. It seems, however, that the zero-copula construction is used more typically in other genres than in Standard Erzya. Unlike the standard written language, in the **questionnaires** zero-copula constructions were used more frequently than predicative suffix constructions. In the questionnaires, there were five classifying nominal predicate constructions. In these clauses, the predicative suffix construction occurred 21 times, and the zero copula 82 times. For the sake of comparison, it should be noted that among Mokshas, the zero-copula construction occurred only once, and a predicative suffix construction was used in all other 67 cases. In Erzya, the clause ‘Are you Erzyas or Mokshas?’ was encoded with a predicative suffix construction four times, illustrated by the example in (25), and 11 times with a zero copula, illustrated in (26). In one case, only the first nominal predicate was encoded with a predicative suffix.

- (25) Tiń eńza-tado ili mokšo-tado? (questionnaires)
 2pl Erzya-2pl or Moksha-2pl
 ‘Are you Erzyas or Mokshas?’

- (26) Tiń eřža-t ili mokšo-t? (questionnaires)
 2pl Erzya-pl or Moksha-pl
 ‘Are you Erzyas or Mokshas?’

9.1.2. The encoding of nominal predicates in the past tense

The two predication strategies in past tense non-verbal predication are the predicative suffix construction and the *ulñems*-copula construction. In past tense nominal predicate constructions, regardless of the genre, predicative suffix constructions were used less often than *ulñems*-copula constructions. In written prose, there were 47 clauses with a nominal predicate inflected by a past tense predicative suffix and 156 cases in which an *ulñems*-copula construction was used.⁸ It is noteworthy that when the *ulñems*-copula construction was chosen, the predicate noun was more often inflected in the translative than in the nominative case: there were 106 clauses with translative predicates and 50 clauses with nouns in the nominative. The use of the translative precludes the use of a predicative suffix construction. In some cases, the translative is interchangeable with the nominative, but not always (see Turunen forthcoming c). In the following examples, the nominal predicates are inflected by past tense predicative suffixes. As the subject is in the third person singular, the predicative suffix does not contain a person marker, but only the tense marker *-l*. In (27), the predicate noun *tarkazol* is inflected in the possessive declension, and the word order is reversed. In (28), there are two nominal predicates, both of which are conjugated. As (29) illustrates, a conjugated predicate may have complex modifiers.

- (27) Ańśak šeħ večke-v-iks tarka-zo-l — te lej-čire-ś.
 only most love-refl-nom place-3sg-2pst.3sg this river-part-def
 ‘Just this part of the river was his favourite place.’ (Syatko 2003, 10)
- (28) T’e a-soda-v-iks lomań-eś tuřist-eł, FRG-ń ěnemeć-eł.
 this neg-know-refl-nom human-def tourist-2pst.3sg FRG-gen German-2pst.3sg
 ‘This unknown man was a tourist, he was a German from the FRG.’
 (Syatko 2003, 3)
- (29) Kolhoz-oń právt-oś kolońgemeń-ška ije-se ćora-l.
 kolkhoz-gen leader-def thirty-adv year-ine man-2pst.3sg
 ‘The leader of the kolkhoz was a man of about 30 years of age.’ (Syatko 2003, 4)

⁸ In the past tense, the third person subject also has an overt marker, and thus it is included in the numbers.

Contrary to the previous examples, those in (30)–(31) illustrate nominal predicates which are encoded by an analytic *ul'ñems*-copula construction. In example (30), a copula verb has been chosen, even though there are no morphological or semantic constraints that would prevent the use of a predicative suffix. In example (31), the nominal predicate *generaloks*, typical of nouns of occupation, is inflected in the translative (see Turunen forthcoming c).

- (30) Mon piže ejkakš ul'-i-i-ń. (Syatko 2003, 2)
 1sg green/young child be-freq-1pst-1sg
 'I was a young child.'

- (31) Son vojna-so ul'-ne-ś general-oks. (Erkay 1991, 144)
 3sg war-ine be-freq-1pst.3sg general-tra
 'He was a general in the war.'

The preference for an *ul'ñems*-copula construction is more marked in other genres than in standard written Erzya. It is especially noteworthy that in the folklore data, past tense predicative suffixes were not used in nominal predicate constructions at all, and they were also generally extremely rare. In the past tense nominal predicate constructions of the spoken data, the copula occurred more often than the predicative suffix construction. In nominal predicate constructions the copula occurred 18 times in the speech of the informants, and the predicative suffix construction was used twice. In these cases, it was used in an answer to a question which itself contained a predicative suffix construction. In the questionnaire data there was no variation: none of the past tense clauses was translated into Erzya using a predicative suffix construction. On the basis of these facts, it can be concluded that the use of the past tense predicative suffix construction in nominal predicates is more typical of written standard Erzya than of any other genre.

9.2. Adjectival predicates

9.2.1. The encoding of adjectival predicates in the present tense

Erzya adjectival predicates can be formulated in the present tense using a predicative suffix construction, and also, to a lesser extent, using a zero-copula construction. In my database on standard written Erzya, there were 144 present tense adjectival predicate clauses in which the subject was either in the first or second person. Only four of these were

encoded by a zero-copula construction. In the following examples, the adjectival predicates are encoded by a predicative suffix construction. In (32), the second person singular subject is encoded by a predicative suffix only. (33) illustrates an adjective derived in the caritive [‘without’], then conjugated in the first person singular. In (34), the adjectival predicate *od* is repeated and conjugated.

- (32) Jožo-v-at, vaj, kodamo jožov-at, N'ikitič! (Doronin 1996, 369)
 affection-adj-2sg oh how affection-adj-2sg Nikitich
 ‘You are sly, oh, how sly you are, Nikitich!’

- (33) Mon čumo-vtoma-n! (Syatko 2003, 2)
 1sg guilty-car-1sg
 ‘I am innocent!’

- (34) A: Ton iščo od-at.
 2sg still young-2sg
 B: Da, od-an. Moń koj-se od-an. (spoken data, N.K.)
 yes young-1sg 1sg.gen habit-ine young-1sg
 ‘You are still young.—Yes, I am young. I think I am still young.’

The following examples illustrate rare constructions in the written data, in which the adjectival predicate is encoded with a zero-copula construction. It is important to notice that the adjectives, which are zero encoded in these examples, could also be encoded with a predicative suffix construction, that is, there are no morphological constraints that preclude the use of predicative suffixes (for derived adjectives, see Turunen forthcoming b). Example (35) with a second person singular subject is taken from lyrics.

- (35) Mazij, mazij, / Ton tejteř-eš! (Syatko 2003, 7)
 beautiful beautiful 2sg girl-def
 ‘You, girl, are beautiful, beautiful.’

The other phrases in which person agreement was not attested in adjectival predication are illustrated in examples (36)–(40). The subjects of these phrases are in the first person plural, and the adjectival predicate agrees in number. In the spoken data there was one occurrence of an adjectival predicate encoded with a zero-copula construction, illustrated in example (36). Unfortunately, the spoken data cannot be considered statistically significant, since there were only two occurrences in which an

adjectival predicate construction was encoded with a predicative suffix in the present tense. The word order is reversed in the clauses illustrated in examples (37)–(39), since the adjectival predicates precede the subject. In (37) and (38) the predicate is a pronoun replacing an adjective. The predicate *čaulat* in (39) could also be considered a noun, in which case the interpretation of the clause would be ‘We are such fools.’ The word order is neutral in the clause illustrated in example (40).

- (36) *siń raužo-t, a miń ašo-t.* (spoken data, M. J.)
 3pl black-pl but 1pl white-pl
 ‘They are dark, but we are blond.’
- (37) *Ono, še-ť-ńe-ń końda-t miń — pal-tano, pal-tano* (Doronin 1996, 86)
 see it-pl-def-gen like-pl 1pl burn-1pl burn-1pl
di šavoť-tano pajs-tomo moda-s.
 and fall-1pl share-car earth-ill
 ‘We are like them, we burn and fall into the miserable earth.’
- (38) *Koda-t tiń loma-ť-ńe, ko-v moľ-ťado.* (MV III, 125)
 what.like-pl 2pl people-pl-def what-lat go-2pl
 ‘What sort of people you are, where are you going to?’
- (39) *Vaj, čaula-t miń!* (Syatko 2003, 2; also in Syatko 2003, 4)
 oh stupid-pl 1pl
 ‘Oh, we are stupid!’
- (40) *Nať — miń mej-se-jak čumo-t?* (Syatko 2003, 3)
 probably 1pl what-ine-encl guilty-pl
 ‘Probably we are not guilty of anything?’

Contrary to other data, the data from the questionnaires contained relatively more frequent instances of zero-copula constructions regardless of the dialect of the informant. Even more importantly, there was no difference in the lexical class of the predicate, since zero-copula constructions were always preferred to predicative suffix constructions. As property concepts are regularly encoded with predicative suffix constructions in Standard Erzya, the difference between the data from the questionnaires and Standard Erzya is striking. In the questionnaires, adjectival predicates were encoded with a zero-copula construction 25 times, and predicative suffix was used 22 times. For example, the sentence ‘We are already old, but you are still young’ was encoded in Erzya with a zero-construc-

tion 13 times, as illustrated in example (41). There were two occurrences of the type illustrated in (42), in which a predicative suffix construction was chosen in both clauses, which is the normal pattern in the standard written data. One of the informants used the type illustrated in (43), in which only the first adjective is encoded with a predicative suffix, and one informant used the type illustrated in (44), in which only the last adjectival predicate is encoded with a predicative suffix.

‘We are already old, but you are young.’ (questionnaires)

(41) Miń uš siře-t, a tiń od-t.
1pl already old-pl but 2pl young-pl

(42) Miń uš siře-tano a tiń od-tado.
1pl already old-1pl but 2pl young-2pl

(43) Miń uš siře-tano a tiń od-t.
1pl already old-1pl but 2pl young-pl

(44) Miń uš siře-t a tiń od-tado.
1pl already old-pl but 2pl young-2pl

On the other hand, the translations of ‘We are happy’ showed an opposite tendency, as most informants (12/16) used a predicative suffix construction. The adjective *učas̄kav* occurred five times, always encoded with a predicative suffix, as illustrated in example (45). The adjective *čas̄tlivoj* was encoded with a predicative suffix seven times, and with a zero-copula construction four times, as illustrated in (46). Both lexemes, *čas̄tlivoj* and *učas̄kav*, are Russian loans, but *učas̄kav* is derived using the Erzya adjectivizer *-v* (MWb 2425a).

(45) Miń učas̄ka-v-tano. (questionnaires)
1pl luck-adj-1pl
‘We are happy.’

(46) Miń čas̄tlivoj-t. (questionnaires)
1pl happy-pl
‘We are happy.’

It is possible that the method of data collection affected the results of the questionnaires. More precisely, the fact that Russian non-verbal predi-

cate constructions are zero-coded in the present tense may have affected the frequency of zero-copula construction use in Erzya, as well. It should be noted though, for purposes of comparison, that all Moksha adjectival predicate clauses were encoded with a predicative suffix construction. Consequently, no such influence of Russian can be assumed in the case of Moksha. This fact makes it impossible to verify that Erzya syntactic patterns found in the questionnaire data were chosen on account of a direct Russian influence (see also Turunen forthcoming b). The questionnaires were administered in dialectological terms, but no particular differences between the four dialects were found in the questionnaire data. When consulting the Erzya informants Kazaeva (p.c.), a Central Dialect speaker, stated that present tense adjectival predicates are usually encoded with a predicative suffix construction, and she found zero-copula constructions impossible. The questionnaire data displayed more variation, and zero coding was also found to occur in adjectival predicate constructions among those speakers originating from the area of the Central Dialect. All in all, the variation in the questionnaires was not a result of dialect differences, and a description of dialectological differences will definitely need more data and more profound research. Moreover, there are probably complex sociolinguistic factors behind the variation: finding these will require further research.

9.2.2. The encoding of adjectival predicates in the past tense

As stated above, in encoding the past tense, the two possible predication strategies for non-verbal predication are the predicative suffix construction and the *ulñems*-copula construction. It was observed that especially in the past tense, genre strongly determines the use of the two predication strategies. In written prose, the predicative suffix construction was the more frequent type, as it occurred in 378 clauses, whereas the *ulñems*-copula occurred in 143 clauses. The morphosyntactic structure of the adjective may prevent the use of the predicative suffix, but these adjectival predicates have not been included in the statistics (see Turunen forthcoming b). No difference dependent on the semantics of the adjective was observed, as the following examples illustrate. Examples (47)–(49) are encoded with a predicative suffix and examples (50)–(52) with an *ulñems*-copula. According to Motorkina (p.c.), all the clauses in which a predicative suffix occurs could be encoded with an *ulñems*-copula, and all the clauses in which a copula occurs could be alternatively encoded with a predicative suffix construction.

- (47) Ańśak vejke ćipak-ińe-ś še-de pokš-ke-l, (Syatko 2003, 1)
 only one chicken-dim-def it-abl big-dim-2pst.3sg
 śolm-ińe-nze ašo-l-ť.
 wing-dim-3sg/pl white-2pst-3pl
 ‘Only one chicken was bigger, its wings were white.’
- (48) Čokš-ńe-ś setme-l. (Syatko 2003, 2)
 night-dim-def silent-2pst.3sg
 ‘The night was silent.’
- (49) On-ozo keme-l di domka-l. (Syatko 2003, 4)
 dream-3sg deep-2pst.3sg and deep-2pst.3sg
 ‘His/her dream was deep and profound.’
- (50) Či-ś uł-ńe-ś pek mańej di pśi. (Syatko 2003, 7)
 day-def be-freq-1pst.3sg very bright and hot.
 ‘The day was clear and hot.’
- (51) Amur-oń jožo-zo uł-ńe-ś kełme. (Syatko 2003, 7)
 Amur-gen surface-3sg be-freq-1pst.3sg cold.
 ‘The surface of the Amur was cold.’
- (52) Moń pokšta-m od-sto uł-ńe-ś (Syatko 2003, 1)
 1sg.gen grandfather-1sg young-ela be-freq-1pat.3sg
 čov-ińe, befa-kš-ke.
 thin-dim bad-adj-dim
 ‘My grandfather was thin and sickly when he was young.’

There is a clear opposition between Standard Erzya and other data. In the folklore, spoken, and questionnaire data, copula constructions occurred a lot more frequently in the past tense than predicative suffix constructions did. In the spoken data past tense adjectival predicates were encoded with copula constructions 149 times. As opposed to this, predicative suffix constructions occurred ten times, of which eight constructions occurred immediately after a question containing a predicative suffix. It was observed that even when the interviewer used a predicative suffix in her question, the answer in most cases included a copula construction, which happened 23 times. In the questionnaires past tense predicative suffixes were totally absent, because past tense sentences were always translated using the copula construction. Further, in the folklore data past tense predicative suffix constructions were rare, occurring in

just two lyrics and only in adjectival predicate constructions. In example (53), an adjectival pronoun is conjugated in the past tense, and the word order is reversed. Example (54) is from a fairytale and contains six adjectival predicates conjugated in the past tense. Past tense copula constructions with either a nominal or an adjectival predicate occurred far more often, about 80 times.

(53) a moń końdamo-ŀ toń pola-t (MV I, 235)
 neg 1sg.gen like-2pst.3sg 2sg.gen wife-2sg
 ‘your wife was not like me’

(54) nu bojar, paro-ŀ fejteř-eś pek vadřa-ŀ, (MV III, 322)
 well boyar good-2pst.3sg girl-def very good-2pst.3sg
 ańćak a sod-an mazi-ŀ a mazi-ŀ.
 only neg know-1sg beautiful-2pst.3sg neg beautiful-2pst.3sg
 ořa meř-i tenze: mazi-ŀ, bojar,
 ocha say-3sg 3sg.all beautiful-2pst.3sg boyar
 mazi tatar ava-ń końdamo-ŀ.
 beautiful Tatar woman-gen like-2pst.3sg
 ‘Well, boyar, was the girl good? She was very nice, but I just don’t know whether she was beautiful. Then Ocha says to him: She was beautiful, boyar, she was like a beautiful Tatar woman.’

9.3. Locational predicates

In the cognitive map of intransitive predication (see section 8), locational predicates are separated from nominal and adjectival predicates in two respects: they are less stable temporally than nouns and adjectives, and they denote a specific location in space. As stated in Turunen (forthcoming b), in Erzya the morphosyntactic behaviour of locational predicate constructions is not entirely the same as that of nominal and adjectival predicates. Besides the copula verb *ulńems*, locational predicate constructions may be structured with a special locational copula *ařtems* ‘be, lie, be situated’. It has been shown by Stassen (1997, 57) that locational copulas may intrude into the area of other non-verbal predications. This is, however, not characteristic of *ařtems* as its use is restricted to locational predication. Interestingly though, as noted in section 11 on locational negation strategies, the negator *araś* can be employed in nominal predication when the noun is inflected in the translative.

9.3.1. The encoding of locational predicates in the present tense

Present tense locational predicate constructions resemble Erzya adjectival predicate constructions insofar as the zero-copula construction is rarely used for encoding locational predication in standard written data. (Naturally, if the subject is in the third person, predication is always encoded using a zero strategy in the present tense.) Consequently, in present tense locational predicate constructions, the predicative suffix construction is almost always used. The locational predicate in example (55) is a noun inflected in the inessive and in example (56) it is a postposition. In (57), a noun and a postposition are incorporated.

- (55) Alkuks-kak, mon Moskov-s-an, avoľ veľe-s-an. (Syatko 2003, 2)
 real-encl 1sg Moscow-ine-1sg neg village-ine-1sg
 ‘Really, I am in Moscow, I am not in a village.’
- (56) Sval ton, avi-ńe-m, ojme-m mala-s-at. (Syatko 2003, 3)
 always 2sg mother-dim-1sg soul-1sg close-ine-2sg
 ‘You are always, my dear mother, close to my soul.’
- (57) Tago vaľm-alo-tado!
 again window-under-2pl
 ‘You are under the window again.’

In standard written data, five zero-encoded locational predicate constructions occurred. Genre does affect the use of the zero-copula: even though it was hardly ever used in my standard written data, it occurs quite often in translations. In the questionnaire data, 44 out of 131 present tense locational predicates were encoded with a predicative suffix, and 87 with a zero-copula. In comparison, Mokshas used the predicative suffix construction regularly. In the Moksha data, only one clause with a locational predicate was produced using the zero-copula. (A similar tendency was observed in the case of nominal and adjectival predicates, see above.) The following examples are from questionnaires. In the example ‘We are at home now, come!’, Erzyas used the predicative suffix construction 16 times, as illustrated in (58). The zero-copula construction occurred five times, as illustrated in (59).

- ‘We are at home now, come!’ (questionnaires)
- (58) Miń ńej kudo-so-tano, sa-k!
 1pl now home-ine-2pl come-imp.2sg

- (59) Mińńej kudo-so, sa-k!
1pl now home-ine come-imp.2sg

In the example ‘Where are you now?’, the predicative suffix occurred regularly, 12 times, as illustrated in (60). The zero-construction occurred only once, as illustrated in (61). A previously unattested type, in which the subject is in the second person plural and the plural marker attaches onto the locational predicate, also occurred once, as in example (62).

‘Where are you now?’ (questionnaires)

- (60) Tińńej ko-so-tado?
2pl now what-ine-2pl

- (61) Tińńej ko-so?
2pl now what-ine

- (62) Tińńej ko-so-t?
2pl now what-ine-pl

Unlike in the translations in the previous example, the predicative suffix occurred less frequently in the clause illustrated by examples (63)–(65). Only two informants used a predicative suffix, and 14 used a zero-copula construction. When the zero-copula was used, the locational predicate was twice inflected in the definite inessive, which prohibits the use of a predicative suffix, as illustrated in (65).

‘Which room are you in, I can’t find you.’ (questionnaires)

- (63) Tińń kodamo komnata-so-tado, mon a mu-t-an toń.
2pl which room-ine-2pl 1sg neg find-2sg-1sg you.acc

- (64) Tińń kodamo komnata-so, ...
2pl which room-ine

- (65) Tińń koda komnata-so-ńf, ...
2pl which room-ine-def

Hengeveld (1992, 152) notes that in some languages predicates corresponding to ‘here’, ‘there’, etc. and their interrogative counterpart ‘where’ behave differently from other locative predicates, and therefore he suggests that deictic locative expressions are more easily predicable than

- (67) Ko-so od-sto-piže-ste uľ-ń-i-ń? (Syatko 2003, 10)
 what-ine young-ela-green-ela be-freq-1pst.1sg
 ‘Where was I when I was young?’
- (68) Koto ije-t armija-so-I. (Syatko 2003, 2)
 six year-pl army-ine-2pst.3sg
 ‘He was six years in the army.’
- (69) Son-ś Petra te ška-sto-ńť uľ-ńe-ś komańdirovka-so.
 she-def Petra this time-ela-def be-freq-1pst.3sg posting-ine
 ‘At that time Petra herself was on a posting.’ (Syatko 2003, 3)
- (70) Veľe-ń-ť vejke pe-ze pando pńa-so-I, (Syatko 2003, 3)
 village-gen-def one end-3sg hill head-ine-2pst.3sg
 ombo-će-ś— pand-alo-I.
 other-ord-def hill-under-2pst.3sg
 ‘One end of the village was on the top of the hill, and the other down the hill.’
- (71) Vana, kije uľ-ńe-ś ašo kilej-eń-ť alo! (Paltin et al. 1997, 119)
 look who be-freq-1pst.3sg white birch-gen-def under
 ‘Look who was under the white birch!’
- (72) Čama-st-kak, keđe-st-kak, oršamo-st-kak rudaz pot-so-I-ť. (Syatko 2003, 4)
 face-3pl-encl hand-3pl-encl clothes-3pl-encl mud inside-ine-2pst-3pl
 ‘Their face, hands, clothes, all were in mud.’
- (73) Mon še ška-sto-ńť uľ-ń-i-ń (Paltin et al. 1997, 92)
 1sg it time-ela-def be-freq-1pst.1sg
 ińe-veńč-eń-ť pot-so, ...
 big-ship-gen-def inside-ine
 ‘I was at that time inside the big ship, ...’

Again, the data from written Standard Erzya and the vernacular give conflicting results. In the spoken data, the predicative suffix was used twice in a past tense locational predicate construction, as illustrated in example (74), in which the lexeme is a Russian loan word. In the spoken data, the locational predicates were encoded with a copula construction 26 times.

The data from the questionnaires showed again the same tendency as observed in case of nominal and adjectival predicates: predicative suffixes in the past tense were not used at all in locational predicate constructions.

sion, see Turunen forthcoming a). The structure of the scale is similar to the Time Stability Scales of Givón and Stassen (see section 8 above).

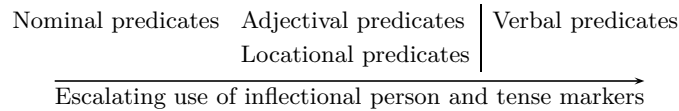


Fig. 4

The escalating use of predicative suffix constructions

It was observed that there are crucial differences across genres in the encoding of non-verbal predicates. Predicative suffix constructions of both the past and present tenses are used more regularly in written Standard Erzya than in any other genre. To encode the present tense in the written language, a predicative suffix construction is the norm, and the zero-copula construction is more marginally employed. The zero-copula construction is more typical of lyrics, and in informal language and translations from Russian. The spoken data is too scarce for making generalisations concerning present tense encoding strategies. The crucial differences between written Standard Erzya and the questionnaire data consisting of translations are illustrated in Table 6, in which the lexical class of the predicate is taken into account.

Table 6

Statistical differences between written Standard Erzya and questionnaires.
W = standard written data, Q = questionnaires

Predication strategy	Lexical class of the predicate					
	Nominal		Adjectival		Locational	
	W	Q	W	Q	W	Q
Present						
Pred. suffix	64	21	144	22	24	44
Zero	62	82	4	25	2	86
Past						
Pred. suffix	47	—	143	—	125	—
Copula	156	165	378	123	99	162

Interestingly, the predicative suffix construction in the past tense is almost totally confined to the written, formal language. Besides the predicative suffix strategy, copula constructions for encoding the past tense

in the written language also often occur. Furthermore, the past tense predicative suffix pattern is infrequent in folklore. Past tense non-verbal predication in folklore data typically uses copula constructions. Table 7 presents an overview of the occurrences of the various predication strategies in all the genres regardless of the lexical class of non-verbal predicate. In the present tense, only constructions with first and second person subjects are listed. (The majority of the constructions in my data are present tense phrases with third person subjects, which do not offer a basis for comparison, since they are always zero-coded.)

Table 7

Variation of non-verbal predicate strategies in various genres

Predication strategy	Type of data				
	written	spoken	quest.	folklore	all
Present					
Pred. suffix	232	18	87	94	434
Zero	72	5	194	5	276
Copula	76	—	—	84	160
Past					
Pred. suffix	315	14	—	7	336
Copula	627	193	390	86	1296

On the basis of the results presented above, it is hard to determine whether any of the predication strategies are more basic than any others. As suggested by Croft (2006, 43–4), a language may belong to multiple typological types when there is no clear basic type. Further, Croft asserts that such an instance is useful for diachronic typological research, because it often represents a language in transition from one type to another. It seems that this is true of Erzya. There are synthetic and analytic constructions, some of which are in free variation.

Croft (*ibid.*) suggests some criteria to help define which construction is the basic type. Firstly, a construction that is pragmatically or semantically specialised is less basic. In Erzya, the tendency for synthetic constructions to be typical of conservative written language was observed, and analytic zero-constructions were more typical of the informal varieties employed in the questionnaires and spoken data. The encoding of the past tense with synthetic constructions seems to be a

peculiarity of written Standard Erzya. In other data, it is clearly a more marginal phenomenon.

Croft (*ibid.*) further suggests that structurally simple constructions are more probably basic and complex constructions are less so. Morphologically heavy, synthetic constructions are, however, typical of Erzya in all areas of grammar. Consequently, the predicative suffix construction, which is structurally complex, could be regarded as more basic compared to the zero-copula construction. As further noted in Turunen (forthcoming a), system complexity decreases when all predicates, regardless of their lexical class, are encoded similarly: predicative suffix constructions are less complex than analytic constructions, as they lead to symmetrical paradigms of verbal and non-verbal conjugation. On the other hand, as noted above, zero-copula constructions in the present tense are cross-linguistically the most often attested type, and their use is typical in Erzya in the third person as it is in many other Uralic languages.

10. Semantic maps of Erzya non-verbal predication

The differences between the encoding of nominal, adjectival and locational predicates were summarised in Figure 3. That figure leads to a final form of the semantic map of Erzya non-verbal predication. This illustrates that in Erzya there is a correlation between the escalating use of the predicative suffix and the decreasing time stability of the predicate. Predicative suffixes are obligatory in verbal, and more likely to occur in adjectival than in nominal, predicate constructions. They are found less often in identificational clauses, which are the most time stable (see Turunen forthcoming b). The correlation between the time-stability scale and the semantic map of intransitive predication was mentioned above.

The semantic map of Erzya non-verbal predication is sketched out below in Figure 5. It should be read in the following way. As time-stability decreases towards the top, the probability of using a predicative suffix construction grows. At the bottom are identificational clauses in which person agreement markers are hardly ever used, and thus they are distinguished from all other non-verbal predicates by a circle. In the uppermost part are verbal predicates in which person agreement markers are obligatory, for which reason these too are separately encircled. In nominal predicate clauses person agreement markers are used optionally. The use of predicative suffixes is more regular in adjectival and locational

predicate constructions than in nominal predicate constructions; an arrow showing decreasing use of predicative suffixes illustrates this.

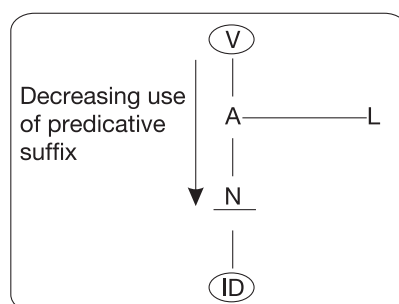
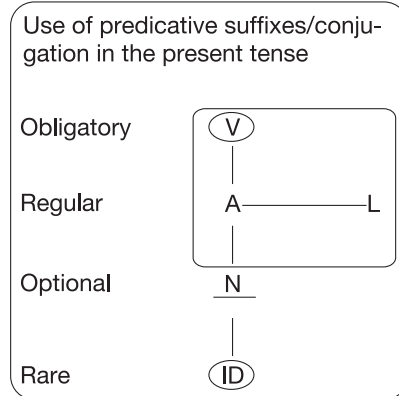


Fig. 5

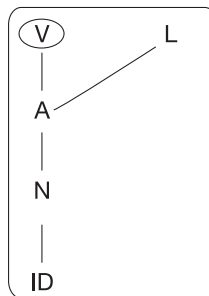
General semantic map of Erzya non-verbal present tense predication. Compare with Stassen (1997), presented in Figure 3 above. V = verbal predicates, L = locational predicates, A = adjectival predicates, N = nominal predicates, ID = identity statements

Actually, there may be several semantic maps of Erzya non-verbal predication, depending on idiolects and dialects. (As suggested by Stassen (1997, 577), the maps can also be made dynamic when they present various stages of diachronic development; this is, however, the theme of another study.) Besides a general semantic map of Erzya intransitive predication, my data provides a basis for drawing at least one more specific map, namely, that for written Standard Erzya, presented in Figure 6 below. This illustrates the similarity between adjectival and locational predicate constructions with respect to the employment of predicative suffixes in the present tense. In written Standard Erzya, adjectival and locational predicates are generally encoded similarly to verbal predicates in the present tense, whereas nominal predicates are only optionally encoded using predicative suffixes.

Past tense encoding, illustrated in Figure 7, differs from its present tense counterpart in that there are no such clear tendencies in it as there are in the present tense. In the past tense, the part-of-speech category of the non-verbal predicate does not affect the variation between the predicative suffix and the copula construction to the same extent as in the present tense. The past tense predicative suffix can be used in all semantic classes including verbal predicates as illustrated by the square in Figure 6. On the other hand, as illustrated by the circle, verbal main predicates differ from non-verbal predicates in that they cannot be encoded with a

*Fig. 6*

Semantic map of Erzya intransitive predication showing the borderlines for using bound person and tense markers in written Standard Erzya

*Fig. 7*

Semantic map of Erzya non-verbal predication, past tense

copula. Furthermore, verbal predicates can be inflected for first person in the past tense, which is not allowed in the case of nominal, adjectival and locational predicates.

II. Negation strategies of non-verbal predicate constructions

The role of negation in determining predication strategies was discussed in section 4.1. Stassen (1997, 289–91) has suggested that the negation criterion has a crucial role in determining the status of predication patterns

and, consequently, the whole typology of Erzya non-verbal predication. Stassen drew attention to the fact that in Erzya the non-verbal parts of speech are negated by a different strategy than verbs are. From this it follows that Erzya non-verbal and verbal predicates are not encoded by the same strategy—no matter how this strategy is labelled. Even though the negation of Erzya non-verbal predicates has been the theme of a thorough study by Hamari (2007), it is still necessary to discuss it here.

In Erzya there are two general negators (negative particles) *a* and *avoľ* which are used in intransitive predication. The particle *a* has the widest use: it occurs in all verbal and non-verbal predicate constructions. A third negator *araś* is typical in locational predication, as well as in existential and possessive clauses. The negator *araś* is hardly ever used in negative verbal, nominal or adjectival predicate constructions, except for its use in property concept and class-membership predication when the non-verbal predicate is inflected in the translative (see Turunen forthcoming c). The fourth negator, *apak*, occurs only in past tense participial predicate constructions, and is thus more marginal.

The following clauses illustrate the use of the negators *a* and *avoľ* in **verbal** predicate constructions. In the example in (75), a verbal predicate is negated by the negator *a*. The negator *avoľ* is used mainly in non-verbal predicate constructions, but it can be used in verbal predicate constructions if it functions as a constituent negator, as illustrated in (76) where it takes a position directly before the constituent it negates, namely *lomańť* ‘people’. The negator *avoľ* is also used in the desiderative and conjunctive moods, as illustrated in (77).

- (75) Lomań-ť son a večk-i, ... (Doronin 1996, 14)
 human-pl 3sg neg love-3sg
 ‘(S)he does not love people, ...’
- (76) Miń avoľ lomań-ť uľ-ń-i-ńek — uře-ť! (Klyuchagin 1997, 109)
 1pl neg human-pl be-freq-1pst-1pl slave-pl
 ‘We are not human beings, but slaves!’
- (77) Buti siń avoľ-ť uře, (Erkay 1991, 186)
 if 3pl neg-3pl be
 mon bu te-j avoľ-i-ń sa-jak, ...
 1sg conj this-lat neg-1pst-1sg come-encl
 ‘If they had not been here, I would not have come.’

The negation of **adjectival** predicates is illustrated in (78)–(80). In example (78), the negator *a* is used in an adjectival predicate construction. Example (79) with the negator *avoľ* resembles example (76) above with a verbal predicate, insofar as it has the contrastive structure ‘not A, but B’. The locational-existential-possessive negator *araś* can be used when the nominal or adjectival predicate is inflected in the translative, like the adjectival pronoun *istamoks* in example (80).

- (78) *Ćora-ś son a beñań, ...* (Erkay 1991,163)
 man-def 3sg neg bad
 ‘He is not a bad man, ...’
- (79) *No mińek kudo-ś avoľ viś-ińe, pokś, ...* (spoken data, M.B.)
 well 1pl.gen house-def neg small-dim big
 ‘Well, our house is not small, but big, ...’
- (80) *... mon od-sto-jak istamo-ks araś-eľ-iń ...* (Doronin 1996: 186)
 1sg young-ela-encl like.that-tra neg-2pst-1sg
 ‘Neither was I like that when I was young...’

The negation of **nominal** predicates is expressed using the same negators as for adjectival predicates. The clause in (81) has similar contrastive semantics as examples (76) and (79) above. Note that in this example, the nominal predicate is negated by *a*, and not *avoľ*, which is used in example (79) in an adjectival predicate construction. In example (82), the negator *avoľ* is used.

- (81) *Eh, te a umań, prok nadobija.* (Erkay 1991, 35)
 oh this neg apple like medicine
 ‘Oh, this not an apple, it is like medicine.’
- (82) *Mon avoľ millioner-an!* (Paltin et al. 1997, 46)
 I neg millionaire-1sg
 ‘I am not a millionaire!’

Interestingly, on the basis of my data, there seems to be a difference between the negators *a* and *avoľ* in nominal predication. The particle *a* occurred most often in specific kinds of nominal predicate clauses with semantics such as illustrated in examples (83)–(85).

- (83) Azor-tomo kudo-ś — a kudo. (Syatko 2003, 7)
 master-car house-def neg house
 ‘A house without a master is not a house.’
- (84) Ilved-ks-teme-jak lomań-eś — a lomań. (Syatko 2003, 1)
 be.mistaken-nom-car-encl human-def neg human
 ‘An infallible person is not a person at all.’
- (85) Kemeń toža-t-ńeń a jarmak-t. (Klyuchagin 1997, 86)
 ten thousand-pl-def now neg money-pl
 ‘Ten thousand is nothing nowadays.’

On the basis of my data it seems that even though the negators *a* and *avol* can be used in all intransitive predicate clauses, there are differences in their relative frequency with respect to the four predicate classes. Hamari (2007, 127–8) did not deal with nominal and adjectival predicates separately, and she came to the conclusion that there are no major differences in the frequencies of the two Erzya words of negation *a* and *avol*. In her data, *a* appeared 124 times as the negative marker of a nominal or adjectival predicate, while *avol* was used 121 times. Also, the Erzya informant cited by Hamari suggested that in most instances the particles *a* and *avol* are interchangeable.

It is clear that the negator *a* is typical in verbal predication, where *avol* has a marginal use only. Even if the particles *a* and *avol* were interchangeable in non-verbal predicate constructions, the statistics from my data suggest that nominal predicate constructions prefer the particle *avol* to *a*. In my data on the written language, in both present and past tense clauses, *avol* appears 114 times in nominal predicate constructions and *a* appears only 13 times. On the other hand, *avol* occurs 74 times in adjectival predicate constructions and *a* occurs 79 times. Both negators can also be used as constituent negators. (In the figures mentioned above, no statistical difference is made between clausal and constituent negation when the negators *a* and *avol* are used in zero-copula and predicative suffix constructions.) As Hamari (2007, 144–5, 166, 250) notes, it is sometimes hard to differentiate between sentential negation and constituent negation, as it is not always clear whether the actual scope of negation covers only the restrictive attributive element preceding the predicate, as this is not formally shown. The distinction between a constituent and clausal negator is, however, clear in those clauses in which the predication strategy is the *ulñems*-copula: in these, *avol* is clearly a constituent negator.

In Erzya there are many adjectives and participles (as well as locational expressions) in which the negator *a* is used as a prefixal element, as illustrated in (86) where the adjective *pokš* ‘big’ is negated by prefixal *a*, producing a contrastive meaning for the adjectival constituent. Notably, there are also cases in which the particle *a* is not **orthographically** a prefix, even if it functions similarly. This is illustrated in (87) and (88). (Due to the problematic definition of constituent vs. clausal negation, I have not included the difference in my statistics, and thus constructions such as (87) and (88) are included in the previous numbers, even though in these clauses the negator *a* could also function as a prefix.)

- (86) Kud-íne-ś a-pokš-ke, ašte-ś Kińaľ lej-eń-ť číre-se.
 house-dim-def neg-big-dim lie-1pst.3sg Kinyal river-gen-def bank-in
 ‘The house was small, it was situated on the bank of the River Kinyal.’
 (Syatko 2003, 2)
- (87) Da, te a mazij tev-eś!
 yes this neg beautiful work-def
 ‘Yes, this is not a good thing/Yes, this is a bad thing.’
 (Erkay 1991, 101)
- (88) P.S. leľa-ś, nama a beńan lomań-eś, di jalateke... (Doronin 1996, 224)
 P.S. uncle-def of.course neg bad human-def and however
 ‘Uncle PS is not a bad man; however, ...’

The frequent use of *a* in adjectival predicate constructions could be related to the status of *a* as a clear constituent negator. Contrastive meanings of adjectives are frequently produced, which could explain why *a* occurs far more frequently in adjectival than in nominal predication.

Even though the negator *a* is not used frequently in nominal predication in my data, it is used relatively frequently when the non-verbal predicate construction expresses possession. In these constructions, the predicate noun is inflected in the genitive. It could be argued that in the following examples *a* functions as a constituent negator: the possessor is negated, but not the possession, hinting that the possessor is someone else.

- (89) T’e, kiska, a toń meľavks-oś, — (Doronin 1996, 131)
 this dog neg 2sg.gen sorrow-def
 ‘This, you dog, is not your sorrow, —’

- (90) *te tev-es a ejkakš-t-ńe-ń.* (Erkay 1991, 101)
 this thing-def neg child-pl-def-gen
 ‘This is not something for children.’

Locational predicate clauses display even more variation than nominal and adjectival ones. Examples (91) and (92) are identical except that (91) has *a* as a negator and (92) involves the negator *avol*. Example (93) illustrates a typical use of the negator *aras* in a locational predicate construction.

- (91) *Me-ks a pakša-s-at?* (Erkay 1991, 53)
 what-tra neg field-ine-2sg
 ‘Why are you not in the field?’
- (92) *Ton me-ks avol pakša-s-at, ńej-at, ...* (Paltin et al. 1997, 16)
 2sg what-tra neg field-ine-2sg see-2sg
 ‘Why are you not in the field, you see, ...’
- (93) *Vana son te-se-jak aras.* (Erkay 1991, 84)
 look 3sg this-ine-encl neg
 ‘Look, (s)he is not here either.’

Hamari (2007, 164, 168) reports that according to her Erzya informant, the two negators *a* and *avol* are in free variation in locative predicate clauses. The negator *a* occurs in six cases and *avol* in ten cases in her locative clause data. When these negators are used, the contrastive meaning ‘not in location A, but in location B’ is often produced. In the case of *aras*, negation is felt to be more categorical; the presence of the subject referent in the location in question is denied without referring to an alternative place. Further, Hamari notes that when the negator *a* is used in locational predicate constructions instead of the negator *aras*, the meaning of the locational expression is typically that of an abstract rather than a concrete location (Hamari 2007, 176, 245).

The various negation strategies of locational predicate constructions were tested in the questionnaires by three sentences in which the location was negated. It should be noted that the locative negator *aras* was not used in the present tense sentences at all. Even though there was variation, the negator *avol* was used by 14 informants, as illustrated in examples (94a, b), and the negator *a* by two informants, as illustrated in examples (94c) and (94d). The predication strategy, which is a zero-

copula in sentences (94a) and (94c) and a predicative suffix construction in sentences (94b) and (94d), seemed not to affect the choice of negator.

- (94) ‘Why are you not at school?’ (questionnaires)
- (a) Tiń me-ks avoĭ škola-so? (8 occurrences)
2pl what-tra neg school-ine
- (b) Tiń me-ks avoĭ škola-so-tado? (6 occurrences)
2pl what-tra neg school-ine-2pl
- (c) Tiń me-ks a škola-so? (1 occurrence)
2pl what-tra neg school-ine
- (d) Tiń me-ks a škola-so-tado? (1 occurrence)
2pl what-tra neg school-ine-2pl

In the past tense, the negation of Erzya verbal and non-verbal predicates differs more decisively from one another than in the present tense. The verbal predicates are negated by the past tense negative auxiliary verb *ež-* (e.g., Bartens 1999, 140). This means that verbal predicates are negated by totally different strategies in the present and the past tense. On the other hand, non-verbal predicates are negated in the past tense mainly using the same negators *a* and *avoĭ* as in the present tense. If the predication strategy of a non-verbal predicate is a copula construction, the auxiliary *ež-* can also be used in nominal, adjectival and locational predicate constructions. However, this is not done frequently; rather, the negators *a* and *avoĭ* are used, and the non-verbal predicate is encoded with a predicative suffix, or a copula construction with a constituent negator. This is illustrated in example (95) where the negator *a* occurs, and in (96) where the negator is *avoĭ*. Hamari’s results (2007, 130, 141–2) support the tendencies observed here.

- (95) ... , di, nat, ruz-oks-kak a beřań-eĭ-t, ... (Syatko 2003, 3)
and probably Russian-tra-encl bad-2pst-3pl
‘...and, probably, they [the poems] were not bad in Russian either.’
- (96) Koj-se-ń, avoĭ beřań-eĭ. (Syatko 2003, 3)
habit-ine-1sg neg bad-2pst.3sg
‘To my mind, it was not bad.’

In the spoken data, all the negative past tense non-verbal predicate constructions were formed with an *ul’iems-*copula construction. Similarly to

the standard written data, negation was usually formed with the constituent negator *avol*, as illustrated in example (97). The negative auxiliary verb *ež-* was chosen once in a locational predicate construction.

- (97) Klass-onok ikele ul-ńe-s avol družna, ... (spoken data, O.P.)
 class-1pl before be-freq-1pst.3sg neg loyal
 'Earlier our class was not loyal, ...'

Motorkina (p.c.) notes that the use of the two negators *a* and *avol* also depends on the dialect: she prefers to use the negator *avol* in all adjectival and nominal predicate clauses, even though both are acceptable. Anyhow, even though my data represents four of the five main Erzya dialects, no differences were found across dialects. In the spoken data, nominal predicates were hardly ever negated. The adjectival predicates were, however, often negated, and in almost all cases, the negator *avol* was used: *avol* appeared 41 times, while *a* occurred twice when the predicate was an adjective. When the predicate was a participle referring to a property concept, the negator *a* appeared three times, as illustrated in (98). As the word order in example (98) reveals, the negator *a* functions as a prefixal element and thus as a constituent negator: it is placed directly before the participle and not before the pronoun that gives comparative meaning to the phrase. Example (99) further illustrates the employment of *a* as the constituent negator of a participle: this construction is structured with a copula verb, which is inflected in the past tense affirmative, and only the participle is negated.

- (98) Siń še-de sefme-t, še-de a kort-íca-t. (spoken data, M.B.)
 3pl it-abl silent it-abl neg talk-ptcp-pl
 'They are quieter, less talkative.'

- (99) A ejkakš-oš mon ul-ń-i-ń a kuncoł-íca, naverna. (spoken data, N.K.)
 but child-def 1sg be-freq-1pst.1sg neg obey-ptcp of.course
 'But as a child, I was disobedient, of course.'

In the questionnaire data, the negator *avol* was used regularly in adjectival and nominal predicate constructions. The negator *araś* was used in past tense locational predicate sentences more often than the other possible strategy, the copula construction negated with the auxiliary *ež-*, as illustrated in (100). Even so, in the third sentence, illustrated in (101), the two negation strategies were used almost equally.

- (100) ‘Yesterday we were not at home.’ (questionnaires)
- (a) Ísak araś-eļ-ínek kudo-so. (13 occurrences)
 Yesterday neg-2pst-1pl house-ine
- (b) Ísak eż-i-ńek uļ-ńe kudo-so. (3 occurrences)
 Yesterday neg-1pst-1pl be-freq house-ine
- (101) ‘My little brother was in the war, but I was not.’ (questionnaires)
- (a) Moń viška brat-om uļ-ńe-ś vojna-so,
 1sg.gen little brother-1sg be-freq-1pst.3sg war-ine
 a mon eż-iń uļ-ńe. (7 occurrences)
 but 1sg neg.1pst.1sg be-freq
- (b) Moń viška brat-om uļ-ńe-ś vojna-so,
 1sg.gen little brother-1sg be-freq-1pst.3sg war-ine
 a mon araś-eļi-ń. (9 occurrences)
 but 1sg neg.2pst.1sg

In summary, on the basis of my data it seems that the negators *a* and *avol* are in free variation in nominal and adjectival (and locational) predicate constructions, the negator *avol* being used in non-verbal predicate constructions more regularly as a clausal negator than the negator *a*. The negator *a* often functions as a constituent negator, but not necessarily. The fact that the negator *avol* is etymologically a combination of a negative marker and a copula meaning ‘be’ (Hamari 2007, 134) explains why it is typical in non-verbal predication. The etymology of the negator *avol* also hints at a previous form of non-verbal predicate construction: the copula verb ‘be’ must have occurred in these, also in the present tense.

The negative counterparts of non-verbal predicate constructions have an important role in establishing the typology of Erzya non-verbal predication. It was observed that the negation of non-verbal and verbal predicates is more similar in the present than in the past tense. Even though past tense nominal predicate constructions can be encoded—similarly to verbal predicates—using the auxiliary *eż-*, this strategy is seldom chosen. Is Stassen’s negation criterion (see section 4.1) fulfilled then? Does the negation of verbal and non-verbal predicates take place in a similar way? Is it enough that the present tense negation is to some extent similar in verbal and non-verbal predication or must the systems be totally the same and in all the tenses? I think it depends on the scholar where (s)he wants to draw the line: which violations (s)he tolerates, and which are taken to be crucial for determining the strategy. The decision may

also depend on expectations: the scholar may wish to take into account the consequences her/his decision has for the typology as a whole. In Stassen's case, the classification of the Erzya predicative suffix strategy as nominal rather than verbal is important: had he come to another conclusion, Erzya would have been a counterexample to his tensedness parameter (see Stassen 1997, 357; also discussed in Hamari 2007, 72–3).

Nevertheless, it is important to acknowledge that a decision as to whether verbal and non-verbal predication strategies are sufficiently similar to consider the strategy involved as a single strategy would not give credibility to the variation found in Erzya, as the system has to be described in a more fine-grained manner. I think when we use criteria such as those of Stassen's verbal strategy, we encounter the familiar problem of linguistic typology. Namely, instead of describing all the variation found, the diverse constructions and systems are forced into general patterns. I have affirmed that it is not relevant to decide whether a predicative suffix construction is a verbal or a nominal strategy. As discussed above, it has been acknowledged that using inflectional person and tense markers is much commoner in verbal predication than in non-verbal predication cross-linguistically. In Erzya, it is obligatory to use these in verbal, although not in non-verbal predication. Predicative suffix construction or, in other words, conjugation, is a typical strategy in verbal predication. If the decision between nominal and verbal strategy must be made, contrary to Stassen, I would regard the strategy as verbal rather than nominal.

A summary of typical negation particles associated with lexical classes of predicates is illustrated in the semantic map in Figure 8, which has the same structure as the semantic maps of intransitive predication presented above. It is worth noting that idiolect and dialect differences may be considerable, and no strict borderlines for variation can be drawn. Consequently, in this map the escalating use of *a* from nouns to verbs is illustrated, although there is no strict demarcation. In Erzya, negative non-verbal predicate constructions are formed with the help of the negation particles *a*, *avol'* and in locational predicate constructions with *aras'*, which can be inflected for person and tense. The fact that *a* seldom occurs in nominal predicate constructions but more frequently in adjectival predicate constructions—either as a clausal or a constituent negator—leads to a situation in which the negation strategy of nominal predicates differs from the negation strategy of verbal predicates more radically than the negation strategy of adjectival predicates differs from that of verbal predicates. In other words, adjectival predicates more often

use the same negation strategy as verbal predicates do. Thus, negative adjectival and verbal predicate constructions are structurally closer to each other than nominal and verbal predicate constructions are.

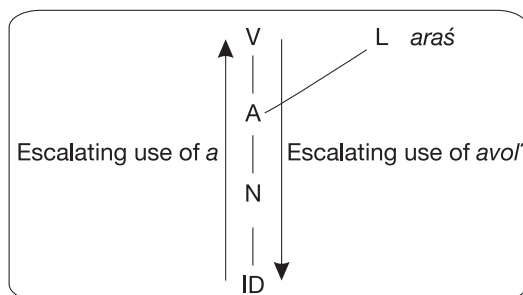


Fig. 8

The semantic map of negation in Erzya

The diachronic development of Erzya negators, and the direction of the change from marking the negation of verbal and non-verbal predicates are discussed in Hamari (2007, 255–6). As she notes, it has been assumed that the Erzya *a* could be the frozen form of an original negative auxiliary, in which case these negators have spread from verbal to non-verbal predication. On the other hand, Pall (1957, 220–1) has suggested another direction for the functional development of *a* suggesting that it could have originally been a negative marker of nominal and adjectival predicates, which spread to verbal predication at the same time as nominal conjugation began to affect the conjugation of verbs. According to Hamari, Pall's hypothesis seems to be very plausible in the case of the development of Moksha *af*, but in Erzya the particle *a* goes back to a personal form of an auxiliary and, as such, is more likely to have originally appeared as a negative element in the verbal paradigm. Thus, according to Hamari, the functional development of *a* would have proceeded from verbal to non-verbal conjugation. The existence of a parallel particle *avol'* in the negation of non-verbal constructions could represent an earlier pattern of negation of nominal predicates in Erzya. If Hamari's assumption is right, Figure 8 can also be interpreted dynamically: the arrows show the developmental path of the negators, which is still mirrored in present-day Erzya.

12. Conclusion

The results of the present study are the following.

As far as the functional domain of non-verbal predication is concerned, Erzya belongs to multiple typological types, which is a sign of an ongoing change. Three predication strategies in Erzya non-verbal predication have been identified: (i) the zero-copula construction, (ii) the predicative suffix construction and (iii) the copula construction. Contrary to Stassen's previous interpretation of Erzya strategies, it was suggested that the predicative suffix construction is not a diachronically nominal pattern, but rather a predication strategy typical of Erzya verbs.

Even though the copula verb *ulems* is specialised to referring to the future tense in modern Erzya, the folklore data contains examples in which it is used with a present tense reference. The copula must have been employed to refer to the present tense in previous stages of the language. Also, the etymology of the negator *avol* strengthens this hypothesis.

The negation strategies of nominal, adjectival and verbal predicates differ from each other, even though the boundaries are somewhat fuzzy. The negator *avol* is typical in nominal and adjectival predication, but marginal in verbal predication. The negator *a*, which is the only negation strategy in present tense indicative verbal predication, also occurs in nominal, adjectival and locational predication, but in this case typically as a constituent negator.

The part-of-speech category of the predicate affects the choice of predication strategy. Cross-linguistic typological studies have shown that patterns such as the predicative suffix construction tend to be missing from nominal predication, which is most typically encoded with zero constructions. Even though in Erzya the predicative suffix is a standard pattern in the present tense in the whole domain of non-verbal predication, among non-verbal predicates it is the most likely to be replaced with a zero-copula construction in a nominal predicate construction. Thus, also in Erzya, the relative frequency of (and degree of obligation for) using the predicative suffix construction decreases moving down the scale verb–adjective/locative–noun.

Further, genre affects the employment of predication strategies. For encoding the present tense, predicative suffix constructions are more frequent in written Standard Erzya, and the zero-copula construction is more typical in spontaneous speech and translation. The present tense *ulems*-copula occurs relatively frequently in folklore data. It is possible

that not only genre, but also the period the data comes from affects the use of encoding strategies.

The past tense predicative suffix construction occurs more frequently in written Standard Erzya than in folklore data, spontaneous speech and translations, in which the copula construction dominates. The zero-copula construction is a spreading pattern: it occurs far more frequently in speech and translations than in standard written Erzya, also in the encoding of adjectival and locational predication. The path of pattern change seems to strengthen the observations of cross-linguistic typologies: the zero pattern spreads from nominal to adjectival and locational predication. The frequent occurrence of zero-copula constructions in translations from Russian to Erzya could be influenced by the fact that in Russian the zero-copula construction is the only possible pattern for encoding the present tense. In the comparative data from Russian-Moksha translations, however, no such influence of Russian has been observed, and in Moksha the predicative suffix construction is the regular pattern.

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