

Loss of semantic specification and lexicalisation of configuration markers : the case of Karata.

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Karata (*k̄'ir̄i mač'i*, Russian *каратинский язык*) belongs to the Andic sub-branch of the Avaro-Andic branch of the Nakh-Daghestanian language family. The spatial system of nouns varies according to two parameters: configuration and direction. There are eight configuration markers which, for reasons that will become obvious in the course of my presentation, I have numbered from one to eight: CFG₁ (-č'o), CFG₂ (-L'a), CFG₃ (-a), CFG₄ (-χa), CFG₅ (-q̄), CFG₆ (-i), CFG₇ (-l̄i), CFG₈ (-l̄'i). Direction is encoded by three spatial cases: locative, allative and ablative.

Tradition has it that each configuration marker is usually considered specified for one 'basic' semantic value. Karata is a typical example of a language in which not all configuration markers can be attributed one basic semantic value, there is no univocal relationship between a marker and its semantics. Moreover analysing the uses of some configuration markers as following from a specific type of configuration considered as their basic meaning may be problematic.

I shall instance the uses of CFG₃ or default configuration marker before moving on to the emergence of a second 'bleached' configuration marker, CFG₁, which is in the process of losing its core spatial meanings (as described by Ganenkov). I shall also bring up and substantiate the question of the lexicalisation of a configuration marker on its orienter even after the latter's meaning has shifted.

This presentation draws upon the findings of caucasologists such as Testelet, Creissels, Kibrik and particularly Ganenkov who carried out an extensive cross-linguistic study of contact configurations.

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