

Paradigm defectivity in Erzya declination types
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The Erzya language is a Volga-Finnic language with a close similarity to its neighbor Moksha. Both languages have three declination types: the indefinite, definite and possessive, which entails four different paradigm patterns for each of the languages. The language of focus, Erzya, has at least 14 distinct morphemes that can be affixed onto the head of complex phrasal constituents, (NPs, non-finite phrases and adpositional phrases), in the indefinite declination. This makes 15 cases with the addition of the zero morpheme, associated with the nominative singular – casus componens. These cases, however, are not attested equally in all three declension types, nor are they compatible with all stems. The following table will illustrate forms that are “+” attested; “(+)” attested but with range restrictions or ambiguity, and “NA” those not attested or not applicable.

Attestation of morphemes in the declination types of Erzya						
Morpheme	Case name		Indefinite	Definite		
				Determinate		Possessive
				Plural	Singular	
∅	Nominative	SG	+	NA	+	(+)
		PL	+	+	NA	(+)
- <i>Oñ</i>	Genitive		+	+	+	(+)
- <i>Neñ</i>	Dative		+	+	+	(+)
- <i>DO</i>	Ablative		+	+	+	+
- <i>sO</i>	Inessive		+	+	+	+
- <i>stO</i>	Elative		+	+	+	+
- <i>S</i>	Illative		+	+	NA	+
- <i>Ov</i>	Lative		+	+	NA	NA
- <i>ks</i>	Translative		+	+	+	+
- <i>Ga</i>	Prolative		+	+	+	+
- <i>ška</i>	Comparative		+	+	+	+
- <i>VTOmO</i>	Abessive		+	+	+	+
- <i>Nek</i>	Comitative		+	+	NA	(+)
- <i>O</i>	Locative		+	NA	NA	(+)
- <i>Ne</i>	Temporalis		+	NA	NA	NA

Hypothesized factors: (i) morphological ordering and phonology; (ii) range; (iii) semantic notions; (iv) WO disambiguation for syntactic homonymy, and (v) discourse roles.

(i) 4 morphological ordering strategies in 4 different ranges “{ }”:

- (1) stem (+ PL) {INDEF.NOM}; stem + case {INDEF.OBL}; stem + PL + DEF.PL + case {DEF.PL};
- (2) stem (+ case) + deictic marker {DEF.SG|POSS}.

(ii) Range restrictions see limitations on core cases in adpositions and non-finites while some non-core cases are limited in nouns.

(iii) Semantic notions contribute to incompatibility in morpheme combinations, i.e. affix + affix and stem + affix:

- (1) Grammatical number (e.g. [DEF.PL] + [NOM.SG]; [DEF.SG] + [NOM.PL]);
- (2) Entities[±CONCRETE] + abstract relations + definite/deictic marking (e.g. [LAT], [LOC], [TEMP], [COM])

(iv) Word order: Does SO ordering contribute to disambiguation of nominative/genitive homonymy?

(v) Discourse role and function incompatibility, e.g. coordinate versus subordinate access + primary arguments in ([POSS] + [DAT]).