Rigina Ajanki

Helsinki

Zero transitive clauses
in Erzya and Finnish

1. Introduction

Erzya and Finnish, though relatively closely related, differ quite radically in the encoding of basic clause types. As they share many features of agglutinative languages, instead of a purely syntactic investigation, the focus must be set on morphosyntax. Finnish and Erzya intransitive clauses resemble each other, but when it comes to other clause types, Erzya makes more use of agglutinative features than Finnish. This is especially characteristic for the encoding of transitive and nonverbal predicate clauses, in which highly synthetic forms are found in Erzya, known under the terms of *object conjugation* and *nonverbal conjugation*, or *nominal conjugation*. The conjugational paradigms display bound person indexing, markers of tense and mood. The current study focuses, however, on clause types less synthetic: clauses encoding outer and inner circumstances, in other words, environmental conditions and mental states.

The aim of this study is to shed light on the different syntactic devices the sister languages employ in the encoding of the clauses in the following examples. In examples 1 through 2, outer circumstances, in other words environmental conditions, are described. In Erzya, nonverbal conjugation is employed whereas in Finnish, there is a copula construction. In both examples, the clauses begin with a spatial (Erzya) or temporal (Finnish) adverbial.

Erzya (Paltin & al. 1997, 20)
(1) *Ušo-so-ńť   tundo-ľ.*
      outside-INE-DEF   spring-2PST.3SG
      'It was spring outside.'

Finnish (<http://keskustelu.suomi24.fi/node/12118817>)
(2) *Eilen   ol-i   kevät.*
      Yesterday   be-1PST.3SG   spring
      'It was spring yesterday.'

Juuret marin murteissa, latvus yltää Uraliin.
Suomalais-Ugrilaisen Seuran Toimituksia =
Mémoires de la Société Finno-Ougrienne 270.
Helsinki 2014. 3–17.

Clauses 3 and 4 illustrate the encoding of inner circumstances: human experiences, feelings and mental states. In Erzya, the morphosyntax of the clause in example 3 resembles the clause in example 1: it begins with a spatial adverbial, and a nonverbal conjugation is employed. In Finnish, the structure of clause 4 is similar only with respect to the fact that the preverbal position is not fulfilled by a nominative encoded NP, and the same copulative item *ole-* 'be' is employed.

Erzya (Syatko 2003: 4)
(3)   *Śeďej-se-nze*   *a-paro-ľ.*
        heart-INE-3SG   NEG-good-2PST.3SG
        'There was a bad feeling in her/his heart.'

Finnish (<http://www.iltasanomat.fi/viihde/art-1288336868935.html>)
(4)   *Minu-lla   on   paha   olo.*
        I-ADE   be.PRS.3SG   bad   feeling
        'I feel bad.'

Comparative syntax has not gained as much attention as comparative phonology and morphology in Finno-Ugrian studies. In the proto-languages, the descriptions of syntax are marginal. The morphosyntax of circumstantial clauses falls easily out of the scope of comparative historical linguistics for the following reasons. The core element of a circumstantial clause is either a verb which does not take any subject argument or, in Erzya, a nonverbal element. Without arguments, the amount of verbal morphology becomes minimal, unless we would be interested in the encoding of tense and mood. Circumstantial clauses have, however, been discussed in studies focusing on word classes in the Uralic languages; namely, the so-called "nomen-verba" include words related to environmental conditions, which is also found in contemporary Finnish e.g. *tuule-* 'wind; the wind blows', which is a root that can be employed both as a verb or a noun. Nomen-verba, which are disyllabic words that can be declined or conjugated, have been regarded as a relic from a period when no distinction was made between verbs and nouns (see e.g. Ravila 1957; Raun 1988, 558; Benkő 1970; for critical point of view, see e.g. Turunen 2010, 41−45).

In this paper, the area of study is defined functional-semantically, after which the formal properties of the expressions are described. Circumstantial clauses are semantically **zero-transitive**, as there is no actor or agent and, naturally, no object (Dryer 2007, 267). The semantic content is related to expressions of outer and inner circumstances, in other words, environmental conditions and human experiences. Dryer (2007, 270) notes that in many languages, these similar kinds of clauses are employed to express time as well.

Zero-transitivity is a semantically based term, but the encoding strategies of zero-transitive clauses differ in many of the world's languages, including Erzya and Finnish. The present paper aims to answer whether there are complements that generally occur in these clause types in Erzya and Finnish, and how the complements are encoded. The study also aims to examine what kind

of formal and semantic connections the circumstantial clauses have with other clause types in these languages.

The data has been collected from the Erzya-language journal *Syatko* as well as Erzya prose. As a native speaker of Finnish, the author has searched the Internet for Finnish counterparts to the Erzya clauses. These Finnish examples aim to represent frequently used clause types.

2. Definition of the semantic-functional domain and typology of intransitive clauses

To define the domain the clauses this study focuses on, a distinction between dynamic and stative circumstantial clauses must be made. Table 1 illustrates the difference between dynamic and stative environmental clauses: in dynamic clauses, there is a predicate with full semantic content, a lexical element identifiable as a verb, and the verb expresses some kind of action. In stative environmental clauses, the predicate is often nonverbal, generally a property concept word in clauses describing circumstances; in the expressions of time it is rather a lexeme identifiable as a noun. Table 1 employs Dryer's (2007, 267) clauses, originally in English, as a starting point; the Erzya and Finnish examples are translations.

Finnish			Erzya			
Sata-a.			*Piźe-ś*	*piź-i.*		DYNAMIC
rain-PRS.3SG			rain-DEF	rain-PRS.3SG		
'It is raining.'						
Tänään	*on*	*kylmä.*	*Ťeči*	*keľme.*		STATIVE
Today	be.PRS.3SG	cold	today	cold		
'It is cold today.'						
Tä-ssä	*huonee-ssa on*	*kuuma.*	*Ťe*	*kvartira-so*	*pśi.*	STATIVE
This-INE	room-INE be.PRS.3SG	hot	this	room-INE	hot	
'It is hot in this room.'						

Table 1. Encoding environmental conditions in Finnish and Erzya, with the division of dynamic and stative constructions.

In order to classify Erzya and Finnish encoding strategies, I have employed Dryer's (2007) typological classification as a working tool. Dryer (2007: 268−69) distinguishes the following strategies for encoding environmental conditions in the world's languages:

i.   a semantically nonreferential pronoun occurs as a subject
ii.   a semantically nonreferential third person singular form of a verb is employed
iii.   a referential subject is present

iv.   there is no overt expression for any argument, no free pronouns nor inflection of verb

v.   employment of the pure noun, such as 'rain'

In the following, Finnish and Erzya stative zero-transitive clause types are studied in light of Dryer's classification. The study uses formal encoding as classification criterion, it focuses on the typological classification of the two languages and simultaneously compares them with each other. In this paper, the focus is set on stative expressions and their encoding. In stative expressions, the predicative element is very often not a verb but rather a stative copula. Even though verbal predicates may express stative relations as well, I have restricted the area of this study to those expressions where the predicate is a copula or a nonverbal element.

3.   Encoding strategies of outer circumstance in Finnish and Erzya

3.1.   Nonreferential pronoun as subject

In Dryer's classification, the first type (type i) is, not surprisingly, represented by languages such as English. In this type, a semantically nonreferential pronoun occurs as a subject. Nonreferential subjects in circumstantial clauses do not occur in standard Finnish, but it is an encoding strategy quite typical for non-standard, colloquial or dialectal language variants (see examples 5–6). According to VISK (§ 915), the formal subject appearing in spoken language fulfills the place of subject when the subject is missing.

Finnish (LA PerP Rovaniemi) [talking about a bear]
(5)   *no sittes se oli sielä talaven ja*
       se keväppuolhen sittet tuli niilä se ampuma… elikkä se
       tappoaika. se oli tuosa

ko	*se*	*alako*	*alako*	*kevät*	*tul-hen*
when	it	begin.1PST.3SG	begin.1PST.3SG	spring	come-INF.ILL

että	*se*	*alako*	*vet-tä*	*tul-hen*
so.that	it	begin.1PST.3SG	water-PRT	come-INF.ILL

       oihi ja semmoshi nin se se sillon sitte lähti pois pesästä.
       'Well, then it was there for the winter and then in the spring, then came those who are gonna shoot…you know, the killing season. It was there when spring started to come, that water started pouring into the ditches and the like, then it left its den.''

Finnish (<http://satakuntasanaa.fi/2014/06/13/>)

(6) *Se on   nyt kesä   vaikka vet-tä   sata-a.*
    it be.PRS.3SG now summer though water-PRT rain-PRS.3SG
    'It is summer now though it is raining.'

Similarly to the constructions in Finnish, the strategy seems to be possible also in Erzya. The Erzya pronoun *t́e* 'it' is employed nonreferentially (see example 7). A further study is needed to figure out how frequent the pattern is in Erzya. It is, by no means, the main strategy in standard Erzya, as the occurrences in written data (collected for the purposes of Turunen 2010) seem to be rare.

Erzya (Syatko 2003: 3)

(7) *T́e uĺńe-ś   ška,   źardo veśeme-ś eŕa-ś*
    it be-1PST.3SG time when all-DEF   live-1PST.3SG
    paz-tńeń   marto ojaksči-se.
    god-PL.DEF.GEN with friendship-INE
    'There was a time when all the people lived in friendship with the gods.'

3.2. Verb with nonreferential and referential third person singular forms

The second type (type ii) in Dryer's classification is represented by languages in which a semantically nonreferential third-person singular form of a verb is employed. This encoding type represents an intransitive clause without an independent noun phrase as a subject. The third-person singular affix, a suffix in Finnish and Erzya that diachronically goes back to participle suffixes (see above), is nonreferential with these verbs. The same suffix is naturally referential with normal intransitive verbs. This type is common in Finnish and Erzya (see examples 8 and 9).

Finnish   Erzya

(8) *Sata-a.*   (9) *Piź-i.*
    rain-PRS.3SG   rain-PRS.3SG
    'It is raining'.   'It is raining'.

Thirdly, Dryer distinguishes the type in which a referential subject is present (type iii), illustrated in examples 10 and 11: *piźeś piźi* 'the rain rains' → 'it is raining' or *moĺi lov* 'goes snow' → 'It is snowing'. The referential noun may be in a definite declension as in example 11 or in an indefinite declension as in example 12. According to Dryer, these clauses are actually intransitive (rather than zero-intransitive) since the subject is referential. Semantically, however, they encode exactly similar conditions.

Erzya (Nina Kazayeva, p.c.)   Erzya (Nina Kazayeva, p.c.)
(10) *Piźe-ś   piź-i.*   (11) *Moľ-i   lov.*
      rain-DEF   rain-PRS.3SG   go-PRS.3SG   snow
      'It is raining.'   'It is snowing.'

In Finnish, the referential subject can be found in circumstantial clauses in the partitive, a case of uncountable nominal subjects in existential clauses as well (see example 12).

Finnish (personal knowledge)
(12) *Vet-tä/lun-ta   sata-a.*
      Water-PRT/snow-PRT   rain-PRS.3SG
      'It is raining/snowing.'

As Turunen (2010, 39) suggests, these kinds of structures are employed in Erzya clauses encoding time (see examples 13 and 14). In these clauses, *ška* 'time' is a referential subject which is either inflected in the definite declension as in example 13 or inflected with a possessive ending as in example 14.

Erzya (Syatko 2003: 3)   Erzya (Syatko 2003: 2)
(13) *Ška-ś   avoľ tundo, /.../*   (14) *Ška-zo   tundo-ľ.*
      time-DEF NEG   spring   time-3SG.PX spring-2PST.3SG
      'It is not spring, ...'   'It was spring.'

In Dryer's fourth type (type iv), there is no overt expression for any argument, no free pronouns nor is there any verbal inflection. From the diachronic point of view, it is tempting to say that this type occurs in Finnish and Erzya as well: the third-person singular does not historically contain any element referring to subject, as this is a situation similar in Erzya verbal inflection. From a historical point of view, there is no reason to consider the third-person singular forms of verbal inflection as containing a third-person subject: in Finnish and Erzya, the third-person singular forms are participles, antecedents of *-jA* and *-pA* (Lehtinen 2007, 125; Bartens 1999, 123).

3.3.   Pure noun: circumstantial or existential clauses?

The last type is to employ the pure noun, such as 'rain'. This type occurs in Erzya stative circumstantial clauses that may contain an adjective in nominative as their only element. It is probably also the sentence type that had occurred in Proto-Uralic: Juha Janhunen (1982, 38–39) summarizes that the complete minimal sentence in PU consisted of a nominal subject and either a verbal or a nominal predicate. The adjective can occur on its own as the predicate of the clause, as illustrated in example 15 in terms of Erzya. The strategy is not unfamiliar to Finnish either, as illustrated in example 16, but it is not regarded as its own clause type in Finnish grammars.

Erzya (Syatko 2003: 10)

(15) *Vaj,　　ava-kaj!　Ťe meźe, kije?!* –
oh,　　mother-voc　it　what　who

　　vajkśńe-ś　　čij-ś　　　valma-ńťeń.
moan-1pst.3sg　run-1pst.3sg　window-def.all

　　Čopoda. Kijak-meźejak　ušo-so　　a　ńeja-v-i.
dark　　nobody-nothing　outside-ine　neg　see-refl-prs.3sg

　　'Oh, mother! What is it, who is it? She moaned and ran to the
window. Dark. You cannot see anybody or anything outside.'

Finnish (<http://www.meidanperhe.fi/keskustelu/838645/ketju/>)

(16) *Hirveä　　myrsky,　pimeä-ä　ja　　jäävet-tä*
awful　　storm　　dark-prt　and　ice.water-prt

　　vihmo-o... aio-tte=ko　　laitta-a　　lapse-t　ulos
rain-prs.3sg　intend-prs.2pl=quest　put-inf　child-pl　out

　　kaike-sta　huolimatta?
all-ela　　despite.of

　　'Awful storm, dark and freezing rain… Are you going to put the
children outside in spite of everything?'

According to Dryer (id.), pure noun as a clause is really an instance of an existential clause which consists simply of a noun phrase denoting that which exists. This is, however, probably not the case in Erzya where circumstantial and existential clauses differ in their encoding. This will be shown in the following.

　　Firstly, the copula in Erzya is not applied in circumstantial clauses in the present tense. Alhoniemi (1982, 52) shows that with respect to this feature, circumstantial clauses resemble adjectival, nominal and locational predicate clauses but differ from the encoding of existential clauses. Secondly, Erzya existential clauses do not make use of nonverbal conjugation in the past tense, but circumstantial clauses do. The differences between existential clauses and circumstantial clauses are discussed in detail in Turunen (2010: 19–24). The following summary of the semantic-pragmatic distinctions between clause types expressing stative relations in Erzya is presented in Turunen (2010, 22). The differences are reflected in the difference in word order, morphological marking and the employment of copulative items. Non-verbal predicate clauses share the same characteristics with state-of-affairs clauses: the past tense of circumstantial clauses can be encoded synthetically, that is, by employing the third-person singular form of nonverbal conjugation. Nonverbal predicate clauses and state-of-affairs clauses resemble each other in the following respect as well: the copula *uľi* 'be' is used in existential and possessive clauses to encode the present tense, but in stative relation clauses, the copula *uľems* 'be' in the present tense normally refers to the future. To encode the past tense, all stative relation clauses can be formed by employing the *uľems* copula.

Clause type	Morphosyntactic characteristics					
	Definite subject	non-verbal conjugation	*uľems* copula for referring to present tense	*uľńems* in past tense	Negator *araś*	Clause initial free person form in obl.case
Nominal predicate	x	x	–	x	–	–
Adjectival predicate	x	x	–	x	–	–
Locational predicate	x	x	–	x	x	–
Environmental clause	–	x	–	x	–	–
Existential clause	–	–	x	x	x	–
Possessive clause	–	–	x	x	x	x
Inner circumstances	–	x	x	x	?	x

Table 2. The distinctive characteristics of nonverbal predicate clauses and existential and possessive clauses in Erzya, adopted from Turunen (2010, 22).

Contrary to existential clauses, there usually is no subject in circumstantial clauses (cf. see the above on nonreferential and referential subjects). The subjects of existential clauses are typically also morphologically indefinite and there is a nominal constituent expressing location, typically in the clause-initial position as illustrated in examples 17 to 19. To encode the present tense, there is either a copula of existence (example 17) or, in some cases, no copula at all (example 18). To encode past tense, the copula takes the same form as it does in other clauses expressing stative relations (example 19), but there is no employment of nonverbal conjugation.

Erzya, Existential clause, present tense, copula (Syatko 2003: 7)
(17)   *A   ko-sto   miń   soda-si-ńek,*
         but   what-ELA   we   know-3SG-1PL
         što   Japonija-so   uľ-iť   eŕźa-t?
         that   Japan-INE   be-3PL   Erzya-PL
         'But how do we know there are Erzyas in Japan?'

Erzya, Existential clause, present tense, zero-copula (Syatko 2003: 7)
(18)   *…stoľe-ń-ť   veľks-se   ugolo-so-ńť – paz-ava-t.*
         table-GEN-DEF   upper.part-INE   corner-INE-DEF   god-woman-PL
         '…there are icons in the corner above the table.'

Erzya, Existential clause, past tense, copula (Syatko 2003: 7)
(19)   *To-so   uľ-ńe-ś   śuro.*
         that-INE   be-FREQ-1PST.3SG   wheat
         'There was wheat.'

The predicate in Erzya stative circumstantial clauses often represents some other lexical class than a verb, in other words, it is either a noun or an adjective such *valdo* 'light' in example 20. The copula is not employed for the present tense. The predicates of circumstantial clauses are nouns or adjectives, but

unlike nominal and adjectival predicate clauses, circumstantial clauses do not contain a subject. Similarly to existential clauses, this clause type often contains a locational element (cf. examples 15–17 above).

Erzya (Syatko 2003: 10)
(20) *Pańikudo-sońť   valdo.*
       Kitchen-DEF.INE   light
       'There is light in the kitchen.'

The domain of stative expressions looks very different in Finnish in comparison to Erzya. Example 21 illustrates the Finnish clause types for expressing existence, whereas example 22 comprises a circumstantial clause that has a very similar kind of structure.

Finnish, existential clause
(<http://www.iltasanomat.fi/matkat/art-1288691214825.html>)
(21) *Luul-i-t=ko,   että Helsingi-ssä on   kallis-ta   kalja-a?*
       think-1PST-2SG=QUEST that H.-INE   be.PRS.3SG expensive-PRT beer-PRT
       'Did you think that there is expensive beer in Helsinki?'

Finnish (<http://hemmahossagolik.blogspot.fi/2013/02/keittio-tanaan.html>)
(22) *Nämä meidän   ikkuna-t anta-a   lounaa-seen,*
       these 1PL.GEN window-PL give-PRS.3SG southwest-ILL
       joten mei-llä   on   ihana-n   valoisa-a /.../
       so   1PL-ADE   be.PRS.3SG lovely-GEN light-PRT
       'Our windows face southeast, so our place gets some lovely light.'

A summary on Finnish stative clause types is given in Table 3. The features that distinguish the clause types in Finnish are rather different from those observed in Erzya. The predication strategies in Finnish stative clause types is based on the copula *ole-*, if not taken into account some semantically full verbs with stative meaning.

Clause type	Morphosyntactic characteristics		
	Definite subject	*ole-* copula	clause-initial free person form in oblique case
Nominal predicate	x	x	–
Adjectival predicate	x	x	–
Locational predicate	x	x	–
Outer circumstance	–	x	–
Existential clause	–	x	–
Possessive clause	–	x	x
Inner circumstances	–	x	(x)

Table 3. Characteristics of Finnish clause types encoding stative relations.

Tables 2 and 3 aim to illustrate that there is a crucial difference between Finnish and Erzya in the morphosyntactic device they make use of in the encoding of circumstantial conditions, nonverbal predication and existence: in Erzya, it is about variation in copula structures, and in Finnish, the same copula 'be' is constantly employed, and variation can be observed in case marking only. There is no copula employed in the Erzya circumstantial clauses type in present tense, and in Finnish, the copula is obligatory. Erzya circumstancial clauses may consist of only one element, an adjectival predicate, but there is often a locational phrase at the beginning of the clause. Both languages display existential clauses with this same feature, and the Finnish circumstantial clause is formally identical to the Finnish existential clause. Locational elements in the theme place is typical for Finnish as well. In Erzya existential clauses, the copula is applied in the present tense, and the clause type difference remains in the present tense. Circumstantial clauses have the semantic characteristics of zero-transitivity, but in form, circumstantial clauses in Erzya may be identical to nonverbal predicate clauses with third-person singular subjects that do not have to be encoded by free pronouns or lexemes. Alhoniemi's (1984) paper illustrates that these clause types in Erzya are related to nonverbal predicate clauses with regard to their encoding, while their connections in Finnish are less obvious: in Finnish, circumstantial clauses display more structural similarities with existential clauses.

To encode the past tense in Erzya, the same predication strategies are available as in nominal, adjectival and locational predication (Alhoniemi 1982, 53). The predicate noun or adjective may be conjugated in the third-person singular in the second past tense, but the copula can be used as well. In Erzya past tense clauses, two predication strategies are available. The synthetic pattern, originally a copula verb that has fused with the nonverbal predicate, is illustrated in example 23. There is no fusion of the copula in Erzya existential clauses, but they have the same structure as the circumstantial clause as in example 24: the copula is a free lexeme inflected in the first past tense.

Erzya (Syatko 2003: 7)

(23)   *..., śe-ks=kak   sov-ińek   viŕ   pot-s,*
          it-TRA=too   go.in-1PST.1PL   forest in-ILLAT
          koso   śeďe   ekše-ľ.
          where   COMP   cool-2PST.3SG
          'Also because of that, we went into the forest, where it was cooler.'

Erzya (Syatko 2003: 10)

(24)   *Mon   sť-i-ń,   źardo*
          I   wake.up-1PST-1SG   when
          kudo-so-ńť   uľ-ńe-ś   uš   valdo.
          house-INE-DEF   be-FREQ-1PST.3SG already   light.
          'I woke up when there was already light in the house.'

The Finnish past tense is identical with its present tense pattern, except for that the copula is inflected in past tense (see example 25).

Finnish (<http://keskustelu.suomi24.fi/node/3495746>)
(25) *Metsä-ssä ol-i   niin iso   sieni*
      forest-INE   be-1PST.3SG so   big   mushroom
      että   istu-i-n   se-n   pää-llä.
      that   sit-1PST-1SG it-GEN   on-ADE
      'There was such a big mushroom in the forest that I could sit on it.'

Expressions of time are closely related to expressions of environmental conditions. Environmental conditions south of the Arctic Circle, such as the amount of light, are directly related to the point of time. The seasons are also both temporal and environmental, at least in those geographically defined areas where Finnish and Erzya are spoken. The encoding of time in Erzya is illustrated in example 26 and Finnish in example 27.

Erzya (Syatko 2003: 3)
(26) *Uľ-ńe-ś   čokšńe.*
      be-FREQ-1PST.3SG   night
      'It was night.'

Finnish (<http://www.taivalkoski.fi/dman/Document.phx?documentId=
lx28713151111824&cmd=download>)
(27) *Ol-i   yö.*
      be-1PST.3SG   night
      'It was night.'

In examples 28 and 29, the environmental conditions are emphasized by using the expression 'outside'; without it, the clauses could be interpreted as being temporal expressions as well.

Erzya (Paltin & al. 1997: 20)
(28) *Ušo-so-ńť   tundo-ľ.*
      outside-INE-DEF   spring-2PST.3SG
      'It was spring outside.'

Finnish
(<http://www.demi.fi/keskustelut/oma-planeetta/ulkona-kevät-d#.U60KbVzyiXU>)
(29) *Ulkona   on   kevät.*
      Outside   be.PRS.3SG   spring
      'It is spring outside.'

4.   Encoding inner circumstances

It is not always semantically clear whether the clauses encode outer or inner circumstances, e.g. when stating that 'It is cold', we can rely on a thermometer or our personal experience. In these clause types, the experiencer is not necessarily encoded at all. Encoding the experiencer is possible in the case of inner circumstances (mental/physical states). The encoding in oblique cases is related to the characteristics of an experiencer subject: it is not an agent, a prototypical agent being a direct causer, deliberate causer, controlling causer and obvious causer (e.g. Givón 1984, 100, 102, 107−108). Consequently, an experience, in Finnish and Erzya as well, is usually not encoded in the prototypical case of subject, that is, the nominative. First, clauses in which there is no overt encoding of experiencer, are inspected.

The Erzya clauses illustrated in examples 30 and 32 encode mental states or emotions. Structurally, they are identical with clauses encoding outer circumstances, as there is no linguistic element encoding the experiencer. The Finnish examples (31 and 33) also display the features of Finnish circumstantial clauses.

Erzya (Erkay 1991: 77)

(30)   *Mińek   škola-so-ńť   pek   vadŕa.*
        we.GEN   school-INE-DEF   very   good
        'Our school has a good athmosphere.'

Finnish (<http://www.demi.fi/keskustelut/oma-planeetta/
koulussa-oli-tänään-niin-tylsää-et-luulin-et-kuolen#.U-xt3FbyiXU>)

(31)   *Koulu-ssa ol-i   tänään   niin   tylsä-ä*
        School-INE be-1PST.3SG today   so   boring-PRT
        et   luul-i-n   et   kuole-n.
        that   think-1PST-1SG that   die-PRS.1SG
        'It was so boring at school today that I thought I'd die.'

Erzya (Paltin & al. 1997: 9)

(32)   *Staka   ton-teme-ť.*
        hard   you-CAR-2SG
        'It is difficult without you.'

Finnish (<http://www.lily.fi/blogit/mangomalen/>)

(33)   *Kun   on   vaikea-a,*
        When   be.PRS.3SG   hard-PRT
        joku   teke-e   hunajaleivä-n
        somebody   make-PRS.3SG   honey.sandwich-GEN
        'When it gets difficult, you can make honey bread.''

In the Erzya present tense, no copulative items are needed, and to encode past tense, Erzya has two patterns equally employable: nonverbal conjugation (see above and example 34) and copula construction (see below example 38).

Erzya (Syatko 2003: 2)

(34) *A   meź-t́   korta-ms,   marto-nzo   vadŕa-ľ.*
      NEG   what-PL   speak-INF   with-3SG.PX   good-2PST.3SG
      'Nothing to add, it was good with her/him.'

Constructions found in Erzya are less common in Finnish, as a non-finite form of the verb usually occurs together with an adjective, as in examples 35 and 36.

Finnish (<http://ellit.fi/ihmissuhteet/seksi/nain-puhut-seksista-uuden-kumppanisi-kanssa-lue-seksuaaliterapeutin-neuvot>)

(35) *Kun   toise-n   tunte-e   ja   häne-n   kanssa-an*
      when   other-GEN   know-PRS.3SG   and   3SG-GEN   with-3SG.PX
      on   hyvä   ol-la, /.../
      be.PRS.3SG   good   be-INF
      'When you know the other person and it is good to be with her/him,…'

Finnish (<http://www.tunnelukkosi.fi/testi.php>)

(36) *Minu-n   on   vaikea   ymmärtä-ä   miksi*
      1SG-GEN   be.PRS.3SG   hard   understand-INF   why
      kukaan   voisi   oikeasti   pitä-ä   minu-sta.
      anyone   can.COND.3SG   really   like-INF   1SG-ELA
      'It is difficult for me to understand why anyone could like me.'

The Erzya experiencer *mońeń* is encoded in the dative, sometimes labelled (dative-)allative (see example 37). The Finnish declination system does not include a dative case, but the functions of the Erzya dative are expressed in Finnish by the adessive in the encoding of mental or physical states, as in examples 38 and 39, or less generally by the genitive as in example 40.

Erzya (Syatko 2003: 3)

(37) *Ťeči   mońeń   uľńe-ś   pek   staka.*
      today   1SG.DAT   be-1PST.3SG   very   hard
      'It was very difficult for me today.'

Finnish (<vastatuulessa.vuodatus.net/lue/2014/01/>)

(38) *Mu-lla   on   niin   vaikea-a.*
      1SG-ADE   be.PRS.3SG   so   hard-PRT
      'I'm having such a difficult time.'

Finnish (<www.demi.fi/keskustelut/keho/miksi-minulla-melkeinpä-aina-kylmä-muita#.U-xu_1byiXU>)

(39) *Miksi   minu-lla   on   melkeinpä   aina   kylmä?*
      why   1SG-ADE   be.PRS.3SG   almost   always   cold
      'Why am I almost always freezing?'

Finnish (<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PBJF9QwlUhE>)

(40) *Kun   minu-n   on   kylmä.*
      When   1SG-GEN   be.PRS.3SG   cold
      'When I am freezing.'

There is a difference between Erzya and Finnish in the sense that Erzya encodes outer and inner circumstances with similar kinds of patterns, but Finnish uses constructions similar to its habitive constructions to encode human experiences. In Finnish, the adessive is a case with which the possessor as well as experiencer are encoded. In Erzya, habitive constructions may display a personal form clause-initially, in which case it is in the genitive.

5.   Final remarks

The typological classification of Finnish and Erzya clause types shows that both languages make use of several typological strategies to encode zero-transitive clauses. Despite many shared characteristics, the two related languages differ from each other in many respects in terms of the encoding of inner and outer circumstances, environmental conditions and psycho-physical states. The differences reflect the different grammatical structures understood in a broad sense: their predication patterns as well as case systems are very different. Erzya can employ nonverbal conjugation and non-copula patterns whereas Finnish cannot. On the other hand, even though they have very different devices, some of the clause types in Finnish and Erzya do resemble one another, especially when Erzya employs a copula. The shared characteristics are, however, also partly due to the limited number of typologically possible patterns and the fact that Erzya makes use of multiple patterns. The connections of clause types to the others inside of one and the same language are very different. The next figures illustrate this.
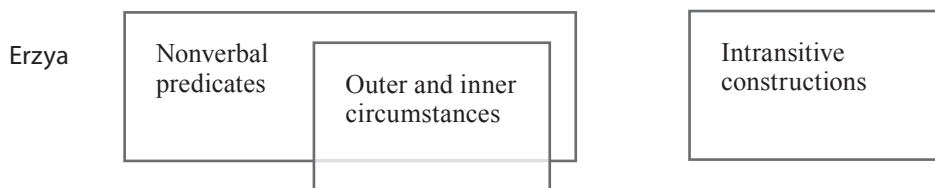

Figure 1. Connections between Erzya clause types / Semantic map of Erzya clause types.
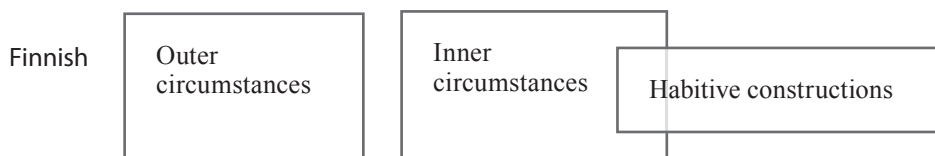

Figure 2. Connections between Finnish clause types / Semantic map of Finnish clause types.

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Syatko 1, 2, 3, 4 and 7 = Material from Erzya journal Syatko, the Volga server of Research Unit for Volgaic Languages, University of Turku.