

Lexically-conditioned uses of emphatic particle =*ok* in Hill Mari: a typological approach

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5th Workshop on the languages of the Volga-Kama Sprachbund

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of emphatic particle =*ok* in Hill Mari:
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Outline of talk

1. Hill Mari =*ok* and the typology of focus particles
2. =*ok* with universal quantifiers
3. =*ok* in comparative constructions
4. =*ok* with contrastive topics
5. =*ok* with spatial expressions
6. =*ok* with temporal expressions
7. =*ok* with caritives

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Background: focus-sensitive items

- Lexical items like English *only*, *even* and *also*, the rules of usage of which require association with focus
- (1) a. John only read THIS book
b. John only READ this book
 - different truth conditions
- Extraordinarily popular among semanticists since **Horn 1969**, being an important source of knowledge about presuppositions, syntax of focus, focus alternatives, etc.

FSI: polyfunctionality

- Polyfunctionality of *only*:

(2) I only invited JACK (“logical *only*”)

→ ‘nobody else but Jack’

(3) “Arsenal” only finished in the FIFTH place (“scalar *only*”)

→ ‘no other place rather than 5th’

FSI: polyfunctionality

- **Coppock and Beaver (2014)**: a plausible unified semantics for logical *only* and scalar *only*
 - same semantic skeleton
 - different readings stem from a pragmatic parameter that can have different values
- However, Russian has separate lexical items for logical *only* and scalar *only*
 - *tol'ko* for logical *only*
 - *liš* (and several compound particles) for scalar *only*

FSI: polyfunctionality

- FSIs have rather abstract meanings, which are cross-linguistically recurrent: a fair number of languages seem to have an equivalent of English “logical *only*”
- The patterns of co-lexicalization of the FSI meanings seem a valid object for semantic typology (as, for example, semantic typology of tense and aspect systems in the vein of **Bybee et al. (1994)**)
- Existing studies:
König (1991) (mostly European languages), **Gast & van der Auwera (2011)**, **Crnič (2012)**, **Forker (2016)** (additives)

Our starting point: =ok

- Hill Mari =ok is something different from what most typological FSI studies aim at investigating (**Kozlov 2017, 2019; Kaškin et al. 2017**)
- The goal of this talk is to describe **minor functions** of =ok and make some first typological observations about how these functions are expressed elsewhere
- Minor, or lexically-conditioned functions of =ok are those that only surface when certain lexemes or morphemes are present

=*ok*: primary functions

- **exhaustive focus** (parallel to English it-cleft, translated with Russian *imenno*)

(4) t̥ə edem=vlä=**ok** tol-ân-ât
that person=PL=**EMPH** come-PRF-3PL
'It were THOSE people who came.'

=*ok*: primary functions

- **anti-additive focus** (marking a repeating element in a parallel structure; may be (sometimes) translated with English *again*; Russian *že*)

(5) nêr-êštê [maša]_{FOC} päšäl-ä,
field-IN M. work-NPST.3[SG]

teta-vlä-m [maša]_{FOC}=**ok** anž-a
child-pl-ACC M.=**EMPH** look-NPST.3[SG]

‘MAŠA works in the field, and MAŠA looks after the children, too.’

Minor functions: caveat

- In this talk, I will not be proving for each function that it really has to be described as a **separate** function of *=ok* (rather than an instance of usage of some broader function).
- I am moderately confident that some of them are, and some of them are not reducible to each other in a straightforward way (although there always remains some room for the wonders of the formal semantics machinery)

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=*ok* with universal quantifiers

- With universal quantifiers (determiners or adverbs, but not, e. g., necessity modals): domain maximization
- \forall =*ok* as compared to just \forall is less tolerant to exceptions
- Cf. English *every single X*, *every bloody X*

=*ok* with universal quantifiers

(6) a. cilä t'et'ä južnamžê opozdaj-a
all child sometimes be.late-NPST [3SG]
'All children are sometimes late.'

b. cilä t'et'ä=**ok** južnamžê opozdaj-a
all child=**EMPH** sometimes be.late-NPST [3SG]
'Every single child is sometimes late.'

=*ok* with universal quantifiers

(7) a. mән' amasa-m čüč-äš so mond-em
I door-ACC close-INF always forget-NPST.1SG

‘Я всё время забываю закрыть дверь.’

b. mән' amasa-m čüč-äš so=**ok** mond-em
I door-ACC close-INF always=**EMPH** forget-NPST.1SG

‘Idem.’

Domain maximization with focus particles

- Do focus particles often fulfill this function?

Balkar (<Turkic; Bylinina et al. 2020): additive particle used for domain maximization

(8) a. Kerim=**da** kel-di

K.=**ADD** come-PAST

‘Kerim came, too.’ / ‘Even Kerim came.’

b. xar sabij(=**da**) kesi-n ana-sy-n süje-di.

every child(=**ADD**) self-GEN mother-3-ACC love-3.SG

‘Every (single) child loves their mother.’

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=*ok* in comparative constructions

- =*ok* attaches to a comparative morpheme in comparative constructions, emphasizing similarity
- cf. English (*just*) *as*

=*ok* in comparative constructions

(9) s'er'ožana tože män' gan'-em=**ok**,

S.-POSS.1PL also I like-POSS.1SG=**EMPH**,

ät'äžö gan'=**ok**

father-POSS₃SG like=**EMPH**

'Our Seryozha is just like me, just like my father'

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=*ok* with contrastive topics

- In Hill Mari, contrastive topics are marked with the 3rd person possessive

(10) ti grušê-žê-m mën' irok kačk-am
this pear-POSS.3SG-ACC I morning eat-NPST.1SG
a ti olma-žê-m kod-em
and this apple-POSS.3SG-ACC leave-NPST.1SG

‘This pear, I will have for my breakfast, and this apple, I will keep.’

(example courtesy of Irina Khomchenkova)

=*ok* with contrastive topics

- =*ok* is commonly (but far from always) used for
- Contrastive topics bear an exhaustivity implicature (**Büring (2014)**):

(11) This PEAR_{CT}, I will have for my BREAKfast

↷ It's only the pear that I have for my breakfast, completely another fate awaits the apple

- A good context for =*ok* to surface in its exhaustive reading

=*ok* with contrastive topics

- (10) no osnovnoj-ž=**ok** kogo-rak klass-vlä-štö
but main-POSS.3SG=**EMPH** big-ATT class-PL-POSS.3PL
izučaj-alt-ət literatur-êštê
study-DETR-NPST.3PL literature-LOC

‘But as for the main part, it is usually studied in the senior school in the Literature class’

=*ok* with contrastive topics

- Frequently used to fix the scope of negation

(11) šêren-ž=**ok** tokê-na a-na kašt êl'ê
often-POSS.3SG=**EMPH** home.1PL NEG.NPST-1PL go PST

‘We seldom went home’ {while on vacations}

= ‘We did not go home O F T E N’

= ‘As for often, the going-home event cannot be characterized with this property’

=*ok* with contrastive topics

- Frequently used to fix the scope of negation

(12) kogon-ž=**ok** a-k pop-ê
very-POSS.3SG=**EMPH** NEG-3SG speak

‘She speaks {Mari} not ideally’

= ‘She doesn’t speak Mari IDEALLY’

= ‘As for ideally, she does not speak Mari this way.’

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=*ok* with spatial expressions

- =*ok* attaches to DPs in locative cases and spatial PPs, indicating greater precision in identifying the location

=*ok* with spatial expressions

- (13) tädä-n pört-šä [povorot paštek]_{PP}=**ok**
this-GEN house-POSS.3SG corner behind=**EMPH**
'His house is just behind the corner.'

=*ok* with spatial expressions

- (14) kart'in-êṃ stöl küšän=**ok** säk-äš lieš
picture-ACC table above=**EMPH** hang-INF necessary
'You need to hang up the picture **straight above** the table'

=*ok* with spatial expressions

- It's only in this function (to the best of my knowledge) that =*ok* can coexist with another (e. g. exhaustive) =*ok*

(15) {I have tried moving this picture to the left and to the right.}

no [[stöl küšän=**ok**]=**ok**] luči

but table above-**EMPH-EMPH** better

'**It's straight above** the table **that** I think it better to hang it up.'

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=*ok* with temporal expressions

Two types of usage:

- indicating greater precision (cf. English *just now*)
- *already*-like

Greater precision with temporal =*ok*

(16) kězät=**ok** tol
now=**EMPH** come[IMP]
'Come right now!'

- Probably some restrictions on the range of adverbials this function is compatible with: *kok cäs-äšt=ok* [2 hour-LOC-EMPH] cannot mean 'exactly at two o'clock'

‘already’ with temporal =ok

- When =ok is attached to some constituent in a temporal clause, it sometimes is (and always can be) interpreted as ‘already’

(17) moskva-šk=**ok** kem-em god-ê^m,

M=EL-**EMPH** go-NMZ-POSS.1SG time-ACC

män’ okn’a vašt jêl vëkë anž-en-am

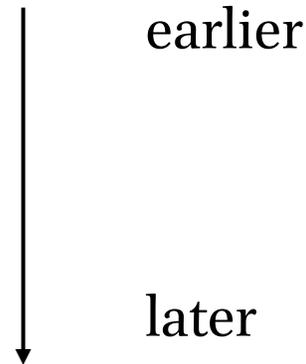
I window through Volga at look-PRF-1SG

‘Already when I was going to Moscow, I looked at Volga through the window of the train ’

'already' with temporal =ok

'Already when I was going to Moscow, I looked at Volga through the window of the train '

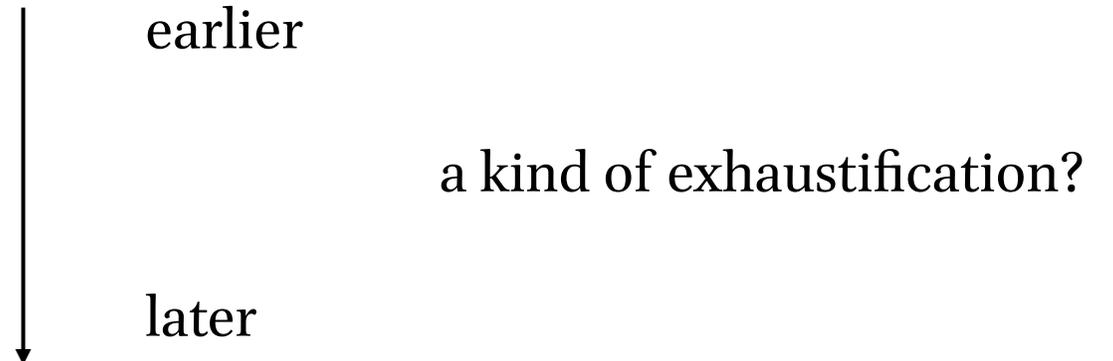
- ∼ 'and from that time on I had many opportunities to look at Volga'
- Question under discussion:
'When in your travel history have you seen Volga (for the first time)?'
- Contextually-supplied focus alternatives, ordered by time:
 - 'when I travelled to Moscow'
 - 'when I travelled to Perm'
 - 'when I travelled to St. Petersburg'
 - 'when I travelled to Anadyr'



'already' with temporal =ok

'Already when I was going to Moscow, I looked at Volga through the window of the train '

- ∼ 'and from that time on I had many opportunities to look at Volga'
- Question under discussion:
'When in your travel history have you seen Volga (for the first time)?'
- Contextually-supplied focus alternatives, ordered by time:
 - 'when I travelled to Moscow' ✓
 - 'when I travelled to Perm' ✗
 - 'when I travelled to St. Petersburg' ✗
 - 'when I travelled to Anadyr' ✗



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=*ok* with caritives

- With DPs in the Caritive case, =*ok* is interpreted as a scalar particle conveying unlikelihood (cf. *even*)

(18) vladislaf kuprijanêf-êm ekzamen-**de=ok**

V. K.-ACC exam-CAR=**EMPH**

muzikal'nêj učil'iš's'-ëškë prinimaj-at

musical college-ILL accept-NPST.3PL

‘Vladislav Kuprijanov even got accepted to the musical college without any EXAMS’ {let alone having any other difficulties}

=*ok* with caritives

- With DPs in the Caritive case, =*ok* is interpreted as a scalar particle conveying unlikelihood (cf. *even*)

(19) tädö kalpak-de=**ok** kašt-eš

he cap-CAR=**EMPH** walk-NPST.3SG

‘He even walks around without a CAP.’ {let alone a fur coat, valenki, etc.}

=*ok* is very unlike *even*

- (sorry for using *even* as if it were a comparative concept. I know it is *mauvais ton*. Imagine that each time you hear *even* I say in fact *scalar additive item*)
- *even* marks the higher-ranged alternative and presupposes that some other alternatives are true
- =*ok* is (supposed to be) exhaustive, hence it (arguably) excludes all other alternatives
- Some weird stuff going on with the scope of negation?

Additive-ish behaviour of =*ok*'s cousins

- (Beserman) Udmurt =*ik* is very much like Hill Mari =*ok*
- Both were borrowed from a common Turkic source ([Zakirova 2019](#))

(20) mənəm səčə=**ik** nəl murt kul-e

I.DAT such=**EMPH** girl human need-PRS.3SG

‘It’s precisely the type of girl that I need’

= ‘I need precisely such girl’

Additive-ish behaviour of =*ok*'s cousins

- (Beserman) Udmurt =*ik* is very alike Hill Mari =*ok*, but being attached to a negative verb, it gets the *even* interpretation

(21) mənəm so nomreno ez=**ik** vera

I.DAT he nothing NEG.PST₃SG=**EMPH** say

‘He didn’t even tell me anything’

(22) so mone ez=**ik** až’ə

he I.DAT NEG.PST₃SG=**EMPH** see

‘He didn’t even see me’

Additive-ish behaviour of =*ok*'s cousins

- The *even* interpretation unavailable without negation:

(23) masa uža=**ik**

M. work.NPST.3SG=**EMPH**

#‘Masha even works {apart from raising five children}’

- So there is definitely some stuff going on with negation in other Volga-Kama languages, too

Summing up

1. =*ok* with universal quantifiers
2. =*ok* in comparative constructions
3. =*ok* with contrastive topics
4. =*ok* with spatial expressions
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Summing up

1. =*ok* with universal quantifiers
2. =*ok* in comparative constructions greater precision
3. =*ok* with contrastive topics
4. =*ok* with spatial expressions greater precision
5. =*ok* with temporal expressions greater precision
6. =*ok* with caritives

Summing up

1. =*ok* with universal quantifiers greater precision???
2. =*ok* in comparative constructions greater precision
3. =*ok* with contrastive topics
4. =*ok* with spatial expressions greater precision
5. =*ok* with temporal expressions greater precision
6. =*ok* with caritives

Summing up

- | | | |
|----|--|------------------------------|
| 1. | = <i>ok</i> with universal quantifiers | greater precision??? |
| 2. | = <i>ok</i> in comparative constructions | greater precision |
| 3. | = <i>ok</i> with contrastive topics | regular exhaustivity meaning |
| 4. | = <i>ok</i> with spatial expressions | greater precision |
| 5. | = <i>ok</i> with temporal expressions | greater precision |
| 6. | = <i>ok</i> with caritives | |

Summing up

- | | | |
|----|--|--------------------------------|
| 1. | = <i>ok</i> with universal quantifiers | greater precision??? |
| 2. | = <i>ok</i> in comparative constructions | greater precision |
| 3. | = <i>ok</i> with contrastive topics | regular exhaustivity meaning |
| 4. | = <i>ok</i> with spatial expressions | greater precision |
| 5. | = <i>ok</i> with temporal expressions | greater precision |
| 6. | = <i>ok</i> with caritives | something completely unrelated |

Greater precision

- **Krifka (2002)**: Level of precision is a pragmatic parameter according to which our assertions are evaluated
- *St. Petersburg has 5 million inhabitants* can be true at some level of precision and false at another (at which we should rather say it has 4,991 million)

Greater precision

- Exhaustivity can in fact stem from tightening up the level of precision: at some level of precision, we are content with partial answers to the QUD, but when we try to be more precise, we provide answers that exhaust the range of possible true answers

(24) {I need to talk to somebody who have been at the workshop}

— Who has been to the workshop?

— Maria has.

Greater precision

- Exhaustivity can in fact stem from tightening up the level of precision
- At some level of precision, we are content with partial answers to the QUD, but when we try to zoom in and be more precise, we provide answers that exhaust the range of possible true answers

(25) {I need to know how many students of mine attended the workshop}

— Who has been to the workshop?

— # Maria has.

Greater precision

- A typological parallel: English *just*

(26) *just now, just above the table, just as he does*

(27) The spade is **just** the thing that we need
≈ It's the spade that we need
(only available for relative clauses in English)

That's it

Thank you for your attention...