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Spatial Cases in Tsez: Revisiting the Great Daghestanian Case Hoax

The talk investigates spatial case marking in Tsez. Comrie and Polinsky (1998) argue for the decomposition of these forms into at least two morphemes (roughly Path and Place), and optionally others, like the distal marker. The current talk points out that the bi-morphemic analysis leaves several puzzles unanswered. To resolve them, I argue that we need a tri-componential underlying structure, augmenting the traditional Path and Place with Svenonius' AxPart.

Despite the need for the tri-componential structure, the marking of some cases is indeed bi-componential, i.e., some of the expected markers are missing. The talk argues that this is because of portmanteau realisation: three underlying positions are present, but realised by only two markers. The specific conditions under which this happens provide us with some general insights into the process of lexicalisation.