

Polysemy patterns of two postpositions marking class-inclusion and property assignment in Jeli (Central-Mande)

The concepts of class inclusion (Musa is a hunter) and property assignment (Musa is president) on the one hand and equation or identification (Musa is the winner) on the other are formally differentiated in Jeli. Whereas class-inclusion and property assignment are expressed by a copula and a postpositional phrase containing a predicate nominal and a postposition (i.e., *kóŋ* or *rè*), the predicate nominal in nominal sentences expressing equational or identificational function is linked to the subject only by a copula, but is not further marked by a postposition.

The paper investigates the polysemy pattern of the two postpositions involved in marking class-inclusion and property assignment. It is shown that besides their primarily locative meaning and their systematic use with predicate nominals, the two postpositions show a different functional range. Whereas the inessive postposition *kóŋ* also marks predicative arguments of verbs expressing quality (e.g., to consider as) or transformation (to become), the adessive postposition *rè* expresses associative meaning (comitative, instrumental) and is also employed to mark comparison.