

# Typology of verbal attenuative

A **verbal attenuative** denotes an eventuality that is *incomplete, deficient, lesser* than normal.

The **data** is a *convenience sample* of **25** languages from different areas. The **sources** are *grammars* and *articles* plus *fieldwork* for Moksha, Hill Mari & Western Khanty. **Previous typologies** are unpublished *sketches* in (Volkov & Ignatenko 2017) and in (Tatevosov 2003).

The final **interpretation** of a verbal attenuative *depends on lexical aspect* of the stem verb.

## Semelfactive

*A temporally minimal eventuality.*

Exemplified by Finnish (Armoskaite & Koskinen 2008)

**multiplicative process → inherent quantum**

*hyp-ähtä-ä* 'jump once' < *hypätä* 'jump'

**process → a minimal instance**

*laul-ahta-a* 'sing for a moment' < *laulaa* 'sing'

**incremental process → hasty realisation**

*luk-ais-ta* 'read quickly, skim' < *lukea* 'read'

**\*punctual events, \*states**

*\*saav-ahta-a* < *saapua* 'come'

*\*tied-ähtä-ä* < *tietää* 'know'

## Delimitative

*An initial proper part of an eventuality.*

Exemplified by Hill Mari (own fieldwork)

**state/process → short duration of an eventuality**

*šül-äläl-eš* 'breathe for a while' < *šülä* 'breathe'

**incremental process → partial accomplishment**

*kačk-âldal-eš* 'eat a bit' < *kačkeš* 'eat'

**\*individual-level states or entry into them**

*\*päl-äläl-eš* < *päl-a* 'know'

**punctual event → a short result state**

*\*po-prixodit'* < *prixodit'* 'come' (Russian)

*pâr-alal-eš* 'drop in' < *pâra* 'come' (Hill Mari)

## Discontinuative

*Eventualities with interruptions*

Ex. by Mauritian Creole (Henri & Winterstein 2014)

**state, process → eventuality with interruptions**

*dormi-dormi* 'sleep sporadically' < *dormi* 'sleep'

**punctual event → sporadic event**

*ariv-ariv* 'happen once in a while' < *ariv* 'happen'

**state, process → lower intensity**

*sant-sante* 'hum' < *sante* 'sing'

**incremental process → partial accomplishment**

*ranz-ranz* 'somewhat build' < *ranz* 'build'

**! individual-level states → lower intensity**

*konn-kone* 'somewhat knows' < *kone* 'know'

## Attenuativization of states

A state of an eventuality can be modified:

Russian (Indo-European; my own knowledge)

*nedo-žat'* 'to press not enough' < *žat'* 'press'

*\*nedo-xodit'* < *xodit'* 'walk, go'

*pri-bolet'* 'be sick a little bit' < *bolet'* 'be sick'

Besermian (Uralic; Cheremisinova 2019 & SLE 2020)

*zol=ges* 'stronger'

*mɣzm-iš'ko=ges* 'miss [you] a bit'

*e-z=ges=na pyž'* 'not yet (=almost) cooked'

Such derivations need more research.

## A prospect of a typology

There are at least three dimensions to an eventuality: states, time, frequency (cf. Croft 2012).

Dimension	minimal	partial
States	<i>pri-?</i>	<i>nedo-, ges?</i>
Time	semelfactive	delimitative
Frequency	diminutives	discontinuative

It's a work in progress. Comments are welcome.

## Diminutives on verbs

Exemplified by French (Amiot & Stosic 2014)

**low intensity**

*neigoter* 'snow slightly' < *neiger* 'snow'

**iterative**

*mordiller* 'nibble from time to time' < *mordre* 'bite'

**pejorative**

*chroniquailler* 'write unimportant chronicles'

< *chroniquer* 'write a chronicle'