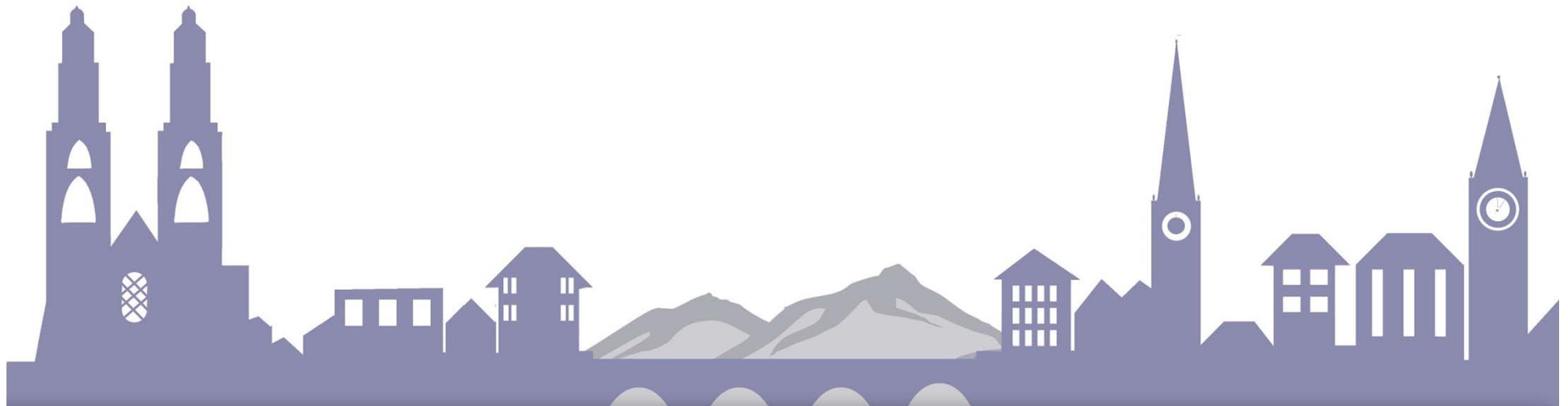


Verbs of Closing and Opening: Towards a Lexical Typology

Olga Vinogradova, Higher School of Economics
Egor Kashkin, Vinogradov Russian Language Institute
Daria Zhornik, Lomonosov Moscow State University
Maria Sidorova, Lomonosov Moscow State University



Introduction

- Verbs of closing: stopping access to a static object by creating a barrier (Eng. *close, shut, shield...*).
- Verbs of opening: creating access to a static object by removing a barrier (Eng. *open, unlock...*).
- Very few typological studies (except some initial contribution by M. Bowerman).
- In this talk only physical meanings (no metaphorical abstract contexts).



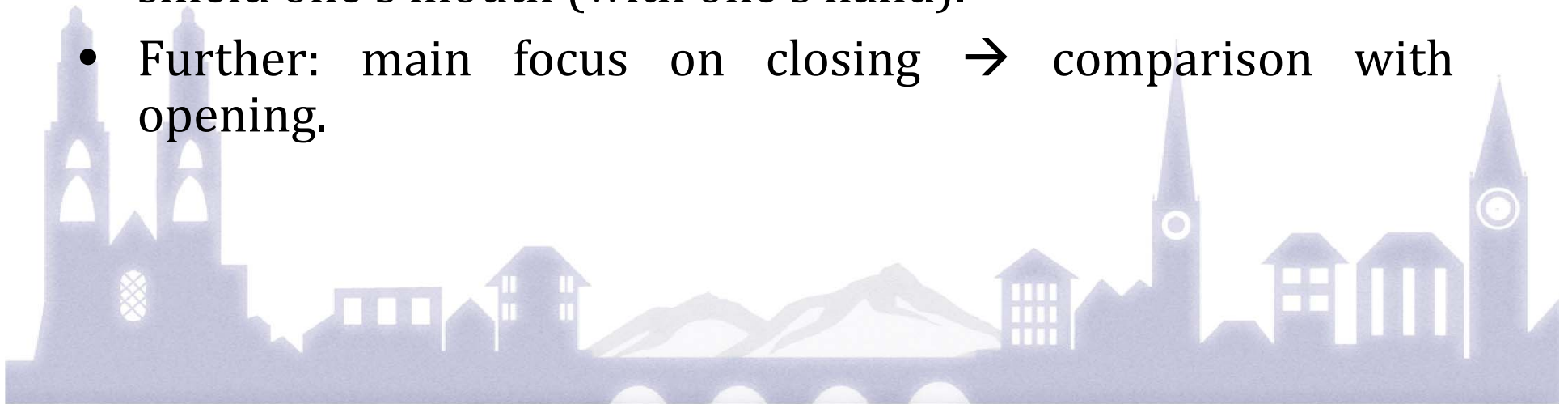
Introduction

- Frame-based approach: collocations of lexical items → typologically consistent classes of situations (frames), see [Maisak, Rakhilina (eds.) 2007; Rakhilina, Reznikova 2013, 2016].
- Native speakers & questionnaires, dictionaries, corpora.
- Language sample: Russian, Polish, English, Swedish, French, Hill Mari, Moksha, Komi, Khanty.



Introduction

- Closing – a fine-grained argument structure:
 - ✓WHO is closing WHAT WITH WHAT FROM WHAT;
 - ✓to close a door (barrier) vs. to close a room (space);
 - ✓[to cry and] cover one's face (contact) vs. to shield one's face [from a ball] (distance).
- Different arguments in different frames: to close a door with a key vs. to close one's mouth (with ???) – to cover / shield one's mouth (with one's hand).
- Further: main focus on closing → comparison with opening.



Barrier in a building

- +/- Closure device

Russian *запереть* 'to lock', Izhma Komi *tomnoony* (< *toman* 'a lock'), Khanty *(lǎp) tūxarti* vs. *(lǎp) pentti*

*ma ɔw-em kǎt toman-na lǎp tūxar-ɫ-em / *lǎp pen-ɫ-em*

I door-1SG two lock-LOC PREV close-NPST-1SG.S:SG.O

'I **locked** the door with two locks.'



Barrier in a building

- +/- tight closure

Hill Mari *čüčäš* 'to close' vs. *pitäräš* 'to close, to lock (tightly, often with a lock)'

män' amasa-m kok sravač don pitär-en-äm / čüč-än-äm

I door-ACC two lock with close-PFV-1SG

'I **locked** the door with two locks.'



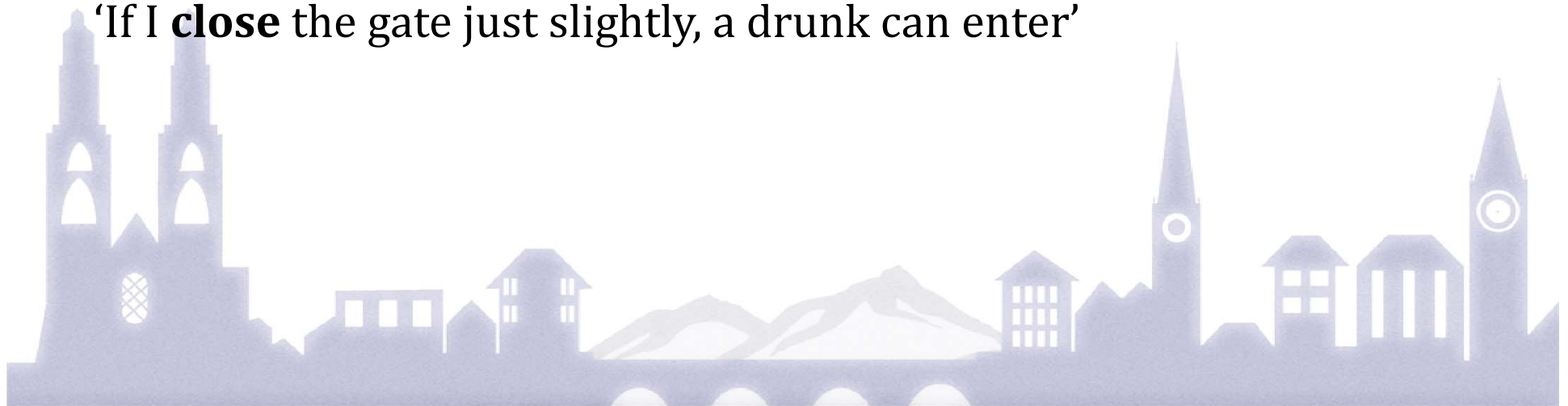
Barrier in a building

män kapka-m pitär-äš-äm, äräkä jü-šä-vlä
я gate-ACC close-PRT-1SG alcohol drink-PTCP.ACT-PL
pâr-en änžä-štä kerd-ep
enter-CVB PROH.3-3PL can-3PL

'I **closed** the gate (e.g. using a stick), so that drunks couldn't enter'

kapka-m čüč-äm gän', äräkä jü-šä
gate-ACC close-PRT.1SG if alcohol drink-PTCP.ACT
pâr-en kerd-eš
enter-CVB can-NPST.3SG

'If I **close** the gate just slightly, a drunk can enter'



Barrier for motion

- Russian: *перекрыть воду* ‘to cut off the water’, *перекрыть дорогу* ‘to block the road’.

- Hill Mari: combination of some contexts with tight locking:

sant'exn'ik tol-ân kran-âm (väd-äm) pitär-en / ?čüč-än

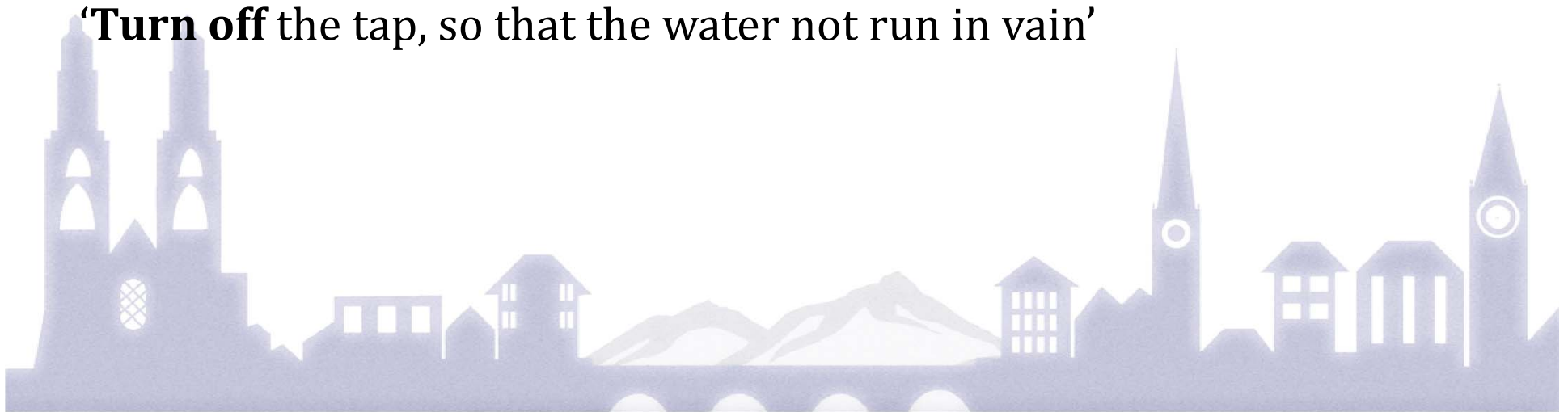
plumber come-PFV.3SG tap-ACC water-ACC close-PFV.3SG

‘The plumber came and **cut off** the water’

čüč / ?pitärä kran-âm takeš väd änžä jogâ

close.IMP tap-ACC in.vain water PROH.3 flow

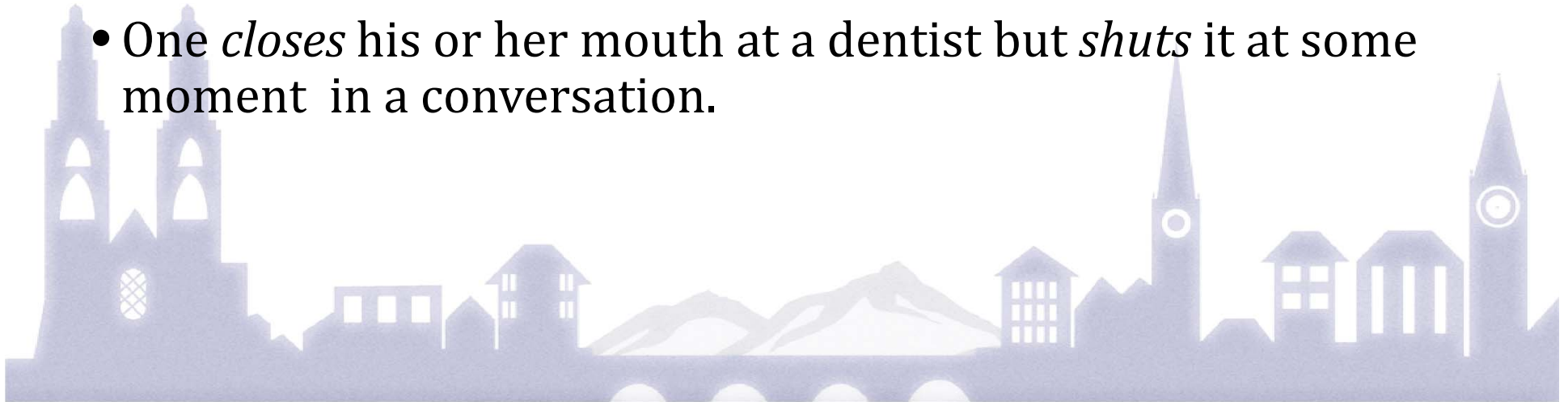
‘**Turn off** the tap, so that the water not run in vain’



Parameter of tightness

English *close* vs. *shut*

- Door, window: both verbs, but one can only *shut* it hard, making *shutting* as a rule more abrupt than *closing*
- *half closes* is 4 to 12 times as frequent as *half shuts* depending on the object.
- Only *close* (in physical meanings): road, motorway, street, bridge; newspaper (but both for a book!); hole; arms close around somebody.
- One *closes* his or her mouth at a dentist but *shuts* it at some moment in a conversation.



Visual perception of a functional part

- Book, newspaper
- Swedish: the dominant verb of closing is rather unacceptable.

Han slog upp / ??stängde boken
'He **closed** the book'.

- At the same time, the dominant verb of opening is possible.

Han öppnade boken
'He **opened** the book'.



Visual perception of a functional part

- Sometimes: the same categorization as folding objects (folding chair, penknife).
- The focus on the change in form, not on creating a barrier.
- These properties may intersect, cf. both *заккрыть* ‘to close’ and *сложитъ* ‘to fold’ possible about an umbrella in Russian.
- Khanty: the default categorization as the change of shape.

keše-n lăp pon-i
knife-P.2SG PREV put-IMP

‘**Fold up** your knife’

ewi-je łuŋət-ti nepek-ət lăp pon-əs
girl-DIM read-IPFV.PART paper-P.3SG PREV put-PST

‘The girl **closed** the book (lit.: the paper for reading)’.

Self-closing body parts

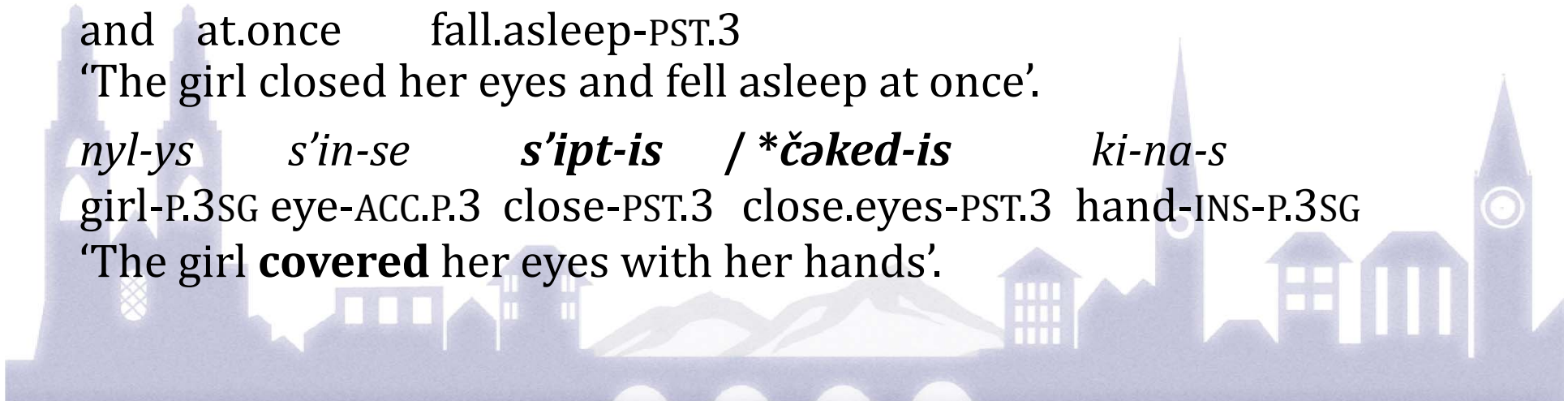
- Eyes and mouth.
- Particular lexicalization of closing eyes:
 - ✓ Special verbs: Izhma Komi *čəkedy*, Hill Mari *kâmaš*, Russian *зажмурить* (+ intensification). NB! Self-closing, cf. Izhma Komi:

<i>nyl-ys</i>	<i>s'in-se</i>	<i>čəked-is</i>	/	<i>s'ipt-is</i>
girl-POSS.3SG	eye-ACC.POSS.3	close.eyes-PST.3		close-PST.3
<i>i mime</i>	<i>unmos'-is</i>			
and at.once	fall.asleep-PST.3			

'The girl closed her eyes and fell asleep at once.'

<i>nyl-ys</i>	<i>s'in-se</i>	<i>s'ipt-is</i>	/	<i>*čəked-is</i>	<i>ki-na-s</i>
girl-P.3SG	eye-ACC.P.3	close-PST.3		close.eyes-PST.3	hand-INS-P.3SG

'The girl **covered** her eyes with her hands.'



Self-closing body parts

- Particular lexicalization of closing eyes:
 - ✓ Semantic shifts: Swedish *sluta* ‘to finish’ (cf. difference with mouth!).

Jag slutade ögönen och somnade snart

‘I **closed** my eyes and soon fell asleep’.

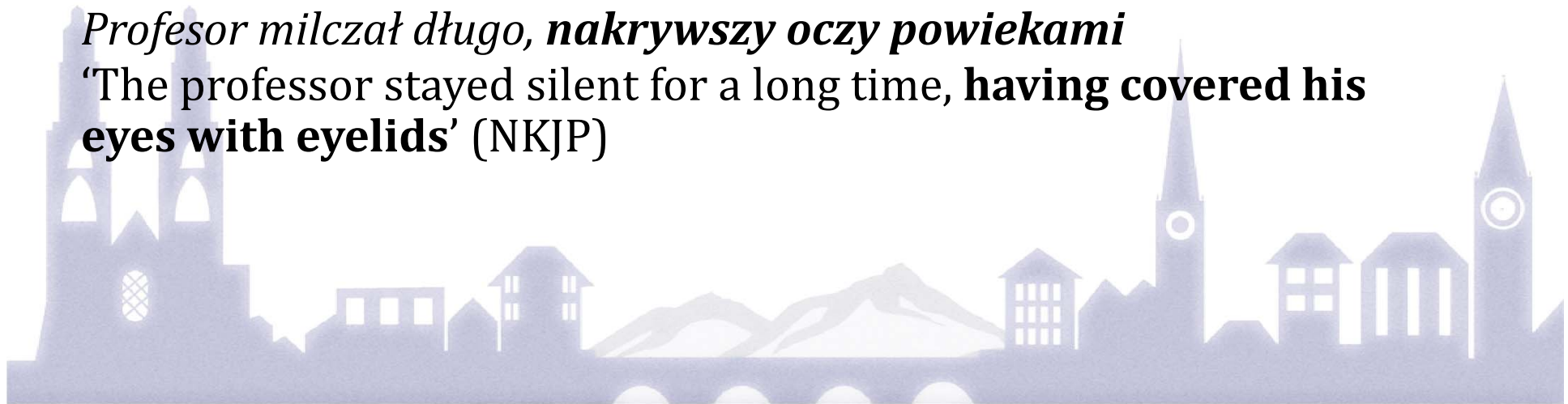
*Patienten stängde / *slutade munnen*

‘(After the examination) the patient **closed** his mouth’.

- ✓ Recategorization, cf. Polish:

Profesor milczał długo, nakrywszy oczy powiekami

‘The professor stayed silent for a long time, **having covered his eyes with eyelids**’ (NKJP)



Covering

- Complete or partial covering of an object (Hill Mari *müdäš* - complete covering vs. *levedäš* – not necessarily complete covering).

ävä t'et'ä-žä-m od'ejal don leved-än / #müd-än

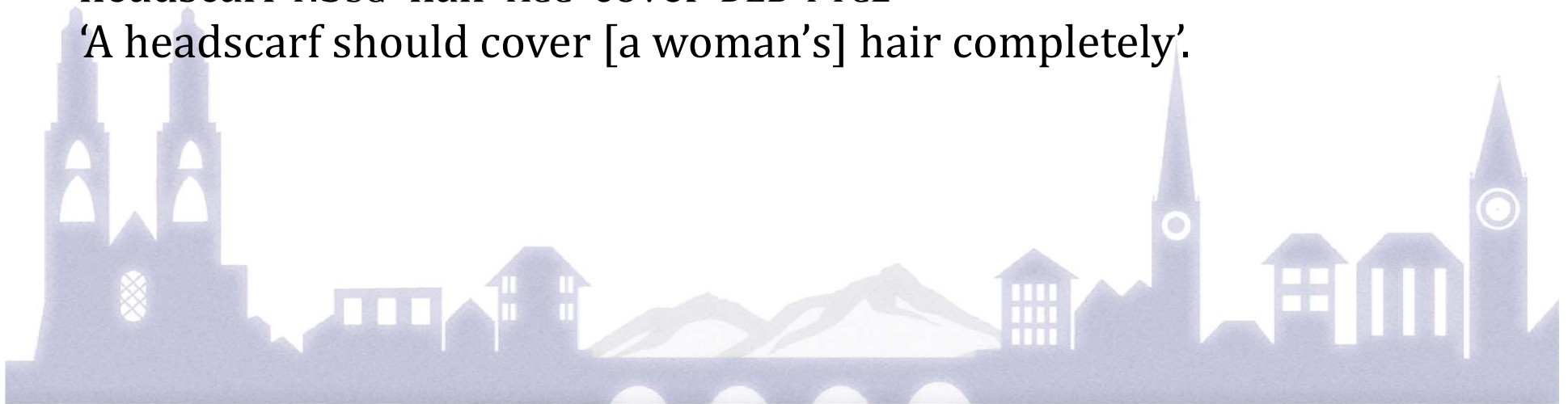
mother child-P.3SG-ACC blanket with cover-PFV

‘Mother covered her child with a blanket’. (cf. *müdän* – ‘a child can’t breathe and is going to die’)

savêc-šê üp-äm müd-äšäš-läk / ?leved-äšäš-läk

headscarf-P.3SG hair-ACC cover-DEB-PTCL

‘A headscarf should cover [a woman’s] hair completely’.



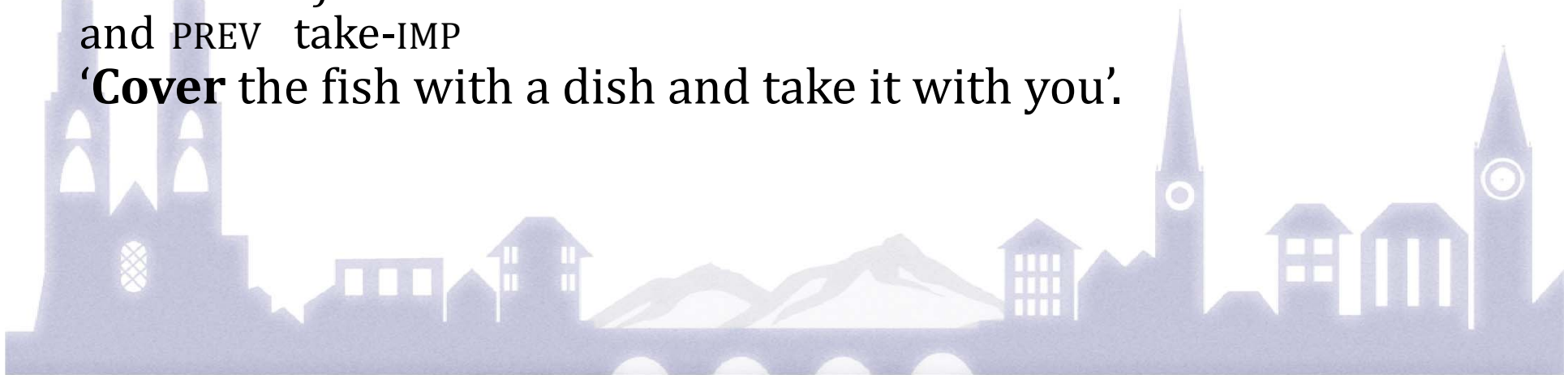
Covering

- Flexibility or inflexibility of a barrier.
- Khanty: different contexts for (*lǎp*) *tūxǎrti* ‘to close’ / (*lǎp*) *laŋkti* ‘to cover’

aŋki sox-ən n̄awrem-əł laŋk-s-ətte
mother skin-LOC child-3SG cover-PST-3SG.SG
‘The mother **covered** the child with a blanket.’

xuł-en karti an-ən lǎp tūxr-i / ?lǎp laŋk-i
fish-2SG iron bowl-LOC PREV close-IMP PREV cover-IMP
i nox uj-i
and PREV take-IMP

‘**Cover** the fish with a dish and take it with you.’



Containers

- Sometimes: containers & covering with sth. flexible.
- Russian. *накрыть* : *заккрыть* (*кастрюлю* 'pot') $\approx 1 : 1$ (Google)
- Polish. *nakryć* : *zakryć* (*garnek* 'pot') $\approx 10 : 1$ (Google)

*Garnek **nakryć** / ?**zakryć** pokrywką, gotować na małym ogniu.*
'**Cover** a pot with a with a lid and cook on low heat'. (Google)



Holes

- Often a special verb, e.g. Izhma Komi *tupkyny*.

me ruz'-se tupk-i n'ič-na-s
I hole-ACC.P.3 plug-PST.1SG moss-INS-P.3SG
'I **plugged** the hole with moss'

- Hill Mari: *pitäräš* 'to close tightly' & 'to plug (a hole)'.



Holes

- French: boucher vs. obstruer – difference in functionality (cf. e.g. [Rakhilina 2000/2008] on this parameter in the lexicon).
- *Boucher*: plugging is used in a functional way (the same as English *to stop a hole*, especially in building discourse):

boucher une bouteille 'plug a bottle'

J'ai bouché le trou avec de la mousse 'I plugged the hole with moss (so that the wind doesn't blow from there)'.


- *Obstruer*: the action of plugging disturbs the functioning of the object:

La canalisation obstruée cause des odeurs nauséabondes 'Horrid smells come from the blocked pipe'.

- Also the verb *oblitérer* may be used in similar contexts (mainly anatomical): *Cette veine s'est tout à fait oblitérée* 'This vein is completely blocked (by a thrombus)'

Barrier for visual perception or for impact

- Distance between an object and a barrier, cf. Polish:
 - ✓ *Ostłonić*, initially ‘to put something rather ON an object than in front of it to make it invisible / to avoid a negative impact’
 - ‘to protect someone or something from damage’

Ostłonił głowę rękami jak hełmem.

‘He **covered** the head with his hands as a helmet’. (Google)

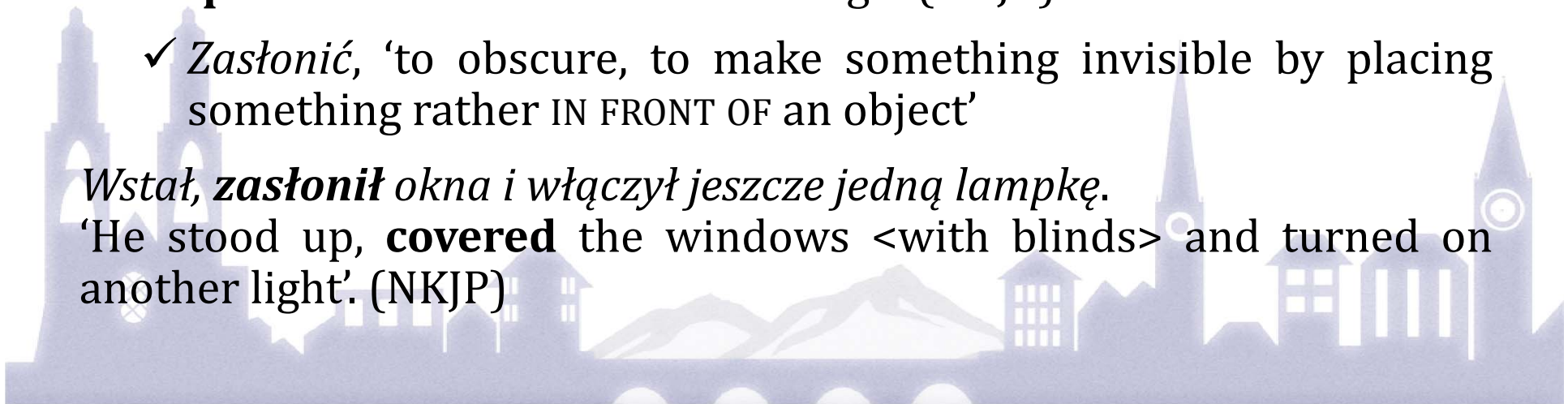
Ją ostłonię od najgorszych rzeczy.

‘I will **protect** her from the worst things’. (NKJP)

- ✓ *Zastłonić*, ‘to obscure, to make something invisible by placing something rather IN FRONT OF an object’

*Wstał, **zastłonił** okna i włączył jeszcze jedną lampkę.*

‘He stood up, **covered** the windows <with blinds> and turned on another light’. (NKJP)



Barrier for visual perception or for impact

- Distance between an object and a “barrier”, cf. Hill Mari:

ärvezäš licä-žä-m m'ačik gäc är-en šänd-en

boy face-P.3SG-ACC ball from shield-CVB seat-PFV

'A boy **shielded** his face from a ball' [distance]

ädäräš mägäräl kolt-âš dä licä-žä-m pitär-en šänd-äš

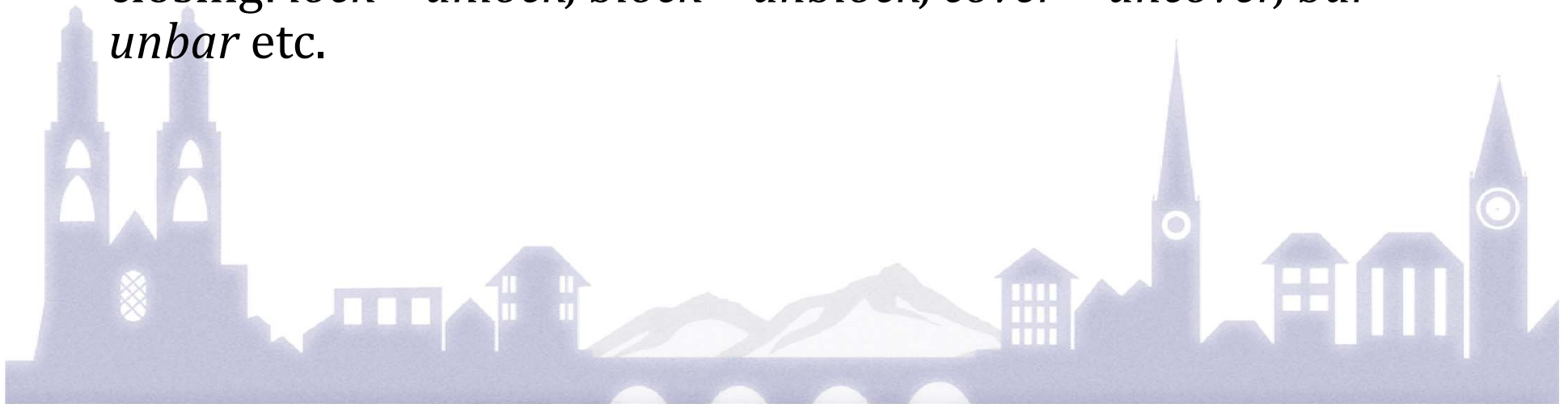
girl cry.CVB send-PRET and face-P.3SG-ACC close-CVB seat-PRET

'A girl burst out crying and **covered** her face' [contact]



Opening

- Situations of opening and closing may be symmetrical
- Close vs. open / lock vs. unlock the door
- Cases of asymmetry in the frame inventory, cf. ??? *an abscess vs. open an abscess.*
- The zone of opening tends to be less detailed than the zone of closing.
- English: many verbs of opening are derived from verbs of closing: *lock – unlock, block – unblock, cover – uncover, bar – unbar* etc.



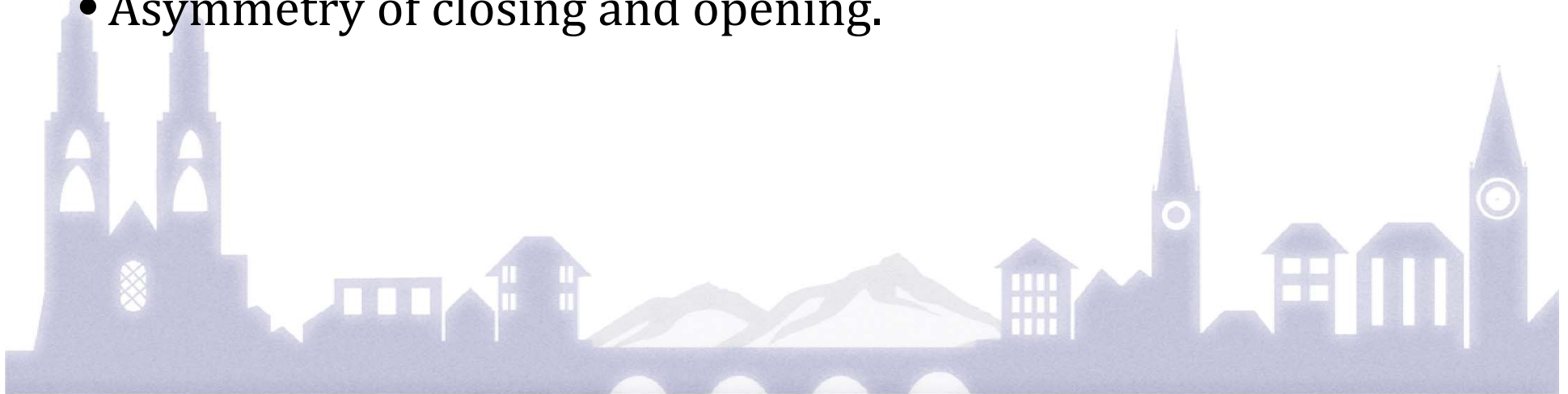
Opening

- Possible asymmetry in the inventory of parameters.
- Large degree: Russian *распахнуть* ‘to open wide’ – no counterpart in closing verbs.
- Small degree: Khanty *xūltəmti* ‘to open slightly’ (< *xūl* ‘a chink’) – no verb like *прикрыть* / *to close softly* in Khanty.
- Tightness: Hill Mari *čüčäš* and *pitäräš* (a fine-grained difference in the tightness of closure) vs. *pačäš* ‘to open’ opposed to both.



Closing remarks

- Types of object and/or instrument.
- ‘Tightness’.
- Type of potential access to an object.
- Functionality.
- Interaction between different participants => challenge for a traditional component analysis.
- Intersection with the domain of changing shape.
- Asymmetry of closing and opening.



Thank you for your attention!

Olga Vinogradova (olgavinogr@gmail.com)

Egor Kashkin (egorkashkin@rambler.ru)

Daria Zhornik (rain-walker@mail.ru)

Maria Sidorova (b.originative@gmail.com)

