

## LEGE ARTIS

Language yesterday, today, tomorrow

Vol. VI. No 1 2021

# FROM SPATIAL MARKING TO DEGREE MODIFICATION: A CORPUS-BASED STUDY OF THE POLISH *DALEKI OD* (FAR.ADJ FROM) X AND *DALEKO OD* (FAR.ADV FROM) X CONSTRUCTIONS\*

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**Bibliographic description:** Herda, D. (2021). From spatial marking to degree modification: A corpus-based study of the Polish *daleki od* (far.ADJ from) X and *daleko od* (far.ADV from) X constructions. In *Lege artis. Language yesterday, today, tomorrow. The journal of University of SS Cyril and Methodius in Trnava*. Trnava: University of SS Cyril and Methodius in Trnava, 2021, VI (1), June 2021, p. 40-74. ISSN 2453-8035

**Abstract:** Based on corpus data, this paper investigates the distribution of two closely related Polish constructions, viz. *daleki od* 'far.ADJ from' X and *daleko od* 'far.ADV from' X. It is shown that only the former exhibits regular extended uses involving a variety of complement types, while the latter is largely confined to spatial marking. The advanced host-class expansion of the *daleki od* 'far.ADJ from' X-construction is argued to reflect an ongoing, metaphorically driven process of grammaticalization.

**Key words:** cognitive linguistics, constructionalization, corpus linguistics, degree modification, gradience, grammaticalization, host-class expansion, metaphorization, subjectification.

## 1. Introduction<sup>1</sup>

Cross-linguistically, parametric expressions, i.e., those invoking physical qualities such as size, height, length, or depth, display a tendency to undergo metaphorization and evolve into degree modifiers (cf. Bałabaniak & Mitrenga 2015: 83-119; Herda 2019a; 2019b; 2020), a fact which can be illustrated by the Polish phrases *wielce*

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\* This article is made open access with funding support from the Jagiellonian University under the Excellence Initiative – Research University programme (the Priority Research Area Heritage).

zaskoczony 'greatly surprised', *wysoce niestosowny* 'highly inappropriate', *głęboko przekonany* 'deeply convinced', *wielki fan* 'great fan, i.e., someone very enthusiastic', as well as *masę podróżować* 'to travel a lot' together with their respective English translations. The present study is concerned with a subset of expressions of this kind, namely adjectives and adverbs originally denoting considerable spatial distances, which have been demonstrated to undergo grammaticalization within constructions in which they take PP-complements headed by elements such as the English *from*. Among the relevant instances studied so far are, aside from the English *far from* X-construction, the Dutch *ver(re) van* X, the Swedish *långt ifrån* X, and the French *loin de* X (cf. among others, Akimoto 2001; Brinton & Inoue 2020; De Smet 2012; De Smet et al. 2015; Van Goethem et al. 2018; van Riemsdijk 2001). More precisely, it has been observed that such constructions tend to develop into the type of degree modifier labelled by Quirk et al. (1985: 597) as minimizers, whose meaning can be paraphrased as 'not X at all; not X to any extent' (cf. *far from perfect* = *not perfect at all*), at the same time undergoing host-class expansion to novel X-types.

However, *far from* X-constructions have likewise been found to exhibit cross-linguistic discrepancies with respect to their distribution and degree of grammaticalization (cf. De Smet et al. 2015). Since such constructions have not yet been systematically examined based on Slavonic material, this paper, drawing on synchronic data extracted from the National Corpus of Polish (Pol. *Narodowy korpus języka polskiego*, henceforth also NKJP), seeks to contribute to the body of research on the above-discussed type of expressions in European languages by investigating the distributional specificity of two closely related Polish constructions, namely the *daleki od* 'far.ADJ from' X-construction and the *daleko od* 'far.ADV from' X-construction, in an attempt to determine their semantics as well as formal characteristics, as evidenced by the range of their possible X-complements along with their respective frequencies. The starting point for the discussion will be the observation that apart from indicating spatial distance (cf. 1a, b), which is the basic function of the pertinent expressions (cf. Boryś

2005: 108), both constructions may, through various metaphorical extensions of this basic meaning, be used to convey more abstract, non-physical relations (cf. 2a, b).

- (1) a. *Najlepsze miejsce to teren*  
 best.SG.N.NOM place.SG.N.NOM be.IMPERS terrain.SG.M.NOM  
*daleki od domu [...]. [NKJP]*  
 'The best place would be a plot located a long way from the house.'
- b. *Samochód Paweł zostawił*  
 car.SG.M.ACC Paweł.SG.M.NOM leave.PERF.3.SG.M.PST  
*daleko od budynku [...]. [NKJP]*  
 far.ADV from building.SG.M.GEN  
 'Paweł left the car a long way from the building.'
- (2) a. *Jestem więc zadowolony, choć*  
 be.1.SG.PRES therefore glad.SG.M.NOM though  
*daleki od osiadania na*  
 far.ADJ.SG.M.NOM from sitting.IMPERF.SG.N.GEN on  
*laurach. [NKJP]*  
 laurel.PL.M.LOC  
 'I am therefore glad, but definitely not sitting on my laurels.'
- b. *Nasze problemy są*  
 our.1.PL.NOM problem.PL.M.NOM be.3.PL.PRES  
*daleko od "ich" wzroku [...]. [NKJP]*  
 far.ADV from their.3.PL.GEN sight.SG.M.GEN  
 'Our problems are far from "their" sight.'

The structure of the paper is as follows. Section 2 provides a brief account of grammaticalization with special reference to the cross-linguistic development of *far from* X-constructions into minimizers, including the role of metaphorization in this instance of language change. Section 3 specifies the research objective as well as describes the empirical material and the adopted methodology, while Section 4

presents the results of an analysis of naturally-occurring Polish data. Finally, Section 5 summarizes the main observations reached in the study and outlines prospects for future research on the topic.

## **2. *Far from X*-constructions in the light of grammaticalization**

Following the classic, oft-cited definition offered by Kuryłowicz (1965: 69), "[g]rammaticalization consists in an increase of the range of a morpheme advancing from a lexical to a grammatical or from a less grammatical to a more grammatical status". What should nonetheless be emphasized here is the role of context, or rather co-text, in the scrutinized type of language change (cf. Bybee et al. 1994: 11; Himmelmann 2004; Skrzypek 2020; Traugott & Trousdale 2013), as it is always within specific syntagmatic environments, rather than in isolation, that a form grammaticalizes. In the instance of grammaticalization under scrutiny, the forms *daleki* 'far.ADJ' and *daleko* 'far.ADV' are supposed to undergo changes within constructions in which they take a prepositional complement headed by *od* 'from'.

In this study, grammaticalization will be operationalized as an essentially semantic phenomenon (cf. Heine 2003), whereby contentive, more denotationally concrete expressions acquire, through "an inference-driven contextual enrichment" (Evans & Wilkins 2000: 550), more abstract, procedural meanings, thus enhancing their functional potential to the detriment of the lexical content. As stated before, spatial markers such as the English *far* in specific linguistic settings develop into minimizers, which point to an evident failure of the subject to attain a property or enter an eventuality implied by the X-element, and whose meaning can therefore be paraphrased as 'not X at all/definitely not X' or 'very/completely un-X'.

The ultimate conceptual mechanism underlying the inference-driven transition of spatial markers into degree expressions is that of metaphorization. Rather than being a purely esthetic device confined to the realm of literature in general and poetry in particular, metaphor, understood as a mapping between two mental domains, has been

found to constitute a ubiquitous cognitive device which enables, or facilitates, the understanding of more abstract concepts in terms of more concrete, tangible ones (cf. among others, Konnova & Babenko 2019; Kövecses 2010; 2018; Lakoff & Johnson 1980a; 1980b; 1980c; Uberman 2016; Yamaguchi 2016). As for the metaphor-related semantic aspects of grammaticalization at large, Heine et al. (1991: 160), drawing on ample evidence from language change, construct a hierarchy of abstractness relative to which expressions belonging to the cognitive domain of SPACE cross-linguistically tend to develop into temporal and/or quality markers, a finding which accords with the changes observed in *far from* X-constructions:

(3) PERSON > OBJECT > PROCESS > SPACE > TIME > QUALITY

According to Peters (1994), parametric expressions take on degree modifier functions via metaphorical scalar transfer, as a result of which the position on a scale pertaining to a physical extent is mapped onto an analogous value on a scale representing an abstract dimension of measurement. Nevertheless, Van Goethem et al. (2018: 193-194) claim the minimizer sense not to be directly derivable from the spatial one, adding that metaphorization "acts as the ground for the pragmatic extension to the downtoner meaning". Indeed, as will be demonstrated in Section 4, the metaphorical extensions observed in the Polish data include the expression of psychological detachment, temporal remoteness, difference/divergence, unrelatedness, skepticism, etc., and not all of such instances permit the minimizer inference.

Another observation relevant to the analyzed instance of grammaticalization is the very strong tendency for grammaticalizing expressions to undergo subjectification, defined as a shift from "content-related" to "speaker-related" function (Verstraete 2001: 1506), i.e., a change whereby linguistic units come to convey a more speaker-based view, and whereby this subjective meaning component becomes conventionalized. In other words, subjectification refers to the semanticization of synchronic subjectivity, which resides in "the way in which natural languages, in their structure and their normal

manner of operation, provide for the locutionary agent's expression of himself" (Lyons 1982: 102) and as such captures an expression's "relationship to the speaker and the speaker's beliefs and attitudes" (Traugott 2010: 30). Traugott (1989: 34-35) identifies three semantic tendencies in grammaticalization, all of which are reflective of ongoing subjectification:

*"Tendency I:*

*Meanings based in the external described situation > meanings based in the internal (evaluative/perceptual/cognitive) described situation.*

*Tendency II:*

*Meanings based in the external or internal described situation > meanings based in the textual and metalinguistic situation.*

*Tendency III:*

*Meanings tend to become increasingly based in the speaker's subjective belief state/attitude towards the proposition".*

Of the tendencies specified above, the first one bears special importance to the subject matter of the present study in that the *far from* X-constructions shift from indicating external, objectively measurable spatial distance to conveying more speaker-centered gradational evaluations, the latter being suggestive of "an emotional attitude of the speaker" (Akimoto 2001: 8). If a subjectified expression additionally starts to index the speaker's "relationship to the addressee and addressee's face" (Traugott 2010: 30), it may be said to have undergone intersubjectification (cf. Traugott & Dasher 2002: 225). As will be argued in Section 4, the *daleki od* 'far.ADJ from' X-construction, when employed in relation to first person subjects, may serve as a kind of hedger, lessening the effect of what the X-element stands for.

Even though semantic in character, the above-discussed grammaticalization-related changes manifest themselves formally in a rise of the productivity of the pertinent expression, i.e., in the form of host-class expansion (cf. Himmelmann 2004), which refers to a broadening of the expression's original collocational scope. In the case of *daleki od* 'far.ADJ from' X and *daleko od* 'far.ADV from' X, host-class expansion will therefore be operationalized as extension from concrete to abstract X-complements, of which the latter exhibit varying levels of structural complexity, including simple

abstract nouns (e.g., *daleki od doskonałości* 'far.ADJ from perfect; lit.: far.ADJ from perfection'), verbal substantives (e.g., *daleki od oskarżania kogokolwiek* 'far.ADJ from accusing anyone'), phrases headed by the dummy pronoun *tego* 'that.SG.N.GEN' taking a clausal, whether finite or non-finite, complement (e.g., *daleki od tego, by oskarżać kogokolwiek* 'far.ADJ from accusing anyone; lit.: far.ADJ from that to accuse anyone'), as well as adjectives (e.g., *daleki od doskonałego* 'far.ADJ from perfect') and adverbs (e.g., *czuć się daleko od OK* 'to feel far.ADV from OK'). Notably, verbal substantives, i.e., nominalizations ending in *-anie*, (e.g., *spanie* 'sleeping' < *spać* 'to sleep'), *-enie* (e.g., *mówienie* 'speaking' < *mówić* 'to speak'), or *-cie* (e.g., *mycie* 'cleaning' < *myć* 'to clean'), resemble verbs in having an argument structure and aspect value (cf. Lewandowska 1975; Rozwadowska 2000), which is why the extension to X-complements of this kind will be taken to constitute an important step in the grammaticalization of the Polish constructions.

Importantly, host-class expansion may likewise be indicative of a syntactic reanalysis having taken place, which leads to the grammaticalizing expression becoming reinterpreted as "belonging to a position differing from its erstwhile positional properties" (Bisang & Wiemer 2004: 9). For instance, the English *far from* X-construction has relatively recently extended its distribution to VPs, as in *We far from nailed it* (cf. Brinton & Inoue 2020: 288), in which *far* no longer takes a PP-complement headed by *from* and instead the segment *far from* clearly constitutes a single syntactic unit. As will be shown in Section 4, however, neither of the analyzed Polish constructions seems to have reached such an advanced stage of grammaticalization.

Aside from unidirectionality of change discussed above, gradualness is another phenomenon generally viewed as central to grammaticalization. Instead of leading to an abrupt shift in the functional status of particular units, grammaticalization invariably entails a state of variation, in which the expressions' older, more contentive meanings and the newer, more abstract ones co-exist (Hopper & Traugott 2003: 122). Diachronic

gradualness emblematic of grammaticalization thus implies a synchronic dimension to the scrutinized phenomenon, namely *gradience*. As Haspelmath (2001: 16539) points out, "[s]ince grammaticalization is generally regarded as a gradual diachronic process, it is expected that the resulting function words form a gradient from full content words to clear function words". Hence, given the "fluid patterns of language use" (Hopper & Traugott 2003: 2) and the existence of "alternate strategies which enjoy different levels of grammatical autonomy" (Lehmann 1985: 309), grammaticalization, although typically conceived of diachronically, can in fact also be studied from a synchronic perspective, a possibility reflected in the methodology adopted in the present study.

### **3. Aim, material, and methodology**

The specific purpose of the present paper is to provide answers to three primary research questions concerning the analyzed Polish expressions. First, is there a statistically significant difference in the frequency of the extended, i.e., metaphorical, uses of the *daleki od* 'far.ADV from' X-construction and the *daleko od* 'far.ADV from' X-construction? Second, what is the empirical distribution of the constructions' extended uses between concrete and abstract nouns, verbal substantives, phrases headed by the dummy pronoun *tego* 'that.SG.N.GEN' taking a clausal complement, adjectives, and adverbs? And third, how many of the extended uses of both constructions can be regarded as minimizer attestations?

To answer the research questions specified above, random samples of 200 attestations of the *daleki od* 'far.ADJ from' X-construction and of the *daleko od* 'far.ADV from' X-construction (N = 400) were extracted from the National Corpus of Polish with the help of the Poliqarp search engine. The corpus queries were specified in such a way that it was possible for the base elements *daleki* 'far.ADJ' and *daleko* 'far.ADJ' to appear in the comparative and the superlative in addition to the positive form. Moreover, the employed command allowed for the adjectival item to occur in all of its possible case and gender forms as well as permitted the occurrence of the phonologically conditioned variant of the preposition *od* 'from', namely *ode* 'from'. All irrelevant attestations,



especially those involving the lexicalized adverbial phrase *z daleka od* 'away from' as well as those in which the preposition *od* 'from' is governed by a particular verb, such as *odbiegać (od)* 'to diverge (from)', with *daleko* 'far.ADV' itself functioning as an intensifier with the meaning of 'significantly', were filtered out manually and replaced with randomly chosen relevant corpus examples.

The obtained tokens were then classified into two major categories, namely (i) basic uses, in which case the construction refers to physical space and thus invariably takes concrete noun complements, and (ii) extended uses, the latter group incorporating all kinds of subjectified, metaphorical attestations. Exhibiting variation in their X-complements, the extended uses of both constructions underwent additional labelling into those involving (a) concrete nouns (CNs), including pronouns referring to concretes, (b) abstract nouns (ANs), including pronouns referring to abstractions, (c) verbal substantives (VSs), (d) phrases headed by the dummy pronoun *tego* 'that.SG.N.GEN' with a clausal complement (*tego*-Ps), (e) adjectives (ADJs), including adjectivized participles, as well as (f) adverbs (ADVs). Cross-linguistically, *far from* X-constructions may also co-occur with verbs, yet since no such attestations have been detected in the Polish corpus data, this category was excluded from the present analysis. Finally, the frequency of minimizer attestations was determined in each subclass of the scrutinized constructions' extended uses. Throughout the empirical part of the text, additional qualitative comments are made as regards the semantics of both constructions, and a number of representative, authentic examples are provided.

#### **4. Results and discussion**

Presented below are the results of the first part of the quantitative analysis of the corpus data, i.e., the proportions of basic and extended uses of the *daleki od* 'far.ADJ from' X-construction and the *daleko od* 'far.ADV from' X-construction:

Table 1. *Daleki od X* and *daleko od X*: Frequency of basic and extended uses

Construction	Basic uses # (%)	Extended uses # (%)	Total # (%)
<i>Daleki od 'far.ADJ from' X</i>	4 (2%)	196 (98%)	200 (100%)
<i>Daleko od 'far.ADV from' X</i>	175 (87.5%)	25 (12.5%)	200 (100%)
<b>Total # (%)</b>	179 (44.75%)	221 (55.25%)	400 (100%)

As can easily be noted, the construction involving the adverbial element *daleko* 'far.ADV' is largely restricted to its basic uses, which consist in indicating spatial distance, while the one comprising the adjectival form *daleki* 'far.ADJ' is almost invariably employed metaphorically, i.e., without literal reference to physical space. The Fisher exact test performed on the data demonstrates the difference between the two constructions in terms of their empirical distribution to be highly statistically significant ( $p < .001$ ), which suggests that in present-day Polish, the two units are specialized in distinct functions. In this respect, Polish resembles Dutch as in the latter language a similar differentiation has taken place: while *verre van X* is predominantly used as a degree modifier, *ver van X* typically indicates spatial distance (cf. Van Goethem et al. 2018).

The following parts of this section offer a more detailed, both quantitative and qualitative, discussion of the extended uses of the *daleki od* 'far.ADJ from' X-construction and the *daleko od* 'far.ADV from' X-construction. In both cases, the frequency of particular X-complements is revealed first, and then each complement type is discussed and illustrated separately.

#### 4.1 Extended uses of the *daleki od* 'far.ADJ from' X-construction

As shown in Figure 1, most of the extended attestations of the *daleki od* 'far.ADJ from' X-construction involve abstract nouns (145/196, i.e., 73.98%), which are followed by verbal substantives (27/196, i.e., 13.78%), *tego*-phrases (11/196, i.e., 5.61%), adjectives (9/196, i.e., 4.59%), and concrete nouns (4/196, i.e., 2.04%). Since no uses

of the analyzed construction involving adverbs have been identified in the corpus data, this category will be excluded from discussion presented in the subsequent subparts of Section 4.1.

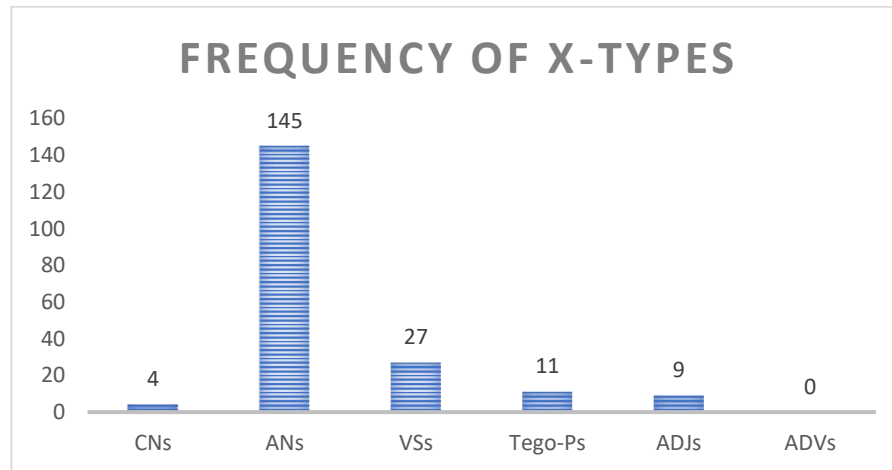


Figure 1. Distribution of X-complements of *daleki od* 'far.ADJ from' X in its extended uses

#### 4.4.1 Concrete nouns

In the concrete domain, the *daleki od* 'far.ADJ from' X-construction in its extended uses has been observed to co-occur with animate nouns, indicating psychological detachment (cf. 4), (spatio)temporal remoteness (cf. 5), and difference (cf. 6-7).

- (4) *Niechaj daleką od nas będzie*  
 may far.ADJ.SG.F.INSTR from us.1.PL.GEN be.3.SG.FUT  
*myśl [...]. [NKJP]*  
 thought.SG.F.NOM  
 'May the thought be far from us.'
- (5) *Egipcjanie [...] w taki sam*  
 Egyptian.PL.M.NOM in such.SG.M.ACC same.SG.M.ACC  
*sposób usiłowali przedstawić*  
 manner.SG.M.ACC attempt.IMPERF.3.PL.M.PST present.PERF.INF  
*szereg osób, jak dalecy od*  
 row.SG.M.ACC person.PL.F.GEN as far.ADJ.PL.M.NOM from  
*nich w czasie i przestrzeni*

them.3.PL.GEN in time.SG.M.LOC and space.SG.F.LOC

*rysownicy buszmeńscy [...]. [NKJP]*

drawer.PL.M.NOM Bushman.PL.M.NOM

'The Egyptians attempted to present a row of people graphically in the same way as did the Bushmen, even though the former were temporally and spatially distant from the latter.'

- (6) *Sq zupełnie innymi, dalekimi*  
be.3.PL.PRES completely other.PL.F.INSTR far.ADJ.PL.F.INSTR  
*od siebie osobami. [NKJP]*  
from each.other person.PL.F.INSTR

'They are completely unrelated persons, different from each other.'

- (7) *Na razie mam zespół*  
on time.SG.M.LOC have.1.SG.PRES team.SG.M.ACC  
*daleki od takiego, który mnie*  
far.ADJ.SG.M.ACC from such.SG.M.GEN which.SG.M.NOM me.1.SG.DAT  
*by satysfakcjonował. [NKJP]*  
would satisfy.IMPERF.3.SG.M.PST

'For the time being, I have a team that is far from being one that would satisfy me.'

Among the relevant instances, there is only one attestation permitting the minimizer inference, namely in Example 7, where the qualitative modifier *taki* 'such' as well as the clause introduced by *który* 'that' are used in relation to the elided noun *zespół* 'team' (cf. *daleki od takiego* 'far from one/such' = *zdecydowanie nie taki* 'definitely not one/such').

#### 4.1.2 Abstract nouns

Similarly to the case with concrete complements, *daleki od* 'far.ADJ from' applied to abstract nouns may point to the psychological detachment of an animate referent (cf. 8).



'I am far from any overtones/I am not making any overtones at all.'

Combined with abstract nouns, the *daleki od* 'far.ADJ from' X-construction may likewise express divergence (cf. 11) and unrelatedness (cf. 12). Again, such uses indirectly imply the negation of an eventuality by virtue of the abstract nominal complements invoking certain verbs, such as *spełniać* 'to meet; to fulfil' (cf. *spełniać oczekiwania* 'to meet expectations') and *zajmować się* 'to occupy oneself with; to deal with' (cf. *zajmować się działalnością filmową* 'to deal with film-making').

- (11) *Dokuczają im korki i daleki od oczekiwań poziom transportu publicznego.* [NKJP]  
tease.3.PL.PRES them.3.PL.DAT traffic.jam.PL.M.NOM and  
far.ADJ.PL.M.NOM from expectation.PL.N.GEN level.SG.M.NOM  
transport.SG.M.GEN public.SG.M.GEN  
'They are fed up with traffic jams and the public transport whose level fails to meet their expectations.'

- (12) *Potem został prezesem dalekiej od działalności filmowej Agencji Inwestycji Zagranicznej.* [NKJP]  
next become.3.SG.M.PST chairman.SG.M.INSTR  
far.ADJ.SG.F.GEN from activity.SG.F.GEN cinematic.SG.F.GEN  
agency.SG.F.GEN investment.SG.F.GEN foreign.SG.F.GEN  
'He later became chairman of the Agency of Foreign Investment, which had nothing to do with film-making.'

Importantly, the metaphorical conceptualization of spatial distance as abstract divergence likewise gives rise to a fairly productive pattern whereby the opposite of the quality denoted by the X-element is asserted. Accordingly, what will here be

regarded as minimizer uses involving abstract nominals are attestations in which the X-slots are occupied by unmodified abstract nouns invoking variable properties, especially those derivationally related to gradable, mostly bounded (cf. Paradis 2001), adjectives. In such cases, the *daleki od* 'far.ADJ from' X-construction indicates a significant negative departure from the point on a scale lexicalized by the X-element, and thus implies the non-attainment of the pertinent property. Among the 45 examples of this kind detected in the corpus data are the nouns *prawda* 'truth' (cf. 13), *jednomyślność* 'unanimity' (cf. 14), and *obiektywizm* 'objectivity' (cf. 15).

- (13) *Opowiada* *pan* *historię*  
 tell.IMPERF.3.SG.PRES sir.SG.M.NOM story.SG.F.ACC  
*daleką* *od* *prawdy*. [NKJP]  
 far.ADJ.SG.F.ACC from truth.SG.F.GEN  
 'The story you are telling is far from true, sir.'
- (14) *Wypowiadane* *w* *tym* *zakresie*  
 uttered.PL.NOM in this.SG.M.LOC extent.SG.M.LOC  
*poglądy* *są* *dalekie* *od*  
 view.PL.M.NOM be.3.PL.PRES far.ADJ.PL.NOM from  
*jednomyślności* [...]. [NKJP]  
 unanimity.SG.F.GEN  
 'The views expressed on this matter are far from unanimous.'
- (15) *Kampania* *medialna* [...] *jest*  
 campaign.SG.F.NOM medial.SG.F.NOM be.3.SG.PRES  
*daleka* *od* *obiektywizmu*. [NKJP]  
 far.ADJ.SG.F.NOM from objectivity.SG.M.GEN  
 'The media campaign is far from objective.'

#### 4.1.3 Verbal substantives

Verbal substantives can be divided into two primary kinds, namely those derived from perfective and those derived from imperfective VPs, and the *daleki od* 'far.ADJ from'

X-construction has been found to co-occur with both types of such nominalizations. In the former case, the analyzed construction typically combines with achievement predicates (cf. Vendler 1957), pointing to a considerable deviation from the maximal value on a closed temporal scale, i.e., the culmination point of the situation denoted by the verbal substantive, and as such implies the negation of the bounded eventuality and hence also the non-attainment of the resultant state. In the data under scrutiny, there are 11 instances involving perfective verbal substantives which can be regarded as minimizer attestations, of which two examples are cited below (cf. 16-17).

As evidenced by the example below (cf. 18), however, not all attestations of the discussed construction with perfective verbal substantives can be viewed as simple minimizer uses. Apart from pointing to the non-attainment of the resultant state implied by the verb *urzeczywistnić* 'to materialize; to make real', the aforementioned example draws a comparison between two periods of time with regard to the likelihood of an idea coming into existence:



on	time.SG.M.LOC	yet	idea.SG.M.NOM	be.3.SG.PRES
<b>dużo</b>	<b>dalszy</b>		<b>od</b>	<b>ureczywistnienia</b>
much	further.SG.M.NOM		from	realizing.PERF.SG.N.GEN
<i>niż</i>	<i>pod koniec</i>	<i>lat</i>		90. [...]. [NKJP]
than	under end.SG.M.ACC	year.PL.M.GEN	90	

'For the time being, however, the idea is much less likely to come true than it was at the end of the 90s.'

The number of minimizer attestations in which the *daleki od* 'far.ADJ from' X-construction co-occurs with nominalizations derived from imperfective verbs, on the other hand, stands at 15. With an imperfective verbal substantive in the X-slot, the construction at issue predominantly takes animate human subjects, and may be interpreted as referring to the subject's skepticism, or reluctance, towards the unbounded eventuality encoded by the nominalization (cf. 19-20).

- (19) *Nasz*                      *kontrahent [...]*                      *jest*  
 our.SG.M.NOM      contractor.SG.M.NOM                      be.3.SG.PRES  
***daleki***                      ***od***                      ***szukania***  
 far.ADJ.SG.M.NOM      from                      searching.IMPERF.SG.N.GEN  
***innego***                      ***rozwiązania***. [NKJP]  
 other.SG.N.GEN      solution.SG.N.GEN

'Our contractor is not looking for another solution at all.'

- (20) *Jest*                      *jednak*                      *daleka*                      *od*  
 be.3.SG.PRES                      yet                      far.ADJ.SG.F.NOM                      from  
***obarczania***                      ***winą***                      ***rodziców [...]***. [NKJP]  
 burdening.IMPERF.SG.N.GEN      blame.SG.F.INSTR      parent.PL.M.GEN

'She is nonetheless not blaming her parents at all.'

As already mentioned in Section 2, the *daleki od* 'far.ADJ from' X-construction seems to have undergone a certain degree of intersubjectification in uses with first person

subjects, notably in those accompanied by clauses introduced by a disjunctive element such as *ale* 'but'. Thus, attestations such as those below (cf. 21-22), involving imperfective nominalizations derived from the epistemic verbs *generalizować* 'to generalize' and *oskarżać* 'to accuse', respectively, bear semantic resemblance to the fixed English phrase *far be it from me/us to VP*, which "has an intersubjective use and refers explicitly to the speaker's stance" (Bybee 2010: 52). In other words, attestations of this kind, in addition to implying the negation of the relevant eventuality, point to the speaker's unwillingness to perform an action which may be interpreted by the hearer as a face-threatening act, thereby lessening the potential negative impact of what the verbal substantive stands for:

- (21) *Jestem daleki od generalizowania,*  
 be.1.SG.PRES far.ADJ.SG.M.NOM from generalizing.IMPERF.SG.N.GEN  
*ale takie zjawiska są*  
 but such.PL.N.NOM phenomenon.PL.N.NOM be.3.PL.PRES  
*mi znane. [NKJP]*  
 me.1.SG.DAT known.PL.N.NOM  
 'Far be it from me to generalize/I am not generalizing at all, but such phenomena are known to me.'
- (22) *Jestem daleki od oskarżania*  
 be.1.SG.PRES far.ADJ.SG.M.NOM from blaming.IMPERF.SG.N.GEN  
*kogokolwiek, ale takie są*  
 whomever.ACC but such.PL.N.NOM be.3.PL.PRES  
*fakty. [NKJP]*  
 fact.PL.M.NOM  
 'Far be it from me to blame anyone/I am not blaming anyone at all, but these are facts.'

Marginally, the *daleki od* 'far.ADJ from' X-construction, when used in relation to imperfective verbal substantives, also takes inanimate subjects. In Example 23, it

implies the highly restricted functionality of the subject's referent, which leads to its incapability of performing the action denoted by the nominalization. What the example at issue likewise demonstrates is that the adjectival element *daleki* 'far.ADJ' permits intensification, which, in this case, further reinforces the non-occurrence of the relevant situation:

- (23) *Ponadto technologia Flash jest też*  
 additionally technology.SG.F.NOM Flash be.3.SG.PRES too  
*bardzo daleka od dostosowywania się*  
 very far.ADJ.SG.F.NOM from adjusting.IMPERF.SG.N.GEN REF  
*do preferencji użytkownika.* [NKJP]  
 to preference.PL.F.GEN user.SG.M.GEN  
 'Additionally, the Flash technology really does not adjust to the user's preferences at all.'

#### 4.1.4 Tego-phrases

The number of minimizer attestations of the *daleki od* 'far.ADJ from' X-construction involving the dummy pronoun *tego* 'that.SG.N.GEN' with a clausal complement stands at 10. Analogously to the case with verbal substantives, the scrutinized construction accompanied by *tego*-phrases displays a strong tendency to take animate human, especially first person, subjects, indicating the subject's skeptical attitude towards the proposition expressed by a particular phrase of this kind, which typically includes a non-finite complement introduced by *(że)by* 'to'. Equally noteworthy here is that most of such uses display an intersubjective flavor, which is sometimes emphasized by the employment of polite forms of address such as *pan* 'sir' (cf. 24) and *pani* 'madame' (cf. 25).

- (24) *Jestem daleki od tego, żeby*  
 be.1.SG.PRES far.ADJ.SG.M.NOM from that.SG.N.GEN to  
*pana przekonywać.* [NKJP]

sir.SG.M.ACC persuade.IMPERF.INF

'Far be it from me to persuade you/I am not persuading you at all, sir.'

- (25) *Nie, jestem daleki od tego,*  
 no be.1.SG.PRES far.ADJ.SG.M.NOM from that.SG.N.GEN  
*żeby Panią posel*  
 to madame.SG.F.ACC parliament.member.SG.M.ACC  
*obwiniać o to.* [NKJP]  
 blame.IMPERF.INF for that.SG.N.ACC

'No, far be it from me to blame you for that/I am not blaming you at all for that, madame.'

However, there is one example in the data in which the animate human subject of the main clause is different from that of a finite clausal complement of the pronoun *tego* 'that.SG.N.GEN', which is why Example 26, despite being suggestive of the subject's reluctance, cannot be regarded as a minimizer use.

- (26) *Jestem daleka od tego,*  
 be.3.SG.PRES far.ADJ.SG.F.NOM from that.SG.N.GEN  
*żeby uczniowie sami placili.* [NKJP]  
 to student.PL.M.NOM themselves.PL.M.NOM pay.3.PL.M.PST  
 'I am very skeptical about the idea of students paying for themselves.'

Less frequently, the *daleki od* 'far.ADJ from' X-construction combines with phrases in which *tego* 'that.SG.N.GEN' takes a finite clausal complement introduced by *co* 'what'. Such attestations express difference/divergence and, in contrast to Example 26, give rise to the minimizer inference (cf. 27).

- (27) [...] *to było dalekie od*  
 that.SG.N.NOM be.3.SG.N.PST far.ADJ.SG.N.NOM from  
*tego, co w młodości*

that.SG.N.GEN	what	in	youth.SG.F.LOC
<i>przywykła</i>		<i>uważać</i>	<i>za</i>
get.used.to.PERF.3.SG.F.PST		consider.IMPERF.INF	for
<i>muzykę</i> . [NKJP]			
music.SG.F.ACC			

'That was definitely not what she considered music in her youth.'

#### 4.1.5 Adjectives

All of the nine occurrences of the *daleki od* 'far.ADJ from' X-construction involving adjectives can be viewed as minimizer attestations. Uses of this kind point to the subject's qualitative divergence from the standard implied by the adjective, and hence imply the truth of the opposite of a given property (cf. 28-30).

(28) [...] *sytuacja* *jest* *nadal daleka*  
situation.SG.F.NOM be.3.SG.PRES still far.ADJ.SG.F.NOM  
*od* *stabilnej*. [NKJP]  
from stable.SG.F.GEN  
'The situation is still far from stable.'

(29) *Konie* *były* *pomęczone,* *a* *i*  
horse.PL.M.NOM be.3.PL.PST tired.PL.NOM but and  
*kondycja* *jeźdźców,* *jak* *się*  
condition.SG.F.NOM rider.PL.M.GEN as REF  
*pokazało,* *daleka* *od* *dobrej*. [NKJP]  
show.PERF.3.SG.N.PST far.ADJ.SG.F.NOM from good.SG.F.GEN  
'The horses were all tired, and the drivers' condition, as it turned out, was far from good, too.'

(30) [...] *eskapada* *ta,* *jak* *można* *się*  
journey.SG.F.NOM this.SG.F.NOM as can.IMPERS REF  
*domyślić,* *przyniosła* *skutki*  
intuit.PERF.INF bring.PERF.3.SG.F.PST effect.PL.M.ACC

<i>dalekie</i>	<i>od</i>	<i>oczekiwanych</i> . [NKJP]
far.ADJ.PL.GEN	from	expected.PL.M.GEN

'As can be intuited, the journey brought effects that were far from expected.'

Nevertheless, the possibility cannot be ruled out that instances where the X-slot is occupied by a self-standing adjective are in fact elliptical in nature, as suggested by the ease of retrieval of the potentially modified noun from the immediate linguistic environment in all the ad-adjectival attestations of the analyzed construction detected in the corpus data (cf. e.g., *sytuacja daleka od stabilnej [sytuacji]* 'a situation far from [a] stable [situation]'). Additional Internet queries seem to corroborate this observation, revealing that clearly non-elliptical uses, such as Example 31, are remarkably scarce and therefore hard to find:

- (31) *Początkowo*      *byłam*      *daleka*      *od*  
initially      be.3.SG.F.PST      far.ADJ.SG.F.NOM      from  
*zadowolonej*. [Znajdź eksperta, *s.a.*]  
satisfied.SG.F.GEN  
'Initially, I was far from satisfied.'

#### 4.2 Extended uses of the *daleko od* 'far.ADV from' X-construction

Figure 2 reveals the distribution of the scarce non-spatial attestations of the *daleko od* 'far.ADV from' X-construction identified in the data. As can be seen, a vast majority of the extended uses of the expression under scrutiny involve abstract nouns (21/25, i.e., 84%), which are followed by concrete nouns (2/25, i.e., 8%), verbal substantives (1/25, i.e., 4%), and adverbs (1/25, i.e., 4%). However, neither *tego*-phrases nor adjectives have been found to occupy the X-slot of the construction, which is why the two categories will be excluded from the discussion offered in the following subparts of this section.

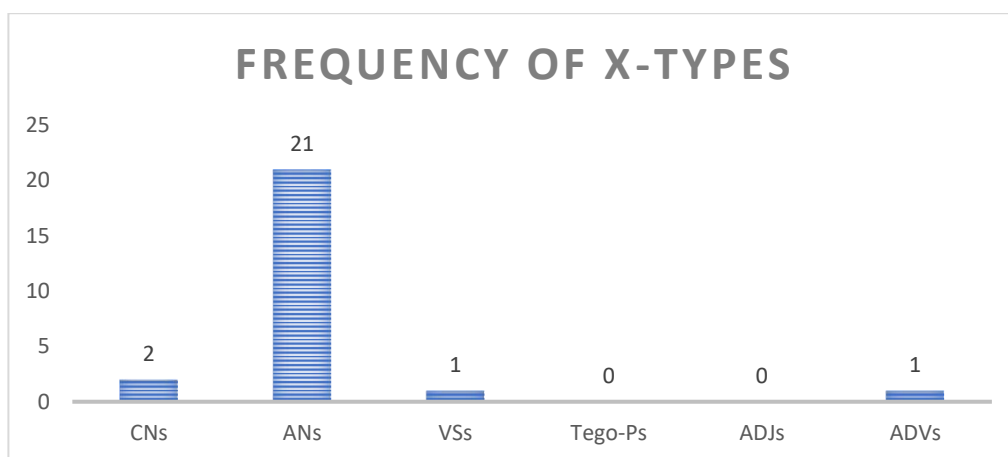


Figure 2. Distribution of X-complements of *daleko od* 'far.ADV from' X in its extended uses

#### 4.2.1 Concrete nouns

As in the case of the *daleki od* 'far.ADJ from' X-construction, the extended uses of *daleko od* 'far.ADV from' X with concrete nouns have been observed to involve animate human referents. Yet, neither Example 32 nor 33 allows the minimizer interpretation, despite implying, respectively, the lack of illness and the non-achievement of success. Thus, spatial distance in Example 32 is metaphorically construed as the speaker's being unaffected by what the subject refers to, while in Example 33, the conceptual domain of SPACE is mapped onto that of TIME, suggesting a long temporal distance between the present moment and the addressee's achievement of success.

- (32) *Ale tak żeby katar mieć to nie [...],*  
 but so to catarrh.SG.M.ACC have.INF then no  
*to na szczęście daleko ode mnie [...].*  
 this.SG.N.NOM on luck.SG.N.ACC far.ADV from me.1.SG.GEN  
 [original spelling; NKJP]

'But a runny nose I don't have, luckily that's far from me.'

- (33) *[...] sukces jest jeszcze daleko*  
 success.SG.M.NOM be.3.SG.PRES yet far.ADV  
*od ciebie. [NKJP]*  
 from you.2.SG.GEN

'Success is still far from you.'

#### 4.2.2 Abstract nouns

Again, similarly to the case with the construction involving the adjectival element, *daleko od* 'far.ADV from' X, when complemented by abstract nouns, may express the psychological detachment (cf. 34) or skepticism (cf. 35) of an animate human subject as well as temporal distance (cf. 36) and unrelatedness (cf. 37). However, none of the relevant attestations permit the minimizer reading. Notably, the purely metaphorical nature of such uses is sometimes reinforced by the presence of elements reinvoking the original, spatial meaning of the adverb *daleko* 'far.ADV', such as the verb *stać* 'to stand' (cf. 35 and 37).

- (34) [...] *był* *już* *myślami* *daleko*  
 be.3.SG.M.PST already thought.PL.F.INSTR far.ADV  
*od* *widowiska* [...]. [NKJP]  
 from spectacle.SG.N.GEN  
 'In his thoughts, he was far from the spectacle.'

- (35) *Inni* *gotowi* *byli* *raczej*  
 other.PL.M.NOM ready.PL.M.NOM be.3.PL.M.PST rather  
*zgodzić* *się* *z* *Bossuetem*, *choćby*  
 agree.PERF.INF REF with Bossuet.INSTR even.if  
*stali* *najdalej* *od* *jego*  
 stand.3.PL.M.PST the.furthest.ADV from his.SG.M.GEN  
*historiozofii* [...]. [NKJP]  
 historiosophy.SG.F.GEN  
 'Others were rather inclined to agree with Bossuet, even if they were highly skeptical of his historiosophy.'

- (36) [...] *im* *dalej* *od* *powodzi* *to* *pamięć*  
 the further.ADV from flood.SG.F.GEN then memory.SG.F.NOM  
*jest* *slabsza*. [original spelling; NKJP]  
 be.3.SG.PRES weaker.SG.F.NOM  
 'As time passes by, the memory of the flood is becoming increasingly weaker.'



- (37) *Jakżeż daleko od naturalnych potrzeb*  
 how far.ADV from natural.PL.F.GEN need.PL.F.GEN  
*stoją otaczające mnie*  
 stand.3.PL.PRES surrounding.PL.NOM me.1.SG.ACC  
*przedmioty!* [NKJP]  
 object.PL.M.NOM  
 'So unrelated to natural needs are the objects that surround me!'

#### 4.2.3 Verbal substantives

Only one instance of the *daleko od* 'far.ADV from' X-construction with a verbal substantive has been detected in the data. Due to the presence of the modifier *równie* 'equally', indicative of a degree comparison, the attestation cannot be looked at as a minimizer use, despite implying the non-occurrence of the bounded eventuality encoded by the perfective nominalization *zgłębienie tajemnicy* 'penetrating a secret':

- (38) [...] *jestem równie daleko od*  
 be.1.SG.PRES equally far.ADV from  
*zgłębienia tajemnicy.* [NKJP]  
 penetrating.PERF.SG.N.GEN secret.SG.F.GEN  
 'I am equally far from penetrating the secret.'

On closer inspection, it turns out that Example 38 is an excerpt from a Polish translation of a literary work originally written in French, which, coupled with the fact that it is the only attestation in the corpus sample where the analyzed construction combines with a verbal substantive, clearly points to the unproductivity of this pattern in standard Polish.

#### 4.2.4 Adverbs

Again, the corpus data offer solely one example in which the *daleko od* 'far.ADV from' X-construction co-occurs with an adverb. In this case, however, the minimizer interpretation is possible:

- (39) *Najważniejsze, że jest mu*  
most.important.SG.N.NOM that be.3.SG.PRES him.3.SG.M.DAT  
*"daleko od OK". [NKJP]*  
far.ADV from OK  
'The most important thing is that he's far from OK.'

What should nonetheless be underlined here is that the quotation marks used in Example 39 indicate either that the speaker simply cited the words of the person referred to or, especially given the English item occupying the X-slot, that the phrase "*daleko od OK*" 'far from OK' is a direct translation of its English counterpart, the latter scenario pointing to the role of language contact in the scrutinized instance of grammaticalization. At any rate, the punctuation suggests that the speaker distances himself/herself from the discussed expression, plausibly considering it to be non-standard. Obviously, the non-canonical nature of such uses is also evidenced by the seemingly incidental occurrence of the discussed example in the investigated corpus data.

## 5. Conclusion

Against the backdrop of recent discussions pertaining to the grammaticalization of *far from* X-constructions in European languages, this paper, drawing on naturally-occurring synchronic data, investigated the distribution of two closely related Polish constructions of this kind, namely *daleki od* 'far.ADJ from' X and *daleko od* 'far.ADV from' X, whose original function consists in spatial marking. The results of a collocational analysis carried out on random samples of attestations of both expressions (N = 400) extracted from the National Corpus of Polish demonstrate that the

constructions exhibit a highly statistically significant difference in the frequency of their extended, i.e., non-spatial, uses ( $p < .001$ ): while the former is predominantly employed without literal reference to physical space, i.e., to imply temporal remoteness, psychological detachment, difference/divergence, unrelatedness, or skepticism, the latter typically serves to indicate spatial distance.

The *daleki od* 'far.ADJ from' X-construction has moreover been shown to have undergone host-class expansion to abstract nouns, notably those invoking variable qualities and derivationally related to gradable, especially bounded, adjectives, both perfective and imperfective verbal substantives, phrases headed by the dummy pronoun *tego* 'that.SG.N.GEN' taking a clausal, whether finite or non-finite, complement, as well as adjectives. A vast majority of the scarce extended uses of the *daleko od* 'far.ADV from' X-construction, on the other hand, include only abstract and concrete nouns, while the two remaining attestations involving a perfective verbal substantive and an adverb may be suspected to have arisen due to external factors, i.e., translation-related interference and language contact, respectively.

Notwithstanding its remarkably high frequency of extended uses and wide distribution, the *daleki od* 'far.ADJ from' X-construction does not always allow the minimizer inference. In the data under scrutiny, 91 minimizer occurrences of the pertinent expression have been identified, which makes up for 46.43% of all of its 196 subjectified, metaphorical attestations. This finding indicates that the construction's grammaticalization is still largely incomplete, i.e., that the process is at the intermediate stage between spatial marking and degree modification, a phase which essentially draws on the above-listed metaphorical extensions of the expression's basic meaning, only two of which frequently give rise to the minimizer inference, namely divergence and skepticism. Notably, in its minimizer uses of the latter kind, which typically involve first person subjects and verbal substantives or *tego*-phrases in the X-slot, the discussed construction, in addition to having undergone subjectification, displays a certain degree of intersubjectivity in that it may serve as a hedger, lessening

the potentially negative effect of what the ensuing discourse refers to (cf. English *far be it from me/us to VP*). Yet, it should be pointed out that *daleki od* 'far.ADJ from' X, despite the significant changes in its semantics and distribution, retains its adjectival characteristics, i.e., case, gender, and number marking on the element *daleki* 'far.ADJ', as well as the original syntactic organization, as it is only compatible with X-elements bearing the genitive case assigned by the preposition *od* 'from'.

The sole minimizer use of the *daleko od* 'far.ADV from' X-construction identified in the data, by contrast, involves the adverbially used item *OK*. This attestation is particularly interesting as it is the only instance in the entire dataset where the X-element does not bear case marking, contrary to what could be expected given the presence of *od* 'from'. As already mentioned, however, the quotation marks used in the original example, its apparently incidental occurrence, as well as the English provenience of the X-element all suggest that the phrase "*daleko od OK*" 'far from OK' may constitute a nonce-formation triggered by language contact.

Even though the results of the synchronic analysis pursued here make clear that in today's Polish, the *daleki od* 'far.ADJ from' X-construction and the *daleko od* 'far.ADV from' X-construction are specialized in distinct functions, the expressions are likely to have participated in a functional competition throughout the history of Polish. The next step in the research on the two Polish constructions should therefore involve a diachronic study, which, apart from examining the assumed tension between them, would allow us to determine the chronology of their host-class expansion and the development of distinct metaphorical senses.

## Note

<sup>1</sup> All the Polish examples have been translated and glossed by the author. Likewise, the table and figures presented in the paper are the result of the author's own work.

## Abbreviations

1	first person
2	second person
3	third person
ACC	accusative
ADJ	adjective
ADV	adverb
DAT	dative
DEF	definite
F	feminine
FUT	future
GEN	genitive
IMPERF	imperfective
IMPERS	impersonal
INF	infinitive
INSTR	instrumental
LOC	locative
M	masculine
N	neuter
NKJP	Narodowy korpus języka polskiego
NOM	nominative
PERF	perfective
PL	plural
PRES	present
PST	past
REF	reflexive
SG	singular

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## Résumé

Against the backdrop of recent discussions concerning *far from* X-constructions in European languages, and within the framework of grammaticalization theory, this paper, drawing on naturally-occurring synchronic data, investigates the distribution of two closely related Polish constructions of this type, namely *daleki od* 'far.ADJ from' X and *daleko od* 'far.ADV from' X, both of which originally indicate significant spatial distances, and which, in view of cross-linguistic evidence, may be expected to develop into minimizers, whose meaning can be paraphrased as 'not X at all/definitely not X' or 'very/completely un-X'. The results of an empirical analysis conducted on random samples of attestations of the two constructions extracted from the National Corpus of Polish (N = 400) demonstrate that the expressions are currently specialized in distinct functions: whereas the former is almost invariably employed without literal reference to physical space, the latter is largely confined to spatial marking ( $p < .001$ ). The *daleki*

*od* 'far.ADJ from' X-construction has likewise undergone a considerable extent of host-class expansion, involving not only abstract nouns, especially those invoking gradable properties, but also both perfective and imperfective verbal substantives, phrases headed by the dummy pronoun *tego* 'that.SG.N.GEN' taking a clausal, whether finite or non-finite, complement, as well as adjectives. However, despite its remarkably high frequency of extended uses and wide distribution, only 46.43% of all the non-spatial attestations of the *daleki od* 'far.ADJ from' X-construction allow the minimizer inference, which suggests that its grammaticalization is largely incomplete, as it still heavily relies on various metaphorical extensions of the basic spatial meaning, including psychological detachment, temporal remoteness, unrelatedness, divergence, and skepticism, of which only the last two frequently give rise to the minimizer interpretation.

**Key words:** cognitive linguistics, constructionalization, corpus linguistics, degree modification, gradience, grammaticalization, host-class expansion, metaphorization, subjectification.

Article was received by the editorial board 30.01.2021;

Reviewed 07.03.2021 and 25.03.2021.

Similarity Index 2%