

Elatives instead of partitives in Estonian Wh-questions

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The talk discusses an elative wh-construction [mis NP_{nominative} NP_{relative} V?] in the Estonian language, as in (1).

(1)

Mis sa ta-st kiusa-d?

what 2SG 3SG-ELAT bully-2SG

'Don't bully him!' (lit. 'Why are you bullying him?')

Syntactically, the construction is an interrogative, but pragmatically it can be regarded as prohibition or negation of the sense of the proposition. It is a mixed construction, which consists of lexical, morphological, and pragmatic elements. The most remarkable feature of the construction is the elative argument which can't be used in other clause types. The aim is to analyse what motivates the formation of the meaning of the construction.

Pajusalu, R. (2006). Multiple motivations for meaning of an elative wh-construction in Estonian. *Trames Journal of the Humanities and Social Sciences*, 10 (4), 324–340.