

Adpositions in Finnish

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Aims: Finnish utilizes both pre- and postpositions. Both are analyzed as appearing with one of two cases: the partitive and the genitive. The choice is not a matter of lexical case assignment, i.e., there are not certain pre- or postpositions that must appear with either the partitive or the genitive case. Rather, the choice of case is directly tied to the *boundedness* of the PP. The purpose of this presentation is twofold: 1) to discuss how the use of either case conditions the spatial/temporal boundedness of the phrase, and 2) to reanalyze the partitive case in adpositional phrases as an instance of caselessness.

Previous work: Lestrade (2010) analyzes the alternation of case in the Finnish PP. *Bipositions* may appear with either the genitive or the partitive case and as pre- or postpositions.

- (1) a. *Lelut ovat lattian keskellä.*
toy.NOM.PL be.PRS.3SG floor.GEN middle.of
‘The toys are in the middle of the floor.’
- b. *Lelut ovat keskellä lattiaa.*
toy.NOM.PL be.PRS.3SG middle.of floor.PART
‘The toys are (scattered around) the middle of the floor.’

In (1), the change in case and the position of the adposition has an effect on the interpretation of the clause. With the genitive, the toys occupy a finite area on the floor. In contrast, in (1b) the toys are spread out all over the floor randomly, and occupy a non-finite area. This talk argues that the syntactic structure of the PP conditions where these nouns appear and exclude the possibility that the position of the adposition has any effect on meaning.

Caselessness and the Finnish adpositional phrase: Much like the adpositional phrases, verb phrases also show a case alternation in order to mark a change in *telicity*.

- (2) *Ammuin karhua.* (3) *Ammuin karhun.*
shoot.PST.1SG bear.PART shoot.PST.1SG bear.GEN
‘I shot at (but did not kill) the bear.’ ‘I shot (and killed) the bear.’

I adapt Pesetsky (2013), who analyzes Russian. Pesetsky argues that a caseless form of the noun appears in quantified expressions. He calls this noun a ‘primeval genitive.’

- (4) *šest' čelovek*
six person.M.PL.GEN
‘six people’
- (5) *kuusi henkilöä*
six people.PART
‘five good days’

The examples (4) and (5) demonstrate the primeval genitive, and its counterpart in Finnish. In order to avoid a case-assigning numeral, Pesetsky argues that the complements of numerals are caseless positions and therefore appear with the ‘primeval genitive’. I make a similar argument for Finnish in that the caseless noun is syncretic with the partitive case. I propose that it is this form of the noun that encodes the *unbounded* meaning in PPs. So, in the following example, the noun is caseless in (a).

- (6) a. *Johanna juoksi keskellä kaupunkia.*
 Johanna.NOM run.PST.3SG middle.of city.(PART)
 ‘Johanna was running (around) in the middle of the city.’
 b. *Johanna juoksi kaupungin keskellä*
 Johanna.NOM run.PST.3SG city.GEN middle.of
 ‘Johanna ran in the middle of the city.’

I propose that Finnish adpositions and verbs do not assign case; thus, the appearance of the genitive case must be conditioned by something else in the grammar. Following Caha’s (2009) framework, I propose that when the PP is bounded, a GenP is generated in the complement of Place/PathP, and it is within this phrase that the noun gets genitive. **Word order:** Caha (2007) posits that when the genitive marked noun is moved into the specifier of a DegP, then the phrase receives a bounded interpretation. I refute this idea because it does not capture the word order of PPs that have an overt Deg head.

- (7) *todella talon ylhäällä* (8) *aivan puun ylhäällä*
 really house.GEN above right/just tree.GEN above
 ‘far above the house’ ‘right/just above the tree’

Caha’s (2007) proposal for the structures in (7) and (8) would predict **talon todella ylhäällä* and *aivan puun ylhäällä*. This is not possible, therefore, there is no movement into spec, DegP. Caha (2007) argued that caseless NPs never occur with DegP. I argue that DegP can appear in the caseless cases because degree words like *right* can appear with caseless PPs as well. The caseless noun triggers an unbounded interpretation in the adpositional phrase. The position of the adposition before or after the noun is not tied to the meaning of the phrase; the meaning is tied exclusively to case. I therefore argue two points: 1) that the adposition appearing before or after the noun depends on whether a movement into the specifiers of PlaceP or PathP has taken place, and 2) that DegP is unrelated to boundedness, and is optional in the Finnish PP.

Selected References

Caha, P. 2007. Case Movements in PPs. Tromsø Working Papers on Language & Linguistics: Nordlyd, 34(2). 239-299. Pesetsky, D. 2013. Russian Case Morphology and the Syntactic Categories. Cambridge: MIT Press.