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The Possibilities for Identifying Newly Emerged Postpositions in Hungarian

This research investigates newly emerging postpositions in Hungarian, focusing on possessive structures through a corpus-based approach. It operates within a functional cognitive framework that treats parts of speech as categories defined by prototype categorization, avoiding rigid boundaries. In ongoing language change, this framework enables the description of coexisting stronger and weaker schemas.

Theoretical Background

Árpád Sebestyén (1965) highlights the challenges older grammars face in categorizing postpositions, which function similarly to noun case markers in Hungarian (Balogh 2000; Tolcsvai Nagy 2017). A postposition forms a composite structure with its noun, creating a complex meaning where one component enhances the other's meaning (Langacker 1987). This aligns with the constructionist view that constructions are form-function pairs with inherent meanings (Goldberg 2006; Langacker 2009).

The presentation also uses the results of research on grammaticalization. Grammaticalization is the process by which a lexical element evolves into a more grammatical one (Heine et al. 1991, Dér 2008). As grammaticalization progresses, a formerly independent element becomes reliant on another, resulting in a shift in syntactic placement (Bybee et al. 1994).

Materials and Methods

The material for the investigation is drawn from the Hungarian National Corpus, where I searched for possessive structures: primarily possessive nouns with person markers, and from there I further filtered for possessive syntagmas. I examined the frequency indicators and collocational candidates of these possessive nouns. This resulted in a list containing possible postpositional candidates.

I conducted new searches to examine the following:

- **Syntactic independence:** the degree of free placement in the sentence: a) the occurrence ratio of noun - postposition candidate word order, b) the distance between the noun and the postposition candidate in the sentence,

- **Formal construction constraints:** Analyzing the presence or absence of the *-nak/-nek*_{DAT/GEN} suffix.
- **Degree of meaning abstraction,**
- **Patterns of expansion with subordinate clauses** (e.g., omission of the 'possessor' in the main clause).

Conclusion

This research enhances our understanding of part-of-speech shifts and grammaticalization in contemporary Hungarian. It offers insights into measuring the progression of grammaticalization, particularly concerning postposition formation.

Literature:

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