

Particles, adpositions and cases: a unified analysis

Anna Asbury & Berit Gehrke

1 Introduction

Aim to show that

- (i) verbal prefixes, particles, adpositions (pre-/postpositions), and cases belong to one syntactic category P
- (ii) the apparent differences between them are derived in the syntax and in the morphophonological processes after spell-out

Prefixes (morphologically attached to the verb)

- (1) Russian
On **ot**-prygnul ot okna.
he **from**-jumped from window
'He jumped away from the window.'
- (2) Ancient Greek
eis-e-bal-on eis ten Attike-n.
into-PST-throw-3PL into the.ACC Attica-ACC
'They **invaded** Attica.'

Particles ('intransitive prepositions')

- (3) English:
John pushed { **over** } the chair { **over** }. Mary put { **out** } the rubbish { **out** }.
- (4) Dutch:
Hij is **weg**-gelopen / liep **weg**.
he is **away**-run / ran **away**
'He ran away.'

Adpositions (prepositions and postpositions)

- (5) English prepositions
They went **in/into/towards** the house. They had a picnic **on** the grass.
- (6) Er rannte **in** den Wald.
he ran **in** the.ACC wood
'He ran in(to) the wood.'
- (7) Er lief den Berg **hin-unter**.
he ran the.ACC hill **there-down**
'He ran down the hill.'

3 Why argue that they are the same?

3.1 Similar meaning of Ps

Verbal prefixes, particles, adpositions (pre-/postpositions), and cases can all express spatial relations.

(10) Hungarian cases

- a. Imre el-ment Olaszország-**ba**.
 Imre PFX-went Italy-**ILL**
 ‘Imre went **to** Italy.’
- b. Géza olvas a kert-**ben**.
 Géza read the garden-**INESS**
 ‘Géza is reading **in** the garden.’

(11) Hungarian postpositions

- a. Négy szék van az asztal **körül**.
 four chair are the table **round**
 ‘There are four chairs **around** the table.’
- b. Fel-akasztotta a festményt a két ablak **közé**.
 up-hung the painting the two window **between**
 ‘She hung up the painting **between** the two windows.’

(12) Russian prefixes and prepositions

- a. On **pere**-šel (**čerez**) ulicu.
 he **ACROSS**-went (**across**) street-ACC
 ‘He **crossed** the street.’
- b. On **pri**-exal v Moskvu.
 he **TO**-drove **in** Moscow-ACC
 ‘He arrived **in** Moscow.’

3.2 Similar forms of Ps

* prefixes and prepositions: Slavic

(13) Russian goal and source prepositions and prefixes:

prepositions	verbal prefixes	
<i>do</i> (+ GEN), <i>k</i> (+ DAT)	<i>do</i> -, <i>pri</i> -, * <i>k</i> -	to
<i>k</i> (+ DAT)	* <i>k</i> -	towards
<i>v</i> (+ ACC) / (+ PREP)	<i>v</i> -, <i>za</i> -	in / into
<i>na</i> (+ ACC) / (+ PREP)	(<i>na</i> -) ¹	on / onto
<i>ot</i> (+ GEN)	<i>ot</i> -, <i>u</i> -	(away) from
<i>iz</i> (+ GEN)	<i>iz</i> -, <i>vy</i> -	out of

¹ The prefix *na*- is only found on the motion verb *idti / jít* ‘go’. *Najti* and *najít*, however, do not convey the meaning of a motion on foot onto something but have the different lexical meaning of ‘find’. To describe a motion onto something, other prefixes are used depending on the particular perspective such as Russian *so-jti* ‘descend’ (lit. down-go) or Czech *vze-stoupit* ‘ascend’ (lit. up-step).

(14) Czech goal and source prepositions and prefixes:

prepositions	verbal prefixes	
<i>do</i> (+ GEN), <i>k</i> (+ DAT)	<i>do-</i> , <i>při-</i> , <i>*k-</i>	to
<i>k</i> (+ DAT), <i>vůči</i> (+ DAT)	<i>*k-</i> , <i>*vůči-</i>	towards
<i>do</i> (+ GEN) / (+ PREP)	<i>do-</i>	in / into
<i>na</i> (+ ACC) / (+ PREP)	<i>(na-)</i> ¹	on / onto
<i>od</i> (+ GEN)	<i>od-</i> , <i>u-</i>	(away) from
<i>z</i> (+ GEN)	<i>vy-</i>	out of

(15) prepositional counterparts of additional prefixes:

- při* (*při*) (+ PREP) ‘at, by’
- za* (+ ACC) / (+ INSTR) ‘within’ / ‘behind, at, with, ...’
- u* (+ GEN) ‘at’
- Old Slavonic *вън* (+ GEN) > Mod. Russ. / Czech adverbial *von* / *ven* ‘outside’

*** particles and prepositions: Germanic**

- (16) a. English: I ran **down** vs. I ran **down the hill**.
 b. Dutch: Ze keek **uit** (over het water). vs. Ze keek **uit het raam**.

*** cases and particles: Hungarian**

- (17) János **rá**-lépett a lábam-**ra**.
 János **onto**-stepped the foot.POSS-SUB
 ‘János stepped on my foot.’

*** postposition and particles: Hungarian**

- (18) a. az autó **mellé**
 the car **beside**
 ‘beside the car’
 b. János **mellé** lőtt a cél-nak
 John **beside**-POSS shot the target-DAT
 ‘John missed the target.’

4 Possible counter-arguments

Some traditional reasons for making a difference between cases and adpositions break down in the face of languages like Hungarian:

*** Cases are affixes and adpositions are words.**

BUT: both cases and postpositions form the head of pronominal forms

- (19) Hungarian pronominal case and postposition forms
- | | | | | | |
|------|-------------------|--|--|--|----------------|
| (én) | vel-em | | | | (case) |
| (I) | INSTR-1SG | | | | |
| | ‘with me’ | | | | |
| (én) | mögött-em | | | | (postposition) |
| (I) | behind-1SG | | | | |
| | ‘behind me’ | | | | |

*** Cases trigger agreement and adpositions usually don’t.**

BUT: the demonstrative seems to agree with either a case or a postposition

- (20) Hungarian demonstrative agreement with a case/postposition
- | | | | | | |
|--------------------|-------------------|---------------------|------|--------------|----------------|
| en- nél | a | ház- nál | | | (case) |
| this- ADESS | the | house- ADESS | | | |
| | ‘at this house’ | | | | |
| az | alatt | a | fa | alatt | (postposition) |
| that | under | the | tree | under | |
| | ‘under that tree’ | | | | |

Traditional reasons for making a difference between particles and adpositions:

*** Particles do not take objects whilst prepositions do.**

BUT: particles as intransitive prepositions, different valency (cf. transitive and intransitive verbs).

- (21) a. I **ate**. vs. I **ate an apple**.
 b. The plane went **up**. vs. I went **up the hill**.

*** Verbs with prefixes / particles are lexical items on their own, i.e. not syntactically derived.**

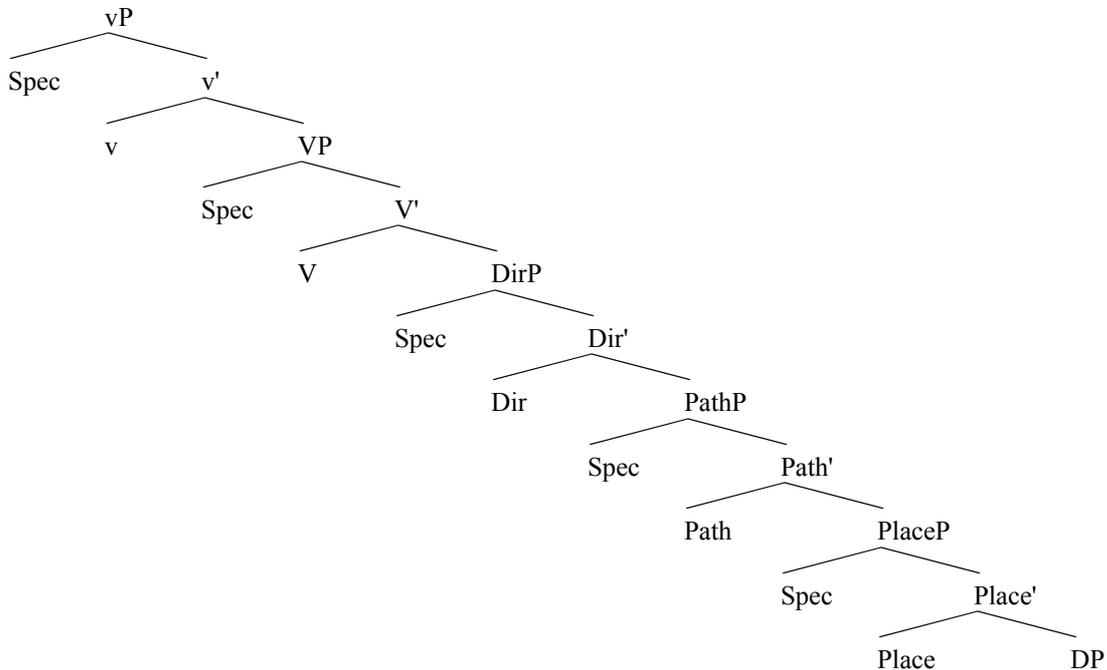
BUT: Dutch postpositions also seem to form a complex predicate with the verb in the syntax so why not have a uniform account?

- (22) Dutch postposition
- | | | | | | |
|----|--------------------------|------|-----|-------|---------------------|
| a. | Hij | liep | het | huis | in . |
| | he | ran | the | house | in |
| | ‘He ran into the house.’ | | | | |
| b. | Hij | is | het | huis | in-gelopen . |
| | he | is | the | house | in-run |
| | ‘He ran into the house.’ | | | | |

- (23) Dutch particle
- | | | | | | |
|----|--------------------------------|--------|-----|-------------|---------------------|
| a. | Hij | diende | een | aanvraag | in . |
| | he | served | an | application | in |
| | ‘He submitted an application.’ | | | | |
| b. | Hij | heeft | een | aanvraag | in-gediend . |
| | he | has | an | application | in-served |
| | ‘He submitted an application.’ | | | | |

5 Towards an analysis of the differences

How does the distribution of P get to be so variable?



- each individual lexical item P has its own core semantics
- position of P with respect to N/V is determined by its syntactic movement
- P is merged in the extended projection of the noun phrase (DP) as either a Place, Path or Dir head, depending on its core semantics
- postpositions (e.g. Hungarian, Dutch) are the result of raising of the noun to Spec-Dir, Spec-Path or Spec-Place
- verbal particles and prefixes are the result of further movement of the P to create a link between the verbal domain and the nominal domain
- difference between case suffixes, adpositions, particles and prefixes, is the result of phonological processes after Spell-Out
e.g. Hungarian monosyllabic Ps form cases, polysyllabic Ps form postpositions

6 Conclusions

- It is controversial which elements belong to the category P
- On the basis of similarities in form and meaning we argue for treating particles, prefixes, adpositions, and cases alike, as instances of the same category P
- Differences between these elements fall out of morphology, syntactic derivation etc.
- Within a clausal perspective Ps emerge as the syntactic glue between verbs and their arguments.