Two types of postpositions in Hungarian

Dékány Éva
University of Tromsø

Aim of the talk: Hungarian postpositions fall into two natural classes. So-called 'dressed' Ps take complements which are caseless (É. Kiss 2002)/bear the morphologically null Nominative case (Marácz 1989). Such a P is *mög-ött* 'behind-at'. 'Naked' Ps, on the other hand, take oblique complements, eg. *kívül* 'outside.of' takes a DP in the Superessive Case.

(1) a híd mög-ött
the bridge behind-at
behind the bridge

(2) a híd-on kívül
the bridge-SUP outside
outside of the bridge

The two classes are generally treated as members of the same syntactic category, subcategorizing for different types of complements. In this approach, each distributional difference between the two classes is captured by setting a different parameter, and crucially, all the parameter-settings are independent of each other and the type of complement the Ps take. This talk argues that 'dressed' and 'naked' postpositions correspond to different bits of the functional sequence, and shows how the distributional differences between the two kids of Ps elegantly follow from such an analysis.

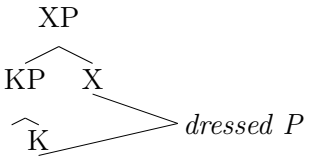
Theoretical framework: In my analysis I use the Nanosyntactic framework developed in Starke (2007, 2009) and taken up in Ramchand (2008), Caha (2008), Fábregas (2009) and Taraldsen (2009) among others. The central idea in Nanosyntax is that the building blocks in syntax are features, not lexical items. Given that lexical items usually identify more than one feature – eg. *he* lexicalizes at least the features [3rd person], [singular] and [masculine] – terminals are in many cases smaller than morphemes. This means that morphemes may span several terminals (cf. also Williams 2003 and Abels and Muriungi 2008), and consequently when they do so, the syntactic part of their lexical entry contains a subtree instead of a terminal. An important corollary of this approach is that depending on how many features they contain, morphemes are of different syntactic complexity and so of different size. Since lexical items correspond to trees, the Lexicon is entirely post-syntactic in Nanosyntax (no 'projection from the Lexicon').

As far as the internal make-up of PPs is concerned, I adopt the fine-grained structure laid out in Svenonius (to appear). AxialPart is a category that corresponds to a space projected from the Ground, such a *front* in *in front of* or *back* in *in back of*.

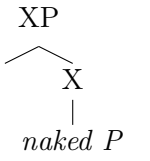
(3) PathP – DegreeP — DeixisP – PlaceP – AxialPartP – KP – DP

Analysis: I propose that the feature shared by all dressed Ps is that they spell out K and some higher material as well. This means that dressed Ps span the P and the D domains. Naked Ps, on the other hand, do not spell out K, only some higher material. That is, none of the features they span belong to the D domain.

(4) Lexical entry of a 'dressed' P

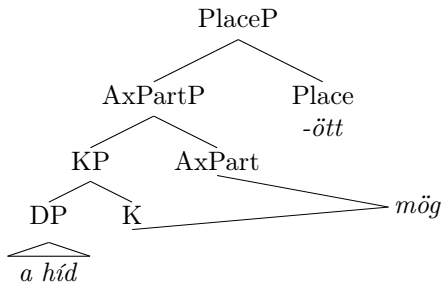


(5) Lexical entry of a 'naked' P

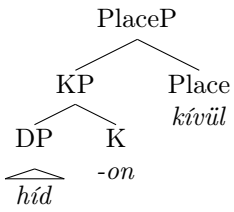


The structures of (1) and (2) are depicted below. Both phrases identify a place, so I propose that they are both PlacePs. In (1) *mög* spans K and AxPart, while Place is spelled out by the locative marker *-ött*. In (2) K is lexicalized by the Superessive Case suffix. I assume that in this case there is no AxPart in the structure, as the semantics associated with this node (i.e. space projected from the Ground) is clearly lacking from the meaning of the PP. Place is spelled out by the naked P.

(6)



(7)



K and D belong to the same domain but K and AxPart do not, so the relationship of K and DP is arguably closer than that of AxPart and KP. In consequence, it is expected in this analysis that dressed Ps, by virtue of spelling out K and so reaching into the D domain, have a tighter connection to their complement than naked Ps, which only spell out material in the P domain. This can be broken down into two different but interconnected predictions.

Prediction No1: On the one hand, movements targeting KP are predicted to be blocked with 'dressed' postpositions. Such operations would disrupt the AxPart–K sequence lexicalized by the dressed P, so at the time of post-syntactic lexical insertion there would be no sequence corresponding to the lexical entry of the P. Consequently, 'dressed' postpositions cannot be inserted into the structure after KP movement. Nothing prevents the same operations to apply to the complements of 'naked' Ps, however, as in this case the lexicalizer of K is completely independent of the P domain. This prediction is borne out: the complements of 'dressed' postpositions cannot move to the specifier of a higher DegreeP and be separated from their Ps by the degree expression, while the complements of 'naked' postpositions can. (The degree expression can precede the DP in both examples, which corresponds to the base-generated order.)

(8) *a tükör közvetlenül mellett
the mirror immediately next.to-at
immediately next to the mirror

(9) az épület-en (egészen) kívül
the building-SUP totally outside
totally outside the building

Prediction No2: On the other hand, movements targeting only features in the P domain and leaving KP in situ are predicted to be blocked with 'dressed' Ps but allowed with 'naked' Ps by the same logic. This prediction is also borne out: 'dressed' postpositions can only follow their complements, while 'naked' ones can also appear in the immediately prenominal position, with the latter position indisputably being a derived one (cf. Marácz 1989, Hegedűs 2006).

(10) (*mellett) a tó mell-ett
next.to-at the lake next.to-at
next to the lake

(11) (kívül) a ház-on kívül
outside the house-SUP outside
outside of the house

'Naked' Ps can also move up to the V domain to precede the V and function as verbal particles, while 'dressed' Ps cannot, which is again consistent with this second prediction. In sum, in this analysis the 'subcategorization' patterns and the distributional differences of the two P classes are not independent of one other: they all follow from the proposed lexical entries in a principled way.

Prediction No3: Locative PPs containing both dressed and naked P are PlacePs, so it is expected that the two types of PPs behave identically with respect to operations targeting PlaceP. This prediction, too, is borne out: PPs containing both types of Ps can take the suffix *-i*, which derives adjectives from Places.

Selected references: Marácz, László. 1989. *Asymmetries in Hungarian*. PhD diss., Rijksuniversität Groningen. Starke, Michal. 2009. Nanosyntax: a new approach to Language. In *CASTL annual report*, 8-9, http://castl.auf.net. Svenonius, Peter. 2006. The emergence of Axial Parts. *Nordlyd*, 33.1: 49–77. Williams, Edwin. 2003. *Representation theory*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.