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The Case of the Noun Phrase in the Finnish Adpositional Phrase: A Discourse-pragmatic Account

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It is commonly assumed that adpositions are heads of adpositional phrases and therefore syntactically govern the form of the noun phrase within the adpositional phrase (Nichols 1986; Zwicky 1993; Comrie 1989; and many others). In this paper, I will argue that such an assumption is challenged by examination of adpositional phrases in naturally occurring language. I will present data from spoken Finnish which show that sometimes it is not plausible to claim that the case of the noun phrase is determined by an adposition with which it can nevertheless be said to form, or be intended to form, an adpositional phrase. I will argue that the case marking of noun phrases within adpositional phrases is motivated by discourse-pragmatic and semantic factors, while purely syntactic factors are inadequate to account for the form of the noun phrases in Finnish adpositional phrases.

1. DATA. My data consist of twenty spoken narratives, some elicited, some spontaneously told, and eight ordinary conversations between friends, co-workers and family members (for further details, see Laury 1997). In addition, I have taken several examples from the Finnish Pear Stories (Chafe 1980), recorded in Finland in 1984.

2. ABOUT FINNISH ADPOSITIONS. In addition to its rich system of local cases, Finnish also has both prepositions and postpositions. Postpositions dominate in the data; 89% (84 out of the 94 total) of the adpositions in the data are postpositions (cf. Palola 1975 with 82.5% postpositions). Most postpositions co-occur with genitive NPs (77 out of 84), while prepositions appear mostly with partitive noun phrases (9 out of 10). Some adpositions occur with either genitive or partitive NPs, and some occur with NPs in local cases (Suova 1938; Airila 1938; Hakulinen and Karlsson 1979; Vilkuna 1996).

3. NOUN PHRASES WHOSE CASE CANNOT BE GOVERNED BY AN ADPOSITION. In this section, I will present and discuss data which show that the case of an NP complement of an adposition cannot always be claimed to be governed by an adposition. I will first discuss co-constructed adpositional phrases; then I will discuss what I call independent landmarks, noun phrases which appear to be intended as, or have potential to become complements of adpositions but are not accompanied by adpositions; and finally I will discuss adpositions which appear with noun phrases in more than one case.

It is very common in ordinary conversational language that two or more speakers are responsible for a particular grammatical construction; this happens, for example, when one speaker starts a sentence or phrase and another speaker finishes it. It is also possible for one speaker to 'abduct' part of a construction produced by one speaker and use it for a new construction different from the construction it was used for by the first speaker. In example (1) below, a group of friends gathered together for coffee are discussing where the hostess, speaker EK, has purchased some of her dishes. This is achieved through a considerable amount of overlap and other types of cooperative construction.

(1)

1 LP Onk 'nämät niitä ku sä olet sielt,
be-Q this-PL 3PL-PRT COMP 2SG be-2SG DEM.LOC-ABL
Are these the ones that you have,

2 EK ^Roomasta [tuonu].¹
Rome-ELA bring-P.PPLE
brought from Rome.

3 LP [Nii] sie[ltä],
PTCL DEM.LOC-ABL
From the,

4 EK [Vatikaanin] torilta.
Vatican-GEN market.place-ABL
Vatican market place.

5 LP sieltä] torilta.
DEM.LOC-ABL market.place-ABL
the market place.

6 EK [Sielt] nii,
DEM.LOC-ABL PTCL
From the,

7 LP [Nii.]
PTCL
Right.

8 EK Vatikaanin kesä--
Vatican-GEN summer
Vatican summer—

9 Siis se,
PTCL DET/DEM
I mean the,

10 .. eiku=,
NEG-CLTC
no,

11 ... san nyt,
say-2SGIMP now
what is it,

12 'paavin ^kesäasunnon.
pope-GEN summer-residence-GEN
of the pope's summer residence.

13 LP Niin 'paavin ^kesäasunnon.=
PTCL pope-GEN summer-residence-GEN
Yeah, (of) the pope's summer residence.

14 EK =Vieres siel oli se,
next.to-INE DEM.LOC-ADE be-PST DET/DEM
Next to [the pope's summer residence] there was the,

In line 2, in response to the question begun by LP in line 1, EK completes LP's clause by saying that the dishes were brought from Rome. In line 4 she specifies further that they come from the Vatican marketplace. In 6-11 she initiates further specification, and the NP *paavin kesäasunnon* 'the pope's summer residence-GEN' in line 12 appears strongly to be intended as a repair of the NP *Vatikaanin* in line 4, which functions as a genitive modifier of *torilta* 'from the market place'. After LP repeats the NP in line 13, my interpretation is that EK abducts this NP and uses it as a complement of the postposition *vieres* which LP produces in line 14. Since the genitive case of this noun phrase is motivated by the fact that it is functioning as (a repair of) a genitive modifier, it does not seem possible to claim that the postposition *vieres* in any way governs or determines the case of the NP with which it can nevertheless be said to form an adpositional phrase.

Furthermore, there are also occasions when speakers produce a genitive NP without any accompanying adposition or noun phrase. In these cases, the independent genitive ordinarily functions as a landmark (O'Dowd 1994), while the relational element, the pathway, which the adposition would have provided, is missing. It is not always easy to know how to interpret the noun phrase in terms of

providing the 'missing' element. It is also not clear whether listeners experience any difficulty in understanding what was meant. Consider the following example, where several speakers are discussing a particular location in the archipelago outside the town of Turku.

(2)

1 IW Ja sit vast [se ^Naan]talin aukko on **sen** [toisen],
and then only DET N.-GEN gap be-PRES DET-GEN other-GEN
And then the Naantali gap is (*) the other,

2 LP [Nii.]
PTCL
Right.

3 JS [<X Nii eikä seX>]
PTCL NEG-CLTC DET/DEM
Right, and it doesn't

4 LP Nii.
PTCL
Right.

5 IW .. **saaren**,
island-GEN
island's,

6 siin on semmonen [^toinen] saari sit [siin],
DEM-INE be-PRES such other island then DEM-INE
then there's another island there,

7 LP [Joo]
PTCL
Yeah.

8 [Joo.]
PTCL
Yeah.

9 IW .. koht **siin** ^**Särkän saaren**,
soon DEM-INE S.-gen island-GEN
soon (*) Särkkä island,

10 ... **ettippäi siitä** [sit].

ahead DEM-ELA then
ahead from there.

11 LP [Ni=i.]
PTCL
Right.

In this excerpt, speaker IW produces two genitive noun phrases without a following noun or adposition, one in lines 1 and 5 and the other in line 9, but although it could be argued that something was omitted, it is difficult to say what. Either a postposition or a local case noun phrase would be syntactically possible here, although it is easier to imagine postpositions filling in the slot. However, the other speakers seem to be able to comprehend her message and do not ask for clarification; the backchannel responses *joo* and *nii* can be taken as an indication that the addressee(s) are comprehending the message (Sorjonen 1997).

It is my view that what the speaker is doing here is providing a landmark; that is, she is indicating that the Naantali gap can be located by locating *se toinen saari* 'the other island' and *Särkän saari* 'Särkkä island', which she presents as identifiable to her addressees by using the determiner *se* (Laury 1997). However, when she produces these noun phrases, she does not provide a pathway; in other words, she does not indicate, by supplying an adposition, where the Naantali gap is located with respect to these landmarks. In my view, in cases like example (2), it would not be reasonable to argue that the case of the NP was governed by an adposition which was never produced. Instead, the genitive case here functions to simply mark the NP as a landmark. We could, of course, assume that the speaker did have a particular adposition in mind but failed to produce it for some reason. However, I see no reason to assume so; one piece of evidence that she had not planned the adposition yet when she produced the noun phrases in lines 1 and 5 and in line 9 is the adpositional phrase in line 10.² The adposition she finally does produce, *ettippäi* 'ahead (from)' is a preposition, not a postposition, and occurs with noun phrases in the elative case, not with genitive noun phrases. Thus, I take data like example (2) as evidence that at the time a speaker produces a noun phrase intended as a landmark, which has the potential to be followed by a postposition, the speaker may not yet have planned the identity of a postposition which may (or may not) follow. This in turn indicates that the case of a noun phrase within a postpositional phrase may have been determined by other factors; for example, as in this case, the function of the NPs as identifiable landmarks.

Also look at example (3). This is an excerpt from the Finnish Pear stories. The speaker has just heard a Pear story and is instructing the teller as to where to turn in a questionnaire he has been given.

(3)

1 ... jos 'täytät ^tän,
 if fill-2SG this-ACC
 if you'll fill this out,

2 ja 'annat **tuolla** ^odottavan 'henkilön,
 and give-2SG DEM.LOC-ADE wait-PRES.PPLE-GEN person-GEN
 and give [it to?]/let the person waiting,

3 ... tota,
 PTCL
 um,

4 ... 'tytölle.
 girl-ALL
 to the girl.

In this example, *tuolla odottavan henkilön* 'the person waiting there' is in the genitive case. At the point it is produced, the speaker has several options. Here, he could have followed this with a postposition, a noun phrase, or an infinitive construction. I think this again shows that all genitive noun phrases which occur with postpositions are not necessarily genitive because of the valency of the following postposition. Both example (2) and (3) show that at the time the speaker produces a genitive NP, it is possible that he or she may not have yet planned the construction the NP will be a part of. In example (2), the speaker provided two genitive NPs which appeared to be sufficient landmarks for the addressees even without a path-specifying adposition; when she did produce an adposition, it was one which appears with noun phrases in a case different than the case of the earlier landmark NPs. And in (3), the speaker produced a genitive NP but self-corrected and produced an oblique NP instead.

We have seen two types of constructions which make it difficult to maintain that the case of an NP complement of an adposition is always governed by an adposition, constructions where the adpositional phrase is cooperatively constructed and constructions where the adposition is never produced. Thirdly, although some Finnish adpositions only occur with genitive NPs and others only with partitive NPs, some adpositions, such as *ympäri* 'around' and *kesken* 'in the middle of' take both genitive and partitive complements. The case marking of the complements of this third type of adposition also cannot be governed by the adposition, but must be determined by some other factors. In the next section, I will discuss semantic and discourse factors which motivate case marking of NPs within Finnish adpositional phrases.

4. DISCOURSE-PRAGMATIC AND SEMANTIC MOTIVATIONS FOR CASE MARKING OF NPS WITHIN ADPOSITIONAL PHRASES. In this section, I am going to propose that the case marking of noun phrases in adpositional phrases is motivated by the role played by the referent of the NP in the current discourse and by semantic factors. I am first going to review research concerning semantic and pragmatic motivations for case marking in Finnish, and then I will show how the case marking of NPs in my database can be argued to be motivated by semantics and pragmatics.

Quite a bit of research on the discourse functions of the Finnish cases has shown that referents of partitive and genitive noun phrases play quite different roles in discourse. The partitive case was originally a local case, and even in their grammatical uses, partitive NPs in discourse still manifest features which are more characteristic of obliques than grammatical cases. Partitive NPs have been found to generally occur in contexts of irresultativity, irrealis, negation, partial affectedness, and low transitivity; they are characterized by a low degree of individuation and nonreferentiality, and their referents are likely to be non-human (Helasvuo 1996).

In contrast, one of the prototypical functions of the genitive case is the expression of ownership and part-whole relationships, and more than a third of all adpositions which occur with genitive noun phrases (and more than half of such constructions which express location) are thought to originate from constructions where the genitive noun phrase expressed the whole and the emerging postposition expressed the part (Jaakola 1997). In addition, Huumo and Inaba (1997) argue that the historical origin of the genitive case in Finnish is not adnominal, but rather a lative case which later developed into a dative. In this function, Huumo and Inaba suggest that its function was one of possession, and that the referents of the genitive noun phrases in these constructions were exclusively animate and predominantly human.

If we compare the partitive NPs in the adpositional phrases in my data to the genitive NPs, quite a few differences emerge. The referents of the partitive NPs are more likely to be new, less likely to be identifiable, less likely to be subsequently mentioned, and much less likely to have human referents, than the genitive NPs within adpositional phrases, which in turn are much more likely than partitive NPs to have been already mentioned, to be mentioned again, to be identifiable, and to have human referents. This can be seen in the table below.

Case	Total NPs	New	Identifiable	Subs. mentioned	Human
PRT	16	9 60%	6 40%	3 13%	1 7%
GEN	78	25 32%	56 72%	34 44%	24 31%

Table 1. Discourse profiles of partitive and genitive noun phrases in adpositional phrases

In other words, it can (and should!) also be argued that the partitive and genitive NPs perform different functions in discourse, and have become grammaticized (or lexicalized) into use in adpositional phrases which reflect these discourse functions. For example, as we have seen above, genitive NPs are often used as landmarks; they also manifest characteristics suitable for such a function, such as identifiability. Recall that the landmark NPs in example (2) were explicitly marked for identifiability; the genitive NP in example (1) was also used as a landmark, and constituted the second mention of that NP in the discourse. On the other hand, as is typical of nonreferentials and other types of nominals with a low degree of individuation, nominals in the scope of negation and other types of irrealis, partitive NPs in my data are likely to be new, not likely to be subsequently mentioned, and much less likely to be identifiable to the addressee than are genitive NPs.

Further, if we examine pairs of adpositions which appear with genitives vs. partitives, it turns out the semantic differences between them are reflective of the kinds of differences which showed up in the comparison of partitive and genitive noun phrases above. Thus the adposition *kanssa* 'with', which implies existence (realis), occurs with genitive noun phrases. Eleven out of the 21 uses of *kanssa* had human noun phrases as objects, and two others which were animate. In contrast, *ilman* 'without', which implies nonexistence (irrealis), occurs with partitive noun phrases; there were only two uses of *ilman* in my database, but both had nonhuman referents. *Jälkeen* 'after' implies existence and occurs with genitive noun phrases, while *ennen* 'before' which implies nonexistence, occurs with partitive noun phrases. Adpositions which imply contiguity and containment (a high degree of affectedness), such as *halki* 'across', *läpi* 'through', *sisällä* 'inside', and *kohdalla* 'at' occur with genitives, while adpositions which imply noncontiguity, noncontainment or opposition (and thus a lower degree of affectedness), such as *kohti* 'towards', *pitkin* 'along' and *vasten* 'against', occur with partitive noun phrases.

With those adpositions which occur with both genitive and partitive noun phrases, the variation between the cases manifests predictable semantic differences. Thus *ympäri* 'around' occurs with both genitive and partitive noun phrases. With a genitive noun phrase, as in *kaupungin ympäri* 'around the town', a complete circle, or containment (total affectedness) is implied; however, in *ympäri kaupunkia* 'around town' with a partitive noun phrase, the implication is a scattered location (partial affectedness) in various parts of the town (Jaakola 1997).

Similarly, in my data, two different forms of the adposition *päässä/stä* 'at/from the end (of)' are used by the same speaker twice within one narrative, once with a genitive noun phrase and another time with a partitive noun phrase. The speaker is foxhunting on a mountain, and is disturbed by woodcutters:

(4)

..Sit tul pari ^hevosmiestä sit,
Then come.PST couple horse-man-PL-PRT then
Then a couple of men came with horses,

...'rantaan vielä ja,
shore-ILL still and
to the shore and,

...tulivat mettäh,
come-PST-3PL forest-ILL
and they came into the forest,

..halkoi hakemah sielt.
firewood-PL.PRT fetch-3INF-ILL DEM.LOC-ABL
to get firewood from there.

..**Vuoren päästä.**
mountain-GEN end-ELA
From the end of the mountain.

In this example, the location referred to by the adpositional phrase is viewed as contiguous; it is near to the speaker and accessible to him in that he can hear the woodcutters. The hunter is disturbed about the noise the woodcutters are making, and starts walking away. It then occurs to him that he should go to the other side of the mountain where he knows of a foxwallow.

(5)

ja muistin,
and remember-PST-1SG
and I remembered (that)

heill on siel **toises pääs vuorta**,
3SG-ADE is DEM.LOC.ABL other-INE end-INE mountain-PRT
they have at the other end of the mountain

sellai kivi,
such rock
this rock,

This time, the speaker uses a partitive noun phrase *vuorta* with the adposition *päässä* (which is modified by the adjective *toises*). The other end of the mountain

is not near the speaker or accessible to him in the way that the end of the mountain referred to in example (4) is; the speaker is currently at the end mentioned there, but not at the end mentioned in example (5) above. It is interesting that while only the genitive is possible with *päässä*, both genitive and partitive are possible with *toises(sa) pääs(sä)*. Thus the choice of cases used with adpositions is sensitive to both semantic features (the other side, vs. just the side) and pragmatic features (how a particular referent is being viewed, in terms of its current accessibility to the speaker).

CONCLUSION. I have presented evidence which indicates that the form of an NP within an adpositional phrase is not just syntactically governed by the adposition, but is instead strongly motivated by discourse-pragmatic and semantic factors. I did this by first presenting data which showed that in naturally occurring language it is not always possible to claim that the form of an NP is governed by an adposition with which it can be said to form an adpositional phrase, since speakers abduct NPs which were originally functioning in some other type of grammatical function. They also sometimes produce NPs which appear to have been planned as complements of adpositions before the identity of the adposition is planned. Further, some adpositions take complements in more than one case.

I then discussed earlier studies which have investigated the discourse functions of the partitive and genitive case, and showed that the discourse profiles of NPs within adpositional phrases in my data are consistent with the findings of the earlier studies. I also showed that the semantics of the adpositions which occur with partitive vs. genitive NPs are consistent with the kinds of meanings partitives and genitives tend to express. I conclude that partitive and genitive noun phrases perform distinctly different functions in discourse, and to the degree that they have become grammaticized into use with particular adpositions, the case assignment is a result of, and still transparently reflects, these discourse functions.

NOTES

1. ^ indicates the word with the primary stress in that intonation unit.
2. It is not entirely clear whether *ettippäi siitä* is an adpositional phrase; it could also be considered an adverbial phrase. The distinction between adverbs and adpositions in Finnish is a continuum, not a strict dividing line (Airila 1938; Hakulinen and Karlsson 1979:154; Vilkuuna 1996:46).

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