

Word order variation within the Lule Sami PP

This paper aims to elucidate the factors underlying variation in the positioning of Lule Sami adpositions and look at how this variation can be accounted for formally within a Minimalist approach. Lule Sami is indigenous to parts of northern Norway and Sweden respectively, and is estimated to have about 650 active speakers. As is the norm for Uralic languages, Lule Sami adpositions tend to be postpositional, which is demonstrated in (1).

- (1) *Gåhppå* *le* *bievde* *nanna*.
cup.NOM.SG be.PRS.3SG table.GEN.SG on
“The cup is on the table.”

Some Lule Sami adpositions are so-called ambipositions, meaning that they can also be used prepositionally (Libert 2006, 1; Spiik 1977, 91–92). One pattern that emerges in the data I have collected on Lule Sami PPs is that the more marked prepositional order can be used when (part of the) adpositional phrase is contrastive, by which I mean that it is picked out from a set of alternatives and contrasted with the other members of that set (Vallduví and Vilkkuna 1998, 83–84). For instance, in (2), the prepositional phrase *badjel jiekke* “above the marsh” has a contrastive interpretation as the speaker is wondering whether she is supposed to relate the bird’s movement to the marsh rather than to other parts of the landscape discussed, such as a forest or a rock. In (3), another speaker is using the adposition *birra* “around” prepositionally to underline that she ran **around** the lake, creating a contrast with someone’s assumption about her only running **to** it.

- (2) *Le* *sån* *háledime* *badjel* *jiekke?*
be.PRS.3SG 3SG.NOM fly.PROG over marsh.GEN.SG
“Is it flying above the MARSH?”
- (3) *Mån* *viehkiv* *birra* *jávre*.
1SG.NOM run.PST.1SG around lake.GEN.SG
“I ran AROUND the lake.”

However, prepositions also appear in contexts which do not seem contrastive. For instance, they seem to occur more generally in certain temporal expressions, such as when telling time on the clock as in (4) or referring to dates or years as in (5). The same seems to be the case when estimating numbers, as demonstrated in (6), where the speaker is answering a question about the number of people living in the village.

- (4) *Boahotá* *skåvllåj* *kvártta* *badjel gávtse*.
come.PRS.3SG school.ALL.SG quarter.NOM.SG over eight.GEN.SG
“She comes to school at quarter past eight.”
- (5) *Ittijj* *boade* *ávddål* *1970*.
NEG.PRT.3SG come.CONNEG before 1970
“It didn’t come before 1970.”
- (6) *Gaskal* *gáktsa-* *ja* *aktsetjuode*.
between eight- and nine.hundred.GEN.SG
“Between eight and nine hundred.”

I will argue that the option of using prepositions in such expressions in non-contrastive contexts is due to the fact that part of the PP is construed as belonging to a conventionalised set of alternatives: we automatically know which other potential alternatives are available in our system for telling time on the clock, years are viewed as part of a timeline containing the set of all years, and numbers also belong to an ordered system of alternatives. Certain spatial expressions might be construed to be members of predefined alternative sets as well. For instance, we often assume that paths and areas consist of different parts, such as a centre and

a periphery or extremities. In (7) and (8), we see spatial expressions referring to a forest's centre and circumference respectively, with the adpositions *gassko* "in the middle" and *birra* "around" being used prepositionally.

- (7) *Sån* *tjuodtju* *gassko* *vuovde*.
3SG.NOM stand.PRS.3SG in.the.middle forest.GEN.SG
"S/he is standing in the middle of the forest."
(8) *Galggá* *birra* *vuovde* *vádtset*.
going.to.PRS.3SG around forest.GEN.SG walk.INF
"S/he is going to walk around the forest".

Thus, the overall pattern seems to be that prepositional word order in Lule Sami can be used either to signal that (part of) the PP is contrasted with other members of a contextually defined alternative set, or to simply indicate that it is part of a predefined alternative set. To account for this patterning, I adopt Simpson and Wu's (2002) proposal of local projections of focus or emphasis which reinforce the semantic content of the functional heads selecting them. I postulate that such a projection might be present within the functional structure of the Lule Sami PP, and that it is movement of the adposition to this projection which results in prepositional word order. The focus/emphatic projection foregrounds the location or relation expressed by the adpositional phrase, yielding contrastive interpretations.

This raises the question of how such an analysis can be extended to non-contrastive contexts. The answer might be found in Simpson and Wu's (2002) account of how local focus/emphatic projections develop in diachrony: they demonstrate that such projections start out as having emphatic value, but that over time, frequent use might lead to the loss of this meaning and bleaching or grammaticalisation of the construction. I suggest that the focus/emphatic projection in the Lule Sami PP is in the process of being bleached, with its original emphatic value having become optional. I hypothesise that expressions construed to be part of a predefined alternative set are particularly often contrasted with other alternatives in the set, resulting in frequent movement of the adpositions in these expressions to the focus/emphatic projection. This has in turn led to a reanalysis where such movement is allowed in PPs containing a member of a predefined alternative set even when no emphasis is intended. The paper will conclude by briefly considering how the analysis adopted might fit with the patternings of prepositions observed in related languages like North Sami, South Sami, and Finnish (i.a. Huumo 2013; Janda et al. 2014; Lehismets 2014; Söder 2017).

Selected references: •Huumo, Tuomas. 2013. 'Many Ways of Moving along a Path: What Distinguishes Prepositional and Postpositional Uses of Finnish Path Adpositions?' *Lingua* 133: 319–35. •Janda, Laura Alexis, Lene Antonsen, and Berit Anne Bals Baal. 2014. 'A Radial Category Profiling Analysis of North Sámi Ambipositions'. In *High Desert Linguistics Society Proceedings*, edited by B. Anible, K. Beers, L. Hirrel, and D. Wager, 91–102. Albuquerque, New Mexico: High Desert Linguistics Society. •Lehismets, Kersten. 2014. 'Bipositions and Motion Events: How Verb Semantics Motivates Prepositional vs. Postpositional Uses of Finnish Path Adpositions'. *Folia Linguistica* 48 (1): 85–118. •Libert, Alan. 2006. *Ambipositions*. Muenchen: Lincom GmbH. •Simpson, Andrew, and Zoe Wu. 2002. 'Agreement, Shells, and Focus'. *Language* 78 (2): 287–313. •Söder, Torbjörn. 2017. 'South Saami Adpositions'. Presented at the 3rd Saami Linguistics Symposium, Albert Ludwig university of Freiburg, October 19. •Spiik, Nils Eric. 1977. *Lulesamisk Grammatik*. Jokkmokk: Sameskolstyrelsen. •Vallduví, Enric, and Maria Vilkuna. 1998. 'On Rheme and Kontrast'. In *The Limits of Syntax*, edited by Peter Culicover and Louise McNally, 79–108. New York: Academic Press.