

## Small nominals in locative phrases<sup>1</sup>

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Many existing analyses of locative cases place these cases in an additional phrasal layer on top of DP (Bayer et al. 2001; McFadden 2004; Asbury 2008; Caha 2009, a.o.). In this paper, I argue that this approach is insufficient, because some locative phrases may lack a DP layer entirely. My argument is based on the properties of locative phrases in Moksha (Finno-Ugric, Uralic). The data come from the author's field notes, elicited in the villages of Lesnoje Tsibajevo and Lesnoje Ardashevo (Republic of Mordovia, Russia) in 2015-2017.

**Basics of Moksha nominal morphosyntax:** Moksha has rich nominal morphology. When a noun phrase appears in a structural case (e.g., genitive on a direct object, or nominative), the nominal suffixes can encode number, possession, case, and definiteness. Compare (1a) and (1b), which represent indefinite and definite nominals, respectively.

(1a) <i>kud-ən'</i>	(1b) <i>kud-t'</i>
house-GEN	house-GEN.DEF.SG
'of a house'	'of the house'

**Locative nominals:** When a nominal occurs in a locative context, only the indefinite form is possible, (2a). As shown in (2a), indefinite forms are underspecified for number. In order to express the definite counterpart of (2a), one has to use a construction with a free-standing locative postposition (2b).

(2a) <i>kud-sə</i>	(2b) <i>kud-t'</i>	<i>esə</i>
house-IN	house-GEN.DEF.SG	in.IN
'in a house / in houses'	'in the house'	

Finally, possessive suffixes occur *after* case in locative contexts (3a), but *before* case in structural cases (3b).

(3a) <i>mon' kud-sə-n</i>	(3b) <i>mon' kud-əz'ə-n'</i>
I.GEN house-IN-POSS.1SG	I.GEN house-1SG.POSS.SG-GEN
'in my house/houses'	'of my house'

The class of free-standing postposition-like elements comprises not only postpositions proper (as in (2b)), but also relational nouns (RNs). RNs have two complementation strategies. First, the complement of an RN can be a full DP in the genitive case which triggers possessive agreement on the RN (4a). Second, the complement can be a bare NP which lacks any affixes and does not trigger agreement (4b).

(4a) <i>morkš-t' lank-sə-nzə</i>	(4b) <i>morkš lank-sə(#-nzə)</i>
table-DEF.SG.GEN on-IN-POSS.3SG	table on-IN-POSS.3SG
'on the table'	'on his table' / *'on a table'

**Analysis.** I adopt the hierarchical model of a DP, with a sequence of nominal projections above the NP. Next, I follow the proposal that not all nominals in a given language have to be of the same size (Cinque 2002; Déchaine & Wiltschko 2002; Lyutikova & Pereltsvaig 2015, Pereltsvaig 2006). I show that:

- complements to locative heads can be smaller than a DP

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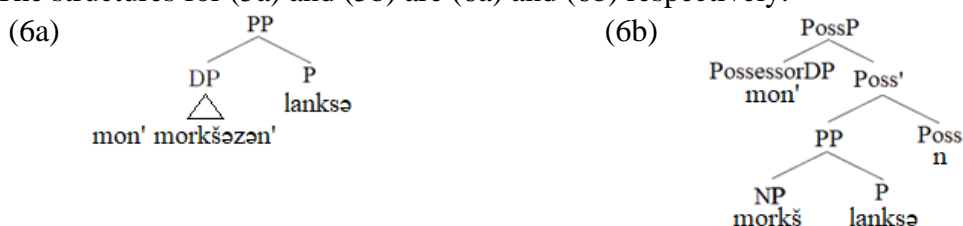
- free-standing locative postposition-like elements and locative cases are different realizations of the category P (in contrast to structural cases); the difference between them is that the latter can *only* take bare NPs

An argument in support of this analysis comes from the placement of possessors in locative phrases.

If a DP complement of P includes a possessor, possessive agreement occurs on the head noun of that DP (5a). If an NP complement has a possessor, that possessor triggers agreement on the P instead (5b). This pattern of agreement indicates that the possessor in the latter case is outside the NP.

- (5a) *mon'* *morkš-əz'ə-n'* *lank-sə* (5b) *mon'* *morkš* *lank-sə-n*  
 I.GEN table-POSS.1SG-GEN on-IN I.GEN table on-IN-POSS.1SG  
 'on my table' 'on my table'

The structures for (5a) and (5b) are (6a) and (6b) respectively.



In contrast to RNs, which can occur with DP complements (5a) and with NP (5b), Moksha has postpositions proper: expressions that are free-standing iff their complement is a DP, (7a). When the complement is an NP, as in (7b), the corresponding element surfaces as a locative case-marker.

- (7a) *d'ed'ε-z'ə-n'* *škaf-ənc* / *\*škaf* *esə*  
 mother-1SG.POSS.SG-GEN cupboard-3SG.POSS.SG-GEN cupboard in.IN  
*ašč-I mazi vaza*  
 be.situated-NPST.3SG nice vase  
 'There is a nice vase on my mother's cupboard'.
- (7b) *d'ed'ε-z'ə-n'* *škaf-sə(-nzə)* *ašč-i* *mazi vaza*  
 mother-1SG.POSS.SG-GEN cupboard-IN-POSS.3SG be.situated-NPST.3SG nice  
 vase  
 'There is a nice vase on my mother's cupboard'.

**Discussion.** I will compare the proposed syntactic analysis with an alternative morphological analysis in terms of Distributed Morphology (DM) (Halle 1990; Halle & Marantz 1993). I will show that a DM analysis requires a complex set of features and vocabulary items to capture the current data. The lack of number and definiteness features in phrases with locative cases could potentially be explained by Underspecification or Impoverishment. However, as I will show in the talk, both lead to overgeneration. In conclusion, locative heads do not always merge with a full DP and can instead merge with smaller nominals. Syntactic theory therefore needs to acknowledge and accommodate these different complementation patterns.

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