

Place Domain Adpositions: A Comparative Study

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Goal: In this talk I will discuss the internal syntax of spatial adpositions used in the place domain in English and Kurdish. I will show that English and Kurdish show distinct realisations of the functional heads involved in a place P projection.

Background and observation: (i) In the literature on place-denoting adpositions, several hypotheses have been proposed for their internal syntactic structure, identifying various functional projections (e.g. Svenonius 2010, Terzi 2010). These analyses are all based on the cartographic approach to phrase structure (see Cinque 1999, Cinque and Rizzi 2008).

Svenonius (2010) decomposes an English P such as *in front of* into three functional heads, each of which has a definite semantic function. These are Loc, AxPart and K. The semantic function of Loc is to map regions into vector spaces. AxPart is a function from the set of points occupied by the Ground object in space to other regions or axes of the Ground such as its top, bottom, front, sides, edges, proximity, etc. (Svenonius 2010). As to the functional head K, Svenonius (2010) assumes that K is the element that returns the set of points occupied by the Ground and he refers to this set of points as eigenplace, following Wunderlich (1991). While I agree with Svenonius (2010) in terms of the functional sequence these heads maintain across languages, I assume slightly different semantic functions for them, Loc and K in particular.

(ii) Based on form, Kurdish adpositions can be said to fall into three classes: simple, compound and discontinuous. The third class, discontinuous adpositions, provides a challenge for Svenonius' (2010) model. This class involves simple or compound Ps followed by DPs which end with a bound morpheme, *-da*, *-əwə* or *-ra*.

(1) lə-naw bax-əkə=da bu-m
at-inside park-DEF=? be-PST.1SG
'I was in the park.'

In (1), *lə* lexicalises Loc and *naw* lexicalizes AxPart, but it is less clear what *-da* could be said to lexicalize in Svenonius (2010). In the literature on Kurdish adpositions, *-da* (along with *-əwə* and *-ra*) has not been analysed satisfactorily (hence the '?' in the gloss).

Proposals: (i) I suggest that elements such as *in/on/at* relate Figures to a specific space with reference to a Ground, and refer to them as Place Relaters, hence the functional head PlaceRel.¹ For instance, *in* relates a Figure to an inner space of the Ground, while *on* relates it to a surface space, and so on. Another function of PlaceRel is introducing a Figure through its Spec into the locative relationship (cf. Svenonius' (2010) little *p*). The specific space to which a Figure is related represents the AxPart, which is suggested by the semantic property of the Place Relater and forms a part-whole relationship with a Ground. Sometimes part of the space is lexicalised such as the case of *inside*, where the exact inner part is not spelled out but part of it is, which is *side*. In Kurdish, the inner space and the surface spaces are lexicalized as in *naw* 'inner side' in *lənaw* 'at/in' and *sər* 'top' in *ləsər* 'on/above'. As to the K element, following Romeu (2013), I assume that K has a possessive function. It just defines the possessive construction or the part-whole relationship that holds between AxPart elements and the Ground. In English, it is lexicalised by *of* and in Kurdish by the ezafe marker *-i*, both of which are used in possessive constructions quite generally.

¹ The terms Figure and Ground are adopted from Talmy (1975). The Figure is the entity whose location is determined, and the Ground is the entity or the location with reference to which a Figure's location is defined.

