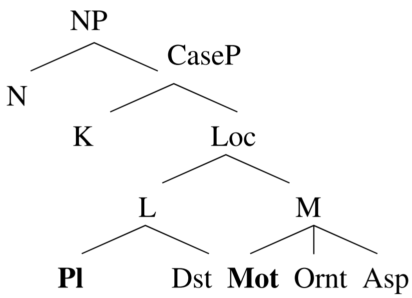
The Internal Structure of Local Case Affixes

Nina Radkevich
University of Connecticut

This paper reports on a survey of 62 languages with complex local case morphology, drawn from 5 language families and several language isolates. The local case morphology of all the languages surveyed conforms, without exceptions, to the template in (1), as detailed below. This template shares with recent analyses of spatial PPs (Koopman 2000, den Dikken 2006, Svenonius to appear) the view that there is more structure than a simple locative/directional division (as in Kracht 2001). However, it differs from previous accounts, on the one hand, in rejecting the view that the locative is a subset of the directional structure, and, on the other hand, in positing a more articulated geometry, rather than a uniformly left/-right branching structure.

(1)



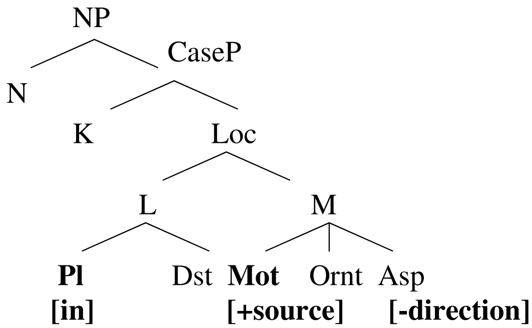
The template in (1) reflects linear order as well as constituency relations among the morphemes, which are uniform across all the languages covered in this study. In (1) K stands for case (genitive, ergative, etc) on the basis of which local cases are built; Place hosts morphemes which mean spatial relations {in, on, at}, Distal hosts affixes encoding proximity, Motion hosts elements denoting the presence of motion (ablative and allative cases) or absence of motion (essive case), Orientation is designated for affixes which mean 'towards/away' and 'upward/downward, and, finally, Aspect hosts morphemes that specify what kind of movement is involved, i.e. whether the movement reaches its goal or not, whether the movement has any direction or a direction is unspecified. The examples from Akhvakh (2a) and Tsez (2b) illustrate forms with more than two nodes simultaneously expressed.

(2) a. ixva- ł- u- ne 'through butter' (translative) b. besuri-x- āz- ay 'from fish over there'
butter-in-abl- transl. fish- at-dist-abl.

In addition to the linear order and inventory of nodes, I suggest dividing all spatial morphemes into two groups –affixes denoting location itself (L) and affixes denoting motion to that location and its characteristics (M) (cf. Kracht 2001). Place and Distal belong to L, whereas Motion, Orientation, and Aspect constitute M. However, not all nodes have equal status: Pl and Mot are 'heads' which contribute the core meaning to the projections they belong to (L and M respectively), whereas other nodes under L and M provide additional information about Pl and M. Furthermore, each terminal node is characterized by a set of features that determines the correct insertion of a spatial morpheme. For example, for the cases in (2a), the relevant features are [in] for Pl, [+source] for Mot, and [-direction] for Asp. (3) illustrates how the systems works within the Distributed Morphology framework –(3a) is an example of rules of insertion, while (3b) shows where features belong in the structure argued for in this paper.

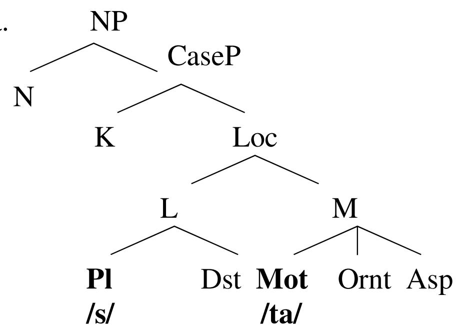
(3) a. /ł/ <=> [in]
/u/ < = > [+source]
/ne/ < = > [-direction]

b.

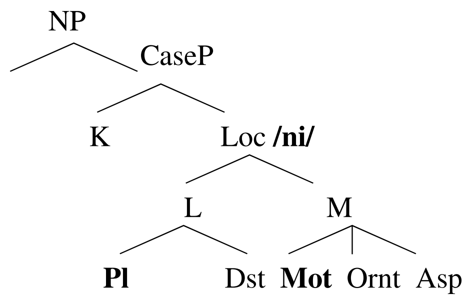


Evidence for the complex geometry in (1) comes from portmanteau morphemes and implicational universals. Estonian has two series of local cases in which two components can be singled out –the first one denotes Pl and the second one denotes Mot. (4a) illustrates the decomposition of Estonian elative case. However, the morphological exponent of the terminative case which expresses Pl, Mot, and Asp nodes cannot be further segmented, as shown in (4b). As a modification to Distributed Morphology, I propose a 'portmanteau' principle according to which a case exponent lexicalizes the minimal node dominating the features the exponent expresses (cf. 'Fusion' in canonical DM).

(4) a.



b.



The geometry in (1) along with the principle of case lexicalization correctly predict attested and unattested portmanteau patterns –there are languages lexicalizing Pl, Mot, and Asp as a single portmanteau exponent (as just illustrated), but there are no languages lexicalizing Pl and Asp nodes as a single exponent to the exclusion of the Mot exponent (or Pl and Mot vs. Asp).

The second argument for the geometry in (1) comes from implicational universals. L and M dominate nodes the status of which is different –Pl is the head node under L whereas Mot is the head node under M. While not all languages have all the nodes, there is an implication that the presence of the non-head daughter node of L (Dst) entails the presence of Pl and presence of non-head daughter nodes of M (Asp/Ornt) implies presence of Mot.

References: Den Dikken, Marcel. (2006). On the functional structure of locative and directional PPs. Ms., CUNY. Koopman, Hilda. (2000). Prepositions, postpositions, circumpositions and particles: The structure of Dutch PPs. Kracht, Marcus. (2001). On the semantics of locatives. *Language and Philosophy 25: 157-232*. Svenonius, Peter. (to appear). Spatial P in English. In *The Cartography of Syntactic Structures, vol. 6.*