Hungarian prepositions: deriving variation in a postpositional language
Veronika Hegedős and Éva Dékány
Research Institute for Linguistics, Hungarian Academy of Sciences

Case-assigning (naked) Ps

Naked P: oblique complement
separable from complement
(1) a patak-on til
the river-step beyond
‘beyond the river’

Dressed P: unmarked complement
strictly postpositional
(2) a patak mellett
the river next to
‘next to the river’

Observations about naked Ps (Maráczy 1986; 1989)

• Complementation:
  Oblique complement
  Complement not obligatory
(3) a fal-on a
the wall-step through
‘through the wall’

• Agreement
  No agreement with the complement
(5) puf-um-at *(ám)
Sup-1SG through-SM 1SG
‘through me’

• Word order effects within the PP
  P > oblique
(7) a fal-en
through the wall

• Separability in the clause
  Wh-movement with P-stranding
(9) Mi-n nent at?
what-SUP go PSTR-3SG through?
‘What did he go through?’

Variation 1: positions in the clause

Can all naked Ps be separated from their complement?

Particle use
P-stranding
(11) János át-ment a
John through-went the bridge
‘John crossed the bridge’

(12) Mi-n ment át János?
what-SUP went through John
‘Did John cross?’

(13) A pest ah al van a vonal-on.
the dog under be-SUP the line-SUP
‘The dog is under the line.’

Only about half of the naked Ps can be separated from their complement.
There is no difference bw. the two kinds of separability: those that can be verbal particles can also be P-stranded.

Variation 2: PP-internal order

Can all naked Ps be prepositional?

Preposition
(15) a szél-en át
the wind-step through
‘through the wind’

(16) a szél-en át
through the wind-step
‘through the wind’

(17) a vonal-on alsó
the line-SUP below
‘below the line’

Only few naked Ps can be prepositional. Prepositional Ps are a subset of separable Ps.

Summary: variation 1 and variation 2

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>P meaning</th>
<th>prepositional use particle use</th>
<th>P-stranding</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>át</td>
<td>through, across, via</td>
<td>yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>közel</td>
<td>close to</td>
<td>yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>szembe</td>
<td>opposite at</td>
<td>yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>vőlgy</td>
<td>(along) to the end of</td>
<td>yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>keresztul</td>
<td>through, across, via</td>
<td>yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>föld</td>
<td>beyond</td>
<td>yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>belül</td>
<td>inside of</td>
<td>yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>együtt</td>
<td>together</td>
<td>yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>szembe</td>
<td>opposite at</td>
<td>no</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>szembe</td>
<td>opposite at</td>
<td>no</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>alsó</td>
<td>below</td>
<td>no</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>föld</td>
<td>over</td>
<td>no</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>keresztul</td>
<td>through, across, via</td>
<td>no</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>föld</td>
<td>beyond</td>
<td>no</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>keresztul</td>
<td>inside of</td>
<td>no</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>föld</td>
<td>outside, beside</td>
<td>no</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>föld</td>
<td>beyond</td>
<td>no</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>keresztul</td>
<td>outside, beside</td>
<td>no</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>föld</td>
<td>beyond</td>
<td>no</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>keresztul</td>
<td>opposite at</td>
<td>no</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>alsó</td>
<td>opposite at</td>
<td>no</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

There is an almost complete correlation between a P having a prepositional order and being able to be separated from its complement. There is no significant difference bw. the two kinds of separability.

Proposal

P has a fine-grained extended structure (see Cinque 2010 and references cited therein).

(19) merging naked P
(20) deriving postpositional naked P

The prepositional order and the separability from the complement correlate because both involve the P in a higher position in the extended PP.

(21) Figure in spec pP
(22) Position moves to p

The complement of a can move, the complement of Place/Path cannot spec. CP pP is the PP-internal escape hatch (Koopman 2000, Dikken 2010, Koopman 2010)

(23) Configuration for separation

Those naked Ps that don’t have a prepositional use don’t move to p, and PlaceP movement to the escape hatch doesn’t separate the P from the complement. This derives that the prepositional use and separability correlate.

Movement to the functional p head appears to be a lexically slisynorctatic property. We argue that for those naked Ps that can be prepositional, a grammaticalization process has begun.

Variation 3: zero complement

Can all naked Ps be intransitive?

Overt complement
Zero complement
(24) A bolt semben van az iskolával.
the store opposite bo-SUP the school-SUP
‘The store is opposite the school.’

(25) A bolt semben van.
the store opposite bo-SUP
‘The store is there.’

Many but not all naked Ps can be used with a zero complement.

Analysis

We argue that this is not an intransitive use. In (25) the position of the Figure is interpreted with respect to the spatial center of deixis of the discourse, that is, here/there. In the absence of an overt complement, the complement is a phonologically null here/there (cf. Kayne 2004, Svenonius 2010).

(26) A bolt iskoláin innen van.
the store the school-SUP this-SUP bo-SUP
‘The store is this side of the school.’

(27) A bolt innen van.
the store this side bo-SUP
‘The store is on this side.’

References


Acknowledgements

This research was funded by the Hungarian Scientific Research Fund (OTKA) under grant No. 100804 (CGR: Hungarian).