

Grammaticalization of Adpositions: The case of Korean, Spanish, and Thai

1. Introduction

- All languages are thought to have grammatical devices to encode the relationship among nominal constituents in a sentence, be they structural (such as word order) or morphological (such as inflection) or lexical (such as adpositions).
- This paper explores the manifestations and emergence of adpositions from three different language types, i.e., agglutinating, inflectional, and isolating languages, as represented by Korean, Spanish, and Thai, respectively.

2. Cases and Adpositions

- Case is “a system of marking dependent nouns for the type of relationship they bear to their heads” (Blake 2004: 1).
- Case may be realized by means of inflection, morphological case markers, word order, adpositions, among others.
- Case is among the primitive notions in linguistics.
- The system of case-marking shows considerable variation across languages.
 - a. No morphological marking for grammatical case: Thai, Chinese...
 - b. Extensive case systems: Sanskrit, Ancient Greek, Latin, Russian...
- Even within a specific language, the system exhibits multiple layers of conceptual domains. e.g. even in languages where grammatical cases are not morphologically marked, there are diverse case-related adpositional markers with various semantic specifications.
 - (1) 3 domains in case and case-related systems (cf. Lehmann 2004: 1845-1851; Blake 2004, Chs 2 & 3)
 - a. **Grammatical case** (= core case; nuclear case; non-local case): typically indicates the role of a syntactic argument in the sentence (Sylak-Glassman et al. 2015: 83).
e.g. nominative, accusative, dative, genitive, absolutive, ergative
 - b. **Local case**: designates the relationship of two entities in terms of relative positions.
e.g. ablative (from), adessive (on), adelative (from), allative (to), delative (off), destinative (to), illative (into), inessive (inside), locative (at, in), mediative (between), perlative (through), postessive (behind), prolative (along), subessive (under), superessive (above), terminative (up to)
 - c. (Non-local) **Case**: marks the general relationship of the argument with respect to the referenced event.
e.g. benefactive (for), comitative (with), directional (to), equative (like), instrumental (with), motivative (by), partitive (of), referentive (about), vocative

3. Simple vs. Complex Adpositions

- Simple adpositions: composition is formally simple, i.e., those that involve monolexemic or monomorphemic forms.
- Complex adpositions: those that involve multi-lexemic or multi-morphemic forms.

(2) Korean (Narrog & Rhee 2013)

- a. Simple (=primary) postpositions: *-ey/lo/kkaci* (allative), *-wa/kwa/hako* (comitative), *-pwuthe/eyse* (ablative), *-lo* (instrumental), *-ey/lo* (causative), *-wa/kwa/ey/hako/hamye* (enumerative), *-pota* (comparative), *-mankhum/chelem/kathi* (similiative)...
- b. Complex (=secondary) postpositions: *-ul hyanghay* (aditive, directional), *-ey aphse* (antessive), *-ul kalocille* (perlative), *-ul twuko/-ul nohko* (topic)...

(3) Spanish

- a. Simple (=primary) prepositions: *a* 'to', *en* 'in', *de* 'of', *por* 'by, for', *para* 'for', *entre* 'among', *desde* 'from', *sin* 'without', *con* 'with', *hacia* 'to, toward', *hasta* 'till', *bajo* 'from (up)', *sobre* 'about, on', *que* 'than', *excepto* 'without', *salvo* 'except'...
- b. Complex (=secondary) prepositions: *cerca de* 'near to', *junto a* 'together with', *a menos de* 'without, except for', *a causa de* 'because of', *en virtud de* 'because of', *debido a* 'because of', *por razón de* 'because of', *por parte de* 'because of', *a fuerza de* 'because of', *a base de* 'because of', *acerca de* 'with regard to', *en cuanto a* 'with regard to', *con/en referencia a* 'with reference to', *con relación a* 'in relation with', *en relación con* 'in relation with', *relacionado con* 'related to', *en torno a* 'with regard to', *en lo tocante a* 'with regard to'...

(4) Thai

- a. Simple (=primary) prepositions: *hây* (<give) 'to', *kàæ* (<to) 'to'; *khǝŋ, hææŋ* 'of'; *hây* (< give) 'for'; *kâp* (<with) 'with'; *càak* (< leave) 'from'; *khâaŋ* (< side, flank), *yaŋ* (<to), *sùu* (<move to), *thaŋ* (<road, way) 'to'...
- b. Complex (=secondary) prepositions: *dooy klây kâp* (<by near to), *tít kâp* (<attached with) 'near'; *nûuaŋ càak* (<caused by, related from) 'because of'...

(5) English

- a. Simple (=primary) preposition: *of, in, to, for, at, on, for, by*...
- b. Complex (=secondary) preposition: *according to, ahead of, as for, away from, as far as, as part of, at odds with, by means of, by virtue of, by way of, for want of, in accordance with, in common with, in favor of, in relation to, in view of, on behalf of, with regard to*...

- Complex adpositions tend to encode more fine-grained configurational notions as compared to simple adpositions, which may be of universal validity (cf. Blake 2004: 10).

4. Grammatical Categories in Cognition

- A survey of adpositions reveals certain relationship between grammatical categories and human cognition.
- Even though adpositions border on, and often blend into, case markers, thus creating fuzzy functional boundaries, it is observed that languages seem to have a relatively limited set of concepts that they choose to encode with adpositions.

- This suggests that the types of inter-nominal relations are tied to the commonality in human cognition and conceptualization.
 - Grammatical cases, such as nominative, accusative, genitive, etc., tend to be unmarked (e.g. Spanish nominative, accusative; Thai nominative, accusative, etc.) or minimally marked (e.g. Spanish dative, Korean nominative, genitive, accusative, dative, etc.).
 - Since these notions seem to be fundamental in human conceptualization of events or states of affairs denoted by a clause as they are closely related to the participants of an event, they seem to be grammatical primitives, regardless of their linguistic realization patterns on the level of surface structure.
 - If grammatical case is more closely tied to the grammatical structure than adposition, the event-related notions are expected to surface as case rather than adposition.
 - Case or non-local case, as opposed to local case, tends to mark diverse relationship in general rather than local relations.
 - The members in this category seem to make reference to such binary distinctions as presence/absence, proximity/distance, association/dissociation, similarity/dissimilarity, or to such relationship as accompaniment, cause, benefit, etc. These seem to form primary cognitive categories as well.
 - Local case marks the local/positional relationship between two or more referenced entities. Local relationship makes reference to axial relationship such as front-back, top-down, left-right, in-out, etc. or to direction, source, path, destination, etc. These seem to be common notions in conceptualization of positionality of entities occupying space.
 - However, it is noteworthy that there are a large number of complex adpositions whose meaning still bears the lexical meanings of the participating formants.
- (6) Adversative complex adpositions
- a. Korean: *-eyto pwulkwuhako, -ey panhay...*
 - b. Spanish: *a fuerza de, a pesar de, contrario a*
 - c. Thai: *máe, máe jà mee, ...*
 - d. English: *in spite of, contrary to, in face of, up against...*
- (7) Substitutive complex adpositions
- a. Korean: *(-uy) taysin(ey)*
 - b. Spanish: *en vez de, en lugar de*
 - c. Thai: *taen tée, nai naam kǒng*
 - d. English: *instead of, on behalf of, in lieu of...*

5. Typological Issues

- Despite commonalities across languages, there exist clear differences depending on their typological characteristics.
- Clearly, languages exhibit preference of one over the other in terms of prepositional vs. postpositional systems.
- Furthermore, isolating languages, such as Thai (and Chinese), make it very difficult to delineate the prepositions from their lexical uses, since they tend to retain syntactic and semantic characteristics throughout their development.

[Thai situation: Categorical Fluidity]

(8) Categorical double plays (preposition & verb) in Thai

- a. *aw* 'take' > with, take
- b. *câak* 'leave' > from, leave
- c. *hây* 'give' > for, give
- d. *taam* 'follow' > along, follow

(9) Categorical double plays (preposition & noun) in Thai

- a. *khâan* 'side' > by, side
- b. *klaan* 'middle' > in the middle of, middle
- c. *lân* 'back of body' > behind, back of body
- d. *nâa* 'face' > in front of, face
- e. *nay* 'inside' > in, inside
- f. *thaan* 'passage' > by way of, passage
- g. *thîi* 'place' > at, place
- h. *thêw* 'line' > around, line

[Korean situation]

(10) From nominal sources

Noun₁ + (**Genitive**) + Noun₂ + **Case Particle** (> Postpositional Particles)

yep 'side, loin': *-uy-yep-ey* [GEN-side-LOC] > *-(uy)-yep-ey* 'beside' (Postposition)

san-(uy) _____ yep-ey hoswu-ka iss-ta (산(의) 옆에 호수가 있다.)

mountain-GEN side-LOC lake-NOM exist-DEC

-beside (Postposition)

'There is a lake beside the mountain.'

Native: *-(uy)twiey, -(uy)alay(ey), -(uy)mithey, -haey, -kkaci, -(uy)aphey, -saiey, thumey, -(uy)aney, -(uy)sokey, -(uy)oyncchokey, -kawuntey, -pakkey, -oyey, -kkeyse, -kkey, -eykey, -talylo, -hanthey, -ttaymwuney, -paluncchokey, -oluncchokey, -ppwun, -(uy)kyethey, -(uy)yephey, ...*

Sino-Korean: *-hwuey, -ceney, -kaney, -nayey, -cwungey, -sangey, -(uy)tekwuney, ...*

(11) From verbal sources

(i) Noun + (**Case Particle**) + **Verb** + **Non-Finite Marker** (> Postpositional Particles)

pwuth- 'adhere' > *-pwuthe* 'from' (ABL)

achim-(ulo) pwuth-e pi-ka o-n-ta (아침(으로)부터 비가 온다.)

morning-DIR adhere-NF rain-NOM come-PRES-DEC

-from (ABLATIVE)

'It's been raining since this morning.'

(ii) Noun + **Copula** + **Connective** (> Postpositional Particles / Connectives)

-i-na 'be-CONN' > *-ina* (Postposition)

pap-i-na mek-ca (밥이나 먹자.)

meal-be-CONN eat-HORT

-Postposition (Selective; Tepid choice)

'Let's eat.'

(iii) Verb₁ + **Connective** + **Light Verb** + **Connective** (> Postpositional Particles / Connectives)

ha-ko [do-CONN] > *-hako* 'with' (Postposition)

cwumal-ey aitul-ha-ko nol-ass-ta (주말에 아이들하고 놀았다.)

weekend-LOC children-do-CONN play-PST-DEC

-with (Postposition)

'(I) played with my children during the weekend.'

Native: *-tele, -(wa)tepwule, -pwuthe, -(i)na, -(i)ken(a)-, -(i)tun(ci), -(i)ya, -(i)yamallo, -(i)lato, -(i)laya, -(i)llang, -(i)ye, -(i)ncuk(sun), -wakathi, -kathi, -taylo, -kenne, -mace, -(ey)se, -(i)se, -lose, -ttala, -(ul/ey)ttala, -cocha, -lococha, -neme, -(ul)nohko, -(ul)twuko, -chiko, -(i)nama, -hako, -(un)khenyeng, -pota, -(ul)poko, -pole, -malko, -(ul)kac(i)ko, -losse...*

Sino-Korean: *-ulkyemhay, -eypihay(e), -ulkyekhay, -eytayhay, -eykwanhay, -eymyenhay, -ulkihay, -ul/lohyanghay, -eypanhay, -ulceyhako, -eyhanhay, -(ul)wihay, -eyinhay, -loinhay,...*

- In grammatical case, Korean has a particularly large number of forms for dative:
-poko, -tele, -kkey, -eykey, -hanthey, -eytayko...
 cf. SPN *a* 'to', THAI: *hây, kàæ, hây-kàæ*

[Spanish situation]

- Primary prepositions (small inventory): *en, a, de, por, con, sin, como, sobre*, etc.
- Complex prepositions (large inventory from a limited set of source patterns):

(12) a. **Prep + Noun + Prep Pattern:**

a menos de, a causa de, en virtud de, por causa de, port parte de, por razón de, a fuerza de, a base de, a excepción de, con respecto a, en cuanto a, con referencia a, en referencia a, con relación a, en relación con, en torno a, acerca de, en dirección a, con rumbo a, a partir de, alrededor de, delante de, enfrente de, acerca de, debajo de, con destino a, dentro de, a través de, después de, detrás de, por medio de, debajo de, encima de, en torno a, a diferencia de, a pesar de, enfrente de, aparte de, en base a, en lugar de, en caso de, a favor de, a cargo de...

b. **Prep + Art + Noun + Prep Pattern:**

al lado de, a lo largo de, a la izquierda de, a la derecha de, alrededor de, al norte de, al sur de...

c. **Participle + Prep Pattern:**

debido a, referente a, tocante a, relacionado con, junto a, destinado de, diferente de, además de, aparte de...

d. **Noun + Prep Pattern:**

hacia, antes de, frente a, fuera de, frente a, contrario a

- Spanish has a particularly large number of forms for direction/destination marking:
hacia, a, destinado a, con destino a, para...
 KOR: *-lo, -lo/ulhyanghay*
 THAI: *khâaŋ, sùu, yaŋ*
- Spanish has a particularly large number of forms for marking motivative (causality):
por, a causa de, en virtue de, por causa de, por parte de, por razón de, debido a, a fuerza de, a base de...
 KOR: *-ey, -ttaymwuney, -eyuyhay, -loinhay*
 THAI: *nuúuaŋ càak, nuúuaŋ maa càak*
- Spanish has a particularly large number of forms for marking referentive:
sobre, acerca de, referente a, (con) respecto a, tocante a, en cuanto a, con/en referencia a, con relación a, en relación con, relacionado con, en torno a
 KOR: *-eytayhay, -eykwanhay*
 THAI: *kiaw kàp, thuŋ*

6. Grammaticalization Sources

- Each language has notable characteristics about the grammaticalization sources.
- All of the languages have nouns and verbs as the major sources.
- Korean and Thai have Chinese-derived sources.
- The three languages show the body-part to adposition development:

- (13) Korean: *-yephey*, *-mithey*, *-kyethey*, *-aney*, *-twiey*...
yeph (< flank), *kyeth* (< flank), *an* (< heart), *mith* (< anus, buttocks), *twi* (anus)
- Spanish: *enfrente a*, *frente a*, *hacia*, *a la izquierda de*, *a la derecha de*
enfrente (< forehead), *hacia* (< face), *izquierda* (< left), *derecho* (< right)
- Thai: *lǎŋ* (< back), *nâa* (< face), *khâaŋ* (< flank),

- Korean and Thai have cardinal direction model in the sources.

- (14) Korean: South-orientation model (very rare crosslinguistically)
aph: < *alp/aph* 'south' (*Sincungyuhap* 1576)
twi: < *twi* 'north' (*Sincungyuhap* 1576, *Hwunmongcaho* 1527)
- Thai: East-orientation model (very common: Brown 1983, Heine 1997)
nuŋua 'on' (< north)
tây 'below' (< south)

[Korean]

- (15) Korean local and non-local case (complex) postpositions

A: Nominal

-(uy)kawuntey(ey); *-kkaci*, *-(uy)kyethey*, *-(wa)hamkkey*, *-hanthey(se/lo)*, *-tongan*,
-(uy)twiey, *-ttaymwuney*, *-mithey(se)*, *-mithulo*, *-pakkey(se)*, *-pakkulo*, *-saiey*, *-sayey*,
-sailo, *-alay(se)*, *-alaylo*, *-aney(se)*, *-anulo*, *-aphey*, *-yephey*, *-olunccokey*, *-oynccokey*,
-wiew(se), *-wilo*, *-ccumey*, *-kkeyse*...

B: Verbal

-kakkai, *-(ul)kalocille*, *-(ul)kacko*, *-kathi*, *-kesulle*, *-kkeyse*, *-neme*, *-eytaka*, *-tele*,
-taylo, *-tayko*, *-(wa)tepwule*, *-(ul)ttala*, *-malko*, *-poko*, *-pwuthe*, *-eyaphse*, *-epsi*, *-ey ie*,
-eyse, *-hako*...

C: Sino-Korean

-kaney, *-(uy)kunchey*, *-ul kihay*, *-sangey*, *-ceney*, *-cwungey*, *-thonghay*,
-(ul/lo)hyanghay, *-hwuey*, *-wihaye/-wihay*, *-ey yhay*, *-loinhay*, *-(ul)ceyhako*,
-(ul)ceyoyhako, *-chelem*, *-(ey)cwunhay*...

- (16) Spanish local and non-local case (complex) prepositions

A. Nominal:

acerca de (< circle) 'about, next to', *en torno a* (< dividers) 'about, around', *encima de*
(< top) 'above', *por medio de* (< middle) 'along, by way of', *vía* (< way, go) 'along, by
way of', *alrededor de* (< to perimeter) 'around, near', *enfrente de / frente a* (< front,
forehead) 'before', *debajo de* (< low, below, fat) 'below, under', *abajo / debajo de / bajo*
(< low, below, fat) 'down', *a lado de* (< side) 'beside', *fuera de* (< out of doors, outside)
'from, out of, outside', *dentro* (< inside) 'in, into', *a la izquierda de* (< left) 'left of',
acerca de (< circle) 'near', *por encima de* (< top) 'over', *a la derecha de* (< straight)
'right of', *hacia* (< face toward) 'to, towards, against', *en dirección a* (< aiming) 'to,
towards', *con rumbo a* (< room, space) 'to, towards', *sin* (< outside) 'without', *a causa
de* (< cause) 'because of', *en virtud de* (< virtue, strength, manliness) 'because of', *por
parte de* (< part) 'because of', *por razón de* (< reason) 'because of', *a base de* (< base,
pedestal) 'because of'...

B. Verbal:

referente a (< carry back) 'about', (*con*) *respecto a* (< look back) 'about', *tocante a* (< strike) 'about', *con/en referencia a* (< tell, carry back) 'about', *con relación a / en relación con / relacionado con* (< carry back) 'about', *a través de* (< turn across) 'across, through', *durante* (< endure) 'during', *a partir de* (< divide) 'from', *destinado a / con destino a* (< determine) 'to, towards', *excepto* (< take out) 'without', *debido a* (< owe) 'because of', *al revés* (< turn back) 'against', *en lo tocante a* (< touch) 'against'...

C. Adverbial/Adjectival/Prepositional...

sobre (< over) 'about', *en cuanto a* (< how great) 'about', *por* (< for, before, forward) 'for, by, along, by way of', *antes de* (< before) 'before', *delante de* (< before) 'before', *junto a* (< joined) 'beside', *a lo largo de* (< abundant, large) 'beside', *desde* (< from from) 'from', *después de* (< from after) 'from', *detrás de* (< from after) 'from', *como* (< how) 'like', *para* (< before) 'for, to, towards', *con* (< near) 'with', *a menos de* (< less, smaller) 'without', *salvo* (< safe, healthy) 'without', *a fuerza de* (< strong) 'because of', *atrás* (< toward after) 'against'...

- Spanish has a number of cases where verbs of movement are the sources:

(17) 'about': *referente a* (< carry back), *con/en referencia a* (< carry back), *con relación a* (carry back), *en relación con* (< carry back), *relacionado con* (< carry back)
'across': *a través de* (< turn across)
'along': *vía* (< go)
'without': *excepto* (< take out)
'against': *al revés* (< turn back)

(18) Thai local and non-local case (complex) postpositions

A. Nominal

khâaŋ (<side) 'next to', *thææw* (<line) 'near', *khǝŋ* (<property) 'of', *hææŋ* (<place) 'of', *rǝp* (<circumference) 'near', *thaŋ* (<way) 'toward', *nâa* (<face) 'in front of', *lǝŋ* (<back of body) 'behind', *nay* (<interior) 'inside', *nǝk* (<exterior) 'outside', *rǝ-waaŋ* (<interval) 'between', *thi* (<ground) 'at', *nǝua* (<north) 'on', *tāay* (<south) 'below', *bon* (<top) 'on', *lǝŋ* (<bottom) 'below', *klaŋ* (<middle) 'in, between', *sāay* (<left) 'on the left of', *khwāa* (<right) 'on the right of', *chên* (<kind) 'like', *tron* (<correctness) 'exactly at'...

B. Verbal

tǝ (<connect) 'at, per', *yók wén* (<exclude) 'except for', *hây* (<give) 'to, for', *sǝmràp* (<suit, fit) 'for', *thâw* (<be same) 'as many as', *taam* (<follow) 'according to', *?aw* (<take) 'with', *càak* (<leave) 'from', *thǝŋ* (<arrive) 'to, until, about', *pen* (<be) '(change) into, as', *sùu* (<go for) 'to', *kâw* (<enter) 'into', *ǝk* (<exit) 'out of', *khǝn* (<ascend) 'to (upward)', *lon* (<descend) 'to (downward)', *khâam* (<cross) 'across', *phâan* (<pass by) 'through', *tálú* (<pierce) 'through', *kæŋ* (<go over) 'over', *con* (<arrive) 'to, till', *kwâa* (<pass) 'than', *tâŋ* (<stop) 'as much as', *yan* (<remain) 'toward', *ráy* (<do not exist) 'without', *prâasacàak* (<do not exist) 'without'...

C. Adjectival/Adverbial

klây (<adj. close) 'near', *mǝwan* (<adj. same) 'like', *khláay* (<adj. similar) 'like, similar to', *dūay* (<adv. also) 'with (instrumental)', *kǝn* (<adv. previously) 'before', *chàphǝ* (<adv. specifically) 'only', *khææ* (<adv. specifically) 'only, as little as'...

D. Complex

nǝwan(maa)càak (<connect-come-leave) 'due to', *kiaw kâp* (<be.caught-with) 'about, regarding', *tǝ nâa* (<connect-face) 'in front of', *khâaŋ+Prep* (<side-place+Prep) 'Prep

(direction)', *con thũŋ* (<arrive-arrive) 'to, until', *con krà-thâng* (<arrive-hit) 'to, until, even up until', *mææ tææ* (even.if-but) 'even', *troŋ khâam* (<correctness-cross) 'facing, opposite to', *tà-lɔ̀t con* (always-arrive) 'up until', *nɔ̀k(nũwa)càak* (exterior-north-leave) 'except for, in addition to'...

7. Summary & Conclusion

- Drawing upon the data from three different languages, Korean, Spanish, and Thai, this paper analyzed the case and adpositional systems.
- It is argued that there are commonalities in terms of the type of the notions signaled by case and adpositions, largely due to the commonalities of human cognition.
- It also argued that there are differences in their developmental processes and in their surface manifestations, especially due to their typological differences.
- For a better understanding of the emergence of adpositions, a more detailed investigation of the diachronic trajectories of the complex adpositions is called for.

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