Making Space: A Sub-categorial Analysis of Afrikaans Adpositions
40 minute talk

1. Synopsis: This talk draws on key observations about the composition of complex Afrikaans adpositions, arguing for an articulated word-internal structure underlying both complex and simplex spatial adpositions. In particular, complex adpositions provide evidence for head movement in the “P domain” of syntax, on the basis of which locative adpositions are argued to possess the internal structure [P_{LOC} [AXPART]], and directional adpositions [P_{DIR} [P_{LOC} [AXPART]]]. The analysis provides support for the view that category (in this case, “P”) should not be considered a theoretical primitive, but rather a composite syntactic derivative (cf. e.g. Borer 2005; Wiltschko 2015).

2. An articulated P domain: That various P elements (= morpho-phonological forms associated with the category P) can co-occur suggests they saturate distinct syntactic positions, thus that they belong to different so-called sub-categories in the “P domain” of syntax (cf. (1), where AXPART = Axial Part (cf. Svenonius 2006 et seq); P_{LOC} = Locative Adposition; P_{DIR} = Directional Adposition; V-PRT = Verbal Particle, for which the scope of this talk does not allow any discussion). As also reflected in the literature (cf. i.a. Kracht 2002; Van Riemsdijk & Huybregts 2002; Svenonius; Zwarts 2008), I argue that this domain is organised AXPART<P_{LOC}<P_{DIR}. The data in (2) show that individual P elements can (and routinely do) express more than one of the distinct functions identified in (1). Afrikaans P elements fall into five classes A-E, based on this “functional range potential” (FRaP; cf. (3)). E.g. the fact that teen is shown in (2) to have the FRaP of all four “sub-categories” of the P domain identifies it as a member of class E.

(1) (a) …dat die man bo_{AXPART} op_{PLOC} die berg rond_{V-PRT} hardloop.
that the man top on the mountain round runs
“…that the man is running round on top of the mountain”
(b) …dat die man buite_{AXPART} om_{PDIR} die huis verby_{V-PRT} ry.
that the man outside around the house past drives
“…that the man is driving round past the outside of the house”
(2) (a) …dat die yskas teen_{AXPART} aan die muur staan
that the fridge against on the wall stands
“…that the fridge is against the wall”
(b) …dat die yskas teen_{PLOC} staan
that the fridge against the wall stands
“…that the fridge is against the wall”
(c) …dat Jan die bal teen_{PDIR} staan
die muur gooi
that Jan the ball against the wall throws
“…that Jan is throwing the ball against the wall”
(d) …dat Jan die nuwe taalbeleid teen_{V-PRT} staan
die yskas teen_{PDIR}
die muur staan
that Jan the new language-policy against stands
“…that Jan is resisting the new language policy”
(3) Class A: FRaP = axial part
Class B: FRaP = axial part and location
Class C: FRaP = direction and V-particle
Class D: FRaP = location, direction, and V-particle
Class E: FRaP = axial part, location, direction, and V-particle

3. Complex Ps are argued in this talk to be formed in syntax and shown to obey Williams' (1981) Right-hand Head Rule stating that the rightmost element supplies the categorial properties. In other words, complex Ps are categorially adpositions of which the rightmost
element is always an adposition from Class C or D, and the leftmost element is always an axial part from Class A, B or E. Even the overall functional meaning of the complex P as a whole (i.e. whether locative or directional) is determined by the functional meaning of the rightmost element: Complex Ps of which the rightmost element is from Class C (i.e. able only to express direction; unable to express location, e.g. deur, na, om in (4a)) are always directional as a whole; those of which the rightmost element is from Class D (i.e. able to express both location and direction, e.g. in, op, by in (4b)) are either locative or direction, or even ambiguous as a whole.

(4) (a) Morphologically final element belongs to Class C or D
(i) *tussendeur* between-through
“through between” = DIRECTIONAL
(ii) *onderdeur* under-through
“through underneath” = DIRECTIONAL
(iii) *agterna* back-after
“after” = DIRECTIONAL
(iv) *rondom* round-around
“around” = DIRECTIONAL

(b) Morphologically final element belongs to Class E
(i) *binne-in* inside-in
“inside/to inside” = AMBIGUOUS
(ii) *agteraan* back-on
“attached to the back” = LOCATIVE
(iii) *bo-op* top-on
“on top/to on top” = AMBIGUOUS
(iv) *na by* near-at
“near” = LOCATIVE

4. Analysis: If complex head formation is modelled as head-movement, locative complex adpositions provide evidence for *AXPART-to-PLOC* head-movement and directional complex adpositions for *AXPART-to-PLOC-to-PDIR* head-movement. This analysis of complex Ps gives important insight to analysing simplex Ps: in an appropriately myopic system, *AXPART-to-PLOC-to-PDIR* movement occurs even if these nodes are not expressed by separate exponents. Thus, in a system where all syntactic nodes must gain morphological expression, simplex locative adpositions express [PLOC [AXPART]], and simplex directional adpositions express [PDIR [PLOC [AXPART]]]. This argument for the word-internal structure of adpositions, and the category-internal structure of P is explanatory in terms of which morpho-phonological forms are systematically (un-)able to express certain functions in the P domain. On this view, the same morpho-phonological forms behave as members of whatever sub-category of P are associated with the chunk of syntactic structure they express in a given derivation.