

## Polysemy of Adpositions and Ambiguity of Word Classes

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According to Dryer (2005) mixed adpositional systems, i.e. languages that have both prepositions and postpositions, are relatively exceptional in the world's languages. The Finno-Ugric language of Estonian is one such example and in this presentation I will focus on the division of labour between prepositions, postpositions, adverbs and particles in Estonian on the basis of contemporary written corpus data.

Although Estonian is a predominantly postpositional language (approximately 75% of adpositions are exclusively postpositions), there are number of prepositions as well and about 10% of adpositions may occur both as pre- and postpositions (Grünthal 2003: 56-60). Most of Estonian adpositions can also function as adverbs and particles (in verb-particle combinations). On the one hand, it has been pointed out that the traditional division into adverbs and prepositions is problematic. Some earlier scholars have considered adpositions as transitivized adverbs and particles as intransitive prepositions (for an overview, see Hagège 2010: 52-53, against this view see Cappelle 2005). According to Langacker "prepositions (and prepositional phrases) function either adjectivally or adverbially, depending on whether their trajector is a thing or a relationship" (2008: 122). Elizabeth O'Dowd has elaborated a discourse-functional account of "adpreps" based on her corpus findings (1998).

On the other hand, Huumo and Lehismets (2011) have, for example, argued that all Finnish ambivalent path adpositions indicate semantic contrasts between the meanings of actual motion (typical for postpositions) vs. the directional representation of static existence or occurrence of entities along a path (typical for prepositions). Janda (2011) has analysed North Sámi adpositions *miehtá* 'over, across', *čadđa* 'through', *rastá* 'across' and *manjel* 'later, after' and has pointed out that even though there is no overall schema for the behaviour of post- vs. prepositions, it can be said that adpositions that signal both time and space show stronger distinctions between the two allostructs than adpositions that signal only space or only time.

The main differences between prepositional, postpositional and adverbial usages of Estonian grams *peale* 'onto' and *üle* 'over' are studied in order to elucidate whether the main difference between adpositions and adverbs is a difference in syntactic status, discourse-functional factors or the nature of trajector; and whether the difference between pre- and postpositional usages depends on semantic factors (and on what kind of factors). Both *üle* and *peale* are spatial grams that express also temporal and abstract relations. While *üle* is predominately a preposition, *peale* is primarily a postposition. The paper presents the results of logistic regression analyses with 500 occurrences of both grams used either as a postposition, preposition or adverb. It looks how well the different factors (e.g. meaning, nature of trajector) are able to predict the word class and which factor is the strongest predictor.

### References

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