The status of Dative case in the Moksha case paradigm

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Cases in Uralic, Altaic and Paleo-Asiatic languages,
22.10.2021, ILS RAS (Online)

1. What this talk is about

- The distinction between structural cases vs. inherent cases is of theoretical importance

- Based on affix order and morphological encoding of number and definiteness, cases in Moksha (Finno-Ugric, Uralic) can be divided into two groups:
  - POSS+CASE, number and definiteness can be encoded (Nominative, Genitive/Accusative, Dative)
  - CASE+POSS, number or definiteness never encoded (all the rest)

- The latter group corresponds to inherent cases, while the former is heterogenous: structural (Nominative, Genitive/Accusative) and inherent (Dative)

→ Why does Dative pattern with structural cases, not with inherent ones?

- Proposal:
  - Nominative and Genitive/Accusative are genuine case forms
  - Dative and other inherent case forms include an underlying P head rather than a bona-fide case exponent
  - Moksha has two types of P heads with different morphosyntactic properties

P (type I)       P (type II)
NP (bare form)  PP   NP/DP (GEN)  PP

- The difference between two groups of P heads is in their relational vs. non-relational nature

- Dative patterns with structural cases because it is a non-relational P (Type II), and its structure “contains” Genitive
2. Roadmap of the talk

3. Language and data
4. Theoretical background
5. Basics of Moksha nominal morphosyntax
6. Two types of P-heads
7. Predictions based on my analysis: Moksha case system revisited
8. Conclusions and implications for the theory

3. Language and data

- Moksha (Mordvin < Mordvinic < Finno-Permic < Finnic < Finno-Ugric < Uralic)
- Spoken in Russia, Republic of Mordovia (the Volga Region)
- Data source: (EMG 2018) + my own fieldwork notes (2015 – 2018, Russia, Republic of Mordovia, villages of Lesnoje Tsibajevo and Lesnoje Ardashevo)

4. Theoretical background

Types of cases (Chomsky 1981, 1986)

(1)

- Inherent cases and adpositions – instances of the same category P (McFadden 2001, 2004; Riemsdijk & Huybregts 2002; Asbury et al. 2007)
  - inherent cases are Ps, and they are exponents of Ps (Asbury 2008; Polinsky 2016)

- NP-DP distinction: Noun phrase structure is hierarchical (2), but not all projections (up to DP) have to be present, there can be Small nominals (terminology by (Pereltsvaig 2006)), e.g. NPs

(2)

- NPs do not need case, they can be bare

5. Basics of Moksha nominal morphosyntax

5.1. Affix order: case and possession

- in Genitive/Accusative and Dative, the order of possessive marking/agreement and case is POSS+CASE
3

(3) GENITIVE (STRUCTURAL) → POSS+CASE
vel'a-z'a-n' [village-1SG.POSS.SG-GEN] ‘of my village’

(4) DATIVE (INHERENT) → POSS+CASE
vel'a-z'a-n'd'i [village-1SG.POSS.SG-DAT] ‘to my village’
- in the other case froms, the order of possessive marking/agreement and case is CASE+POSS

(5) INESSIVE (INHERENT) → CASE+POSS
vel'a-sa-n [village-IN-POSS.1SG] ‘in my village / in my villages’

NB: An explanation in terms of restrictions on syllable structure does not work: reverse order in locatives is not an instance of phonologically-driven metathesis

(6) a. CVN-STRUCTURE
vel'a-z'a-n [village-ILL-POSS.1SG] ‘to my village / to my villages’

b. NCV-STRUCTURE
vel'a-nzə [village-3SG.POSS.Pl] ‘his/her villages’

5.2. Case and number
- Number is expressed in Nominative (7), Genitive/Accusative and Dative (8); no number distinction elsewhere (9)

(7) NOMINATIVE (STRUCTURAL) POSSESSED NP → NUMBER DISTINCTION
a. vel'a-z'a [village-1SG.POSS] ‘my village’

b. vel'a-n'ə [village-1SG.POSS.PL] ‘my villages’

(8) DATIVE (INHERENT) POSSESSED NP → NUMBER DISTINCTION
a. vel'a-z'a-n'd'i [village-1SG.POSS.SG-DAT] ‘my village’

b. vel'a-n'ə-n'd'i [village-1SG.POSS.PL-DAT] ‘my villages’

(9) INESSIVE (INHERENT) POSSESSED NP → NO NUMBER DISTINCTION
vel'a-sa-n [village-IN-POSS.1SG] ‘in my village / in my villages’

5.3. Case and definiteness
- only Nominative, Genitive/Accusative and Dative have definite forms; no definite forms elsewhere (see Table 1)

- In order to express definiteness in cases other than Nominative, Genitive/Accusative and Dative, one has to use constructions with free-standing postpositions

(10) vel'a-i’ esə [village-DEF.SG.GEN in.IN] ‘in the village’
Table 1: Moksha nominal declension, a fragment (EMG 2018: 66)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Case</th>
<th>Indefinite declension</th>
<th>Definite declension</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>SG</td>
<td>PL</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nominative</td>
<td>∅</td>
<td>-t/-t'</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Genitive</td>
<td>-ən'/-ən'ə</td>
<td>-t'</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dative</td>
<td>-ən'd'i</td>
<td>-t'i</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ablative</td>
<td>-də/-tə/-d'ə/-t'ə</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inessive</td>
<td>-sə</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Elative</td>
<td>-sə</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Illative</td>
<td>-s</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lative</td>
<td>-u/-v/-i</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prolative</td>
<td>-əva/-ga/-ka</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

5.4. Obligatoriness of possessive agreement

- Possessive agreement with 3rd person possessors (not personal pronouns) is only obligatory in Nominative, Genitive and Dative

(11) GENITIVE (STRUCTURAL) \(\rightarrow\) OBLIGATORY AGREEMENT

\[ t'e-n' ~ panar-ənce \rightarrow panar-t' \]
\[ this-GEN ~ dress-3SG.POSS.SG.GEN dress-DEF.SG.GEN \]
\[ 1SG 2SG.GEN-PRON.DAT-POSS.2SG ne-f-n'-in'ə \]
\[ see-CAUS-IPFV-PST-3.O-1SG.S \]
\[ 'I showed you that one's dress'. \]

(12) DATIVE (INHERENT) \(\rightarrow\) OBLIGATORY AGREEMENT

\[ t'e-n' ~ ruc'ə-n'a-ncti \rightarrow ruc'ə-n'e-t'i \]
\[ this-GEN ~ shawl-DIM-3SG.POSS.SG.DAT shawl-DIM-DEF.SG.DAT \]
\[ mon aškəd-in'ə ~ kuc'uf-n'ə-n' \]
\[ 1SG wrap-PST.3.O.1SG.S spoon-DEF.PL-GEN \]
\[ 'I wrapped the spoons in her shawl'. (EMG 2018: 291) \]

(13) ILLATIVE (INHERENT) \(\rightarrow\) OPTIONAL AGREEMENT

\[ t'e-n' / ruc'ə-n'ə-zə-nəzə / ruc'ə-n'a-s \rightarrow mon \]
\[ this-GEN ~ shawl-DIM-ILL-3SG.POSS shawl-DIM-ILL 1SG \]
\[ aškəd-in'ə ~ kuc'uf-n'ə-n' \]
\[ wrap-PST.3.O.1SG.S spoon-DEF.PL-GEN \]
\[ 'I wrapped the spoons in her shawl'. (ibid) \]
5.5. Interim summary

Table 2: Three types of cases

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Case</th>
<th>Affix order</th>
<th>Number expression</th>
<th>Definiteness expression</th>
<th>Possessive agreement</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Structural: Nominative; Genitive/Accusative</td>
<td>POSS+CASE</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Obligatory</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inherent: Dative</td>
<td>POSS+CASE</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Obligatory</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inherent: Other</td>
<td>CASE+POSS</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Optional</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

5.6. Functions of cases

5.6.1. Functions of Genitive

- nominal dependents

(14) *ava-t' sumka-c pra-s'*
woman-DEF.SG.GEN bag-3SG.POSS.SG fall-PST.3SG
‘The woman’s bag fell’.

- complements of postpositions

(15) *vel'ɔ-n'əkə-n'*

• *esə er'ɛ-s' koż'ɛ, koż'ɛ al'ɛ*
village-1PL.POSS-GEN in.IN live-PST.3[S] rich rich man
‘There lived a rich man in our village’. (Toldova & Pleshak 2018)

Direct Objects in transitive constructions

(16) *fke traks-t' al'ɛ-z'ɛ mi-z'ə*

one cow-DEF.SG.GEN father-1SG.POSS.SG sell-PST.3SG.O.3SG.S
‘My father sold one of the cows’. (ibid)

5.6.2. Functions of Dative

- Indirect Objects: (recipients, goals)

(17) *RECIPIENT*
peter maks-s' pan'ɛf-t mon' s't'ar'-əz'ɔ-n'd'i / *s't'ar'-əzə-n*
Peter foot-PST.3[S] flower-PL 1SG.GEN girl-1SG.POSS.SG-DAT girl-ILL-1SG.POSS
‘Peter gave flowers to my daughter’. (EMG 2018: 87)

(18) *GOAL*
peter suva-s' mon' kud-əz'ɔ-n'd'i / kud-əzə-n*
Peter enter-PST.3[S] 1SG.GEN house-1SG.POSS.SG-DAT house-ILL-1SG.POSS
‘Peter entered my house (lit. to my house)’. (ibid)
The external argument of passive and debitive constructions

19) EXTERNAL ARGUMENT OF A PASSIVE CONSTRUCTION

t'e karaf-s' šuv-əv-s' vas'e-n'd'i
this pothole-DEF.SG рыть-PASS-PST.3[SG] Vasja-DAT
‘This pothole has been dug by Vasja’. (A. Kozlov et al. 2016: 541).

20) EXTERNAL ARGUMENT OF A DEBITIVE CONSTRUCTION

s'ora-n'ɛ-t'i luva-tə kn'iga-s' / kn'iga-t'
boy-DIM-DEF.SG.DAT read-NZR this book-DEF.SG book-DEF.SG.GEN
‘The boy has to read this book’. (lit. ‘The reading of this book occurs to the boy.’) (EMG 2018: 768)

5.6.3. Impossibility of passivization of Dative Indirect Objects

22) kn'iga-t' maks-əz' t'ejə-nzə
book-DEF.SG.GEN give-PST.3.O.3PL.S PRON.DAT-3SG.POSS
‘They gave him the book’. (EMG 2018: 497)

6. Two types of P heads

6.1. P-heads Type I

• No complements marked with the indefinite genitive

24) morkš / *morkš-ən' lank-ə put-f kn'iga
table table-GEN top-IN put-PTCP.RES book
‘There is a book on a table’.

• Bare NP complements

• Possessive agreement with a definite genitive complement

25) morkš-n'ə-n' lank-ə-st ašč-i-t' čejn'ək-t
table-DEF.PL-GEN top-IN-3PL.POSS be.situated-NPST.3-PL tea.pot-PL
‘There are tea pots on the tables’. (EMG 2018: 218)

6.2. P-heads Type II

• complements marked with the indefinite genitive

26) pet'e s'idə-stə kor'n'-i zabər-ən'/ *zabər kolga
Peter often-EL say.FREQ-NPST.3[SG] fence-GEN fence about
{Peter repairs his house.} ‘Peter frequently talks about fences’. (ibid: 229)
• No bare NP complements
• No possessive agreement with a non-pronominal (!) complement

(27) \( t'e\ 'suf'\-t'\ k\-olga/\ *k\-olga\-nzo \)
   this tree-DEF.SG.GEN about about-3SG.POSS
   ‘about this tree’ (ibid: 16)

6.3. Interim summary

Table 3: Properties of two types of P-heads in Moksha

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Case</th>
<th>Indefinite complement</th>
<th>Possessive agreement</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Type I</td>
<td>bare</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Type II</td>
<td>GEN</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

6.4. The nature of the difference

• Two types of P-heads correspond to relational and non-relational elements
• Relational nouns: nouns that have an internal argument
  o e.g., spatial relations: top of the tree
  relational noun internal argument
• In some languages, relational nouns can have special properties, setting them apart from regular nouns
• In grammaticalization processes, relational nouns often develop into postpositions, and postpositions can develop into inherent cases
  o relational noun > secondary adposition > primary adposition > agglutinative case affix > fusional case affix (Lehmann 1985: 304)
• I argue that the path from a relational noun to a case affix via a postposition is less straightforward than it seems:
  o relational noun \( \rightarrow \) case marker (properties I)
  o non-relational postposition \( \rightarrow \) case marker (properties II)
• Moksha distinguishes between grammaticalized relational nouns (secondary adpositions) and genuine postpositions (primary adpositions)
  o NB: relational nouns \( \rightarrow \) relational grammatical markers (Heine & Kuteva 2002: 81)

7. Predictions based on my analysis: Moksha case system revisited

• I argue that all inherent case forms in Moksha include P heads, and these case forms inherit their morphosyntactic properties from relational nouns and postpositions
  o Inherent cases (other than Dative) < relational nouns (see Pleshak 2021)
Table 4: Summary: Free-standing and bound relational Ps in Moksha

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Free-standing grammaticalized relational noun</th>
<th>Inherent case</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>no possessor of the complement</td>
<td><img src="image1" alt="Diagram" /></td>
<td><img src="image2" alt="Diagram" /></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Bare NP complement</td>
<td>'on a table'</td>
<td>'in a table'</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>+ possessor of the complement</td>
<td><img src="image3" alt="Diagram" /></td>
<td><img src="image4" alt="Diagram" /></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Bare NP complement</td>
<td>'on (to) my table'</td>
<td>'in my house'</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Possessive agreement with the possessor of the complement (on the P-head!)</td>
<td>'on (to) my table’</td>
<td>'in my house’</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- Bare NP complements → no GEN marker on the indefinite complement
- Possessor agreement on the P-head → POSS+CASE order
- (definite complements – n/a)

  - Dative < non-relational postpositions
    - Postpositional origin of -ti/-n’d’i affixes (Serebrennikov 1967: 18)
    - Synchronic postpositional nature of Dative in the pronominal paradigm

(28)  
\[ t’ej(ə)-t \quad ton’-d’ejə-t \]
PRON.DAT-POSS.2SG    2SG.GEN-PRON.DAT-POSS.2SG
‘to you’

- compare to genuine postpositions with pronominal complements

(29)  
\[(ton’) \quad kolga-t \]
2SG.GEN about-POSS.2SG
‘about you’

- GEN marker on the complement

Table 5: Examples of GEN and DAT markers

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>GEN</th>
<th>DAT</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Indef</td>
<td>-n’</td>
<td>-n’d’i</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Def</td>
<td>-t’</td>
<td>-t’i</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Poss 1SG</td>
<td>-z’ə-n’</td>
<td>-z’ə-n’d’i</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Poss 3SG</td>
<td>-nc</td>
<td>-nci</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

...
Table 6: Free-standing and bound non-relational Ps in Moksha

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Free-standing postposition</th>
<th>Dative case</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>no possessor of he complement</td>
<td>PP [NP_GEN] morkš-ә'än' kolga 'about a table'</td>
<td>PP [NP_GEN] morkš-ә'än' -d'ï 'to a table'</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>+ possessor of he complement</td>
<td>DP [morkš-ә'än'] kolga 'about my table'</td>
<td>DP [morkš-ә'än'] -d'ï 'to my table'</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- GEN complement – possessive agreement like in Genitive DPs

8. Conclusions and implications for the theory

- Moksha shows a surprising grouping of cases based on their morphosyntactic properties: Dative behaves as a structural case, not as an inherent case, contrary to expectations
- I argued that Dative is an inherent case, based on its functions
- I argue that the morphosyntactic properties used for case form grouping are sensitive to the relational vs. non-relational nature of P heads, rather than to structural vs. inherent case distinction
- I show that the nature of postposition (relational vs. non-relational) does not become irrelevant in the course of grammaticalization to case, but can be manifested by morphosyntactic properties of case markers
  - Relational properties are not neutralized at the postposition stage

Abbreviations:


References:


Appendix:

Structural vs. Inherent vs. Lexical case distinction

![Diagram](image)

(Chomsky 1981, 1986)

(Woolford 2006)
Table 1: Structural vs. Inherent vs. Lexical case

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Structural</th>
<th>Non-structural</th>
<th>Lexical</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>motivation</td>
<td>based on the structural position</td>
<td>associated with certain θ-positions</td>
<td>lexically selected</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>distribution</td>
<td>argument positions</td>
<td>external arguments, (shifted) DP goal arguments</td>
<td>themes/internal arguments</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>licensing</td>
<td>functional heads</td>
<td>little/light v heads</td>
<td>lexical heads (e.g. V)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Further evidence for different P heads: Elements ambiguous between (grammaticalized) relational nouns and genuine postpositions

*kuvalməva* ‘along; about’

- relational noun if locative meaning: bare indefinite complement; possessive agreement with definite complement

(1) *pet’e* s’idə-stə *jaka-j* *zəbər(*’ən’*) kuvalmə-va*
Peter often-EL walk-NPST.3SG fence-GEN length-PROL
‘Peter often walks along fences’. (EMG 2018: 229)

(2) *ki-t’ kuvalmə-va(-nzə) jota-s’ mašina*
road-DEF.SG.GEN length-PROL-3SG.POSS pass-PST3SG car
‘A car passed by on the road’. (EMG 2018: 233)

- genuine postposition if non-locative meaning: GEN indefinite complement; no possessive agreement

(3) *pet’e s’idə-s’ korn’i* *zəbər*-…”kuvalmə-va*
Peter often-EL say.FREQ-NPST3SG fence-GEN length-PROL
‘Peter frequently talks about fences’. (ibid: 229)

(4) *es’ er’a-f-anc* *kuvalmə-va(*-nzə*) at’e-z’ə*
REFL live-PTCP.RES-3SG.POSS.SG GEN length-PROL-3SG.POSS g.father-1SG.POSS.SG
pek *kel’k-si* *az-ən-kšn’-əma-nc*
very like-NPST.3SG.S.3SG.O say-FREQ-FREQ-NZR-3SG.POSS.SG.GEN
‘My grandfather loves talking about his life’. (ibid: 233)