

# Finnish case alternating adpositions

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# Adpositions in Finnish

- ▶ *al-* 'under', *ede-* 'front', *taka-* 'back', *yli-* 'over', *kohti* 'toward', ...

# Finnish PPs

In Finnish, adpositions themselves assign case. . .

- a. *Elina käveli kohti koti-a*  
Elina walked toward home-PART  
'Elina walked toward home'

# Finnish PPs

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a. *Elina käveli kohti koti-a*

Elina walked toward home-PART

'Elina walked toward home'

b. *Peito-n alta näyi osa vauvan jalkaa*

blanket-GEN under showed part baby foot

'Part of the baby's foot showed (from) under the table'

[Nikanne 1993, Vainikka 1993]

# Adpositions in Finnish

- ▶ *al-* ‘under’, *ede-* ‘front’, *taka-* ‘back’, *yli-* ‘over’, *kohti* ‘toward’, ...
- ▶ *keske-* ‘middle’, *ympäri* ‘around’, *lähe-* ‘near’

# *ympäri* ‘around’

- a. *Juoks-i-mme kaupungi-n ympäri*  
 run-PAST-1PL city-GEN around  
 ‘We ran around the city’
- b. *Juoks-i-mme ympäri kaupunki-a*  
 run-PAST-1PL around city-PART  
 ‘We were running around in the city’

# IE adpositional case-alternation

Different from Indo-European adpositional case-alternation:

- a. *Ja xodil v magazin*  
 I went V shop  
 'I went to the shop.ACC'
- b. *Ja xodil v magazine*  
 I went V shop.DAT  
 'I was walking in the shop'

(But in a way similar)

## *keske-* ‘in the middle of’

- a. *Lelut ovat lattia-n keske-llä*  
 toys are floor-GEN in.the.middle.of-ADE  
 ‘The toys are (exactly) in the middle of the floor’
- b. *Lelut ovat keske-llä lattia-a*  
 toys are in.the.middle.of-ADE floor-PART  
 ‘The toys are spread around the center of the floor’

*lähe*- 'near'

- a. *Auto on talo-n lähe-llä*  
 car.NOM be.SG.PRES house-GEN near-ADE  
 'The car is near the house'
- b. *Auto on lähe-llä talo-a*  
 car.NOM be.SG.PRES near-ADE house-PART  
 'The car is near the house'

Introduction

P and case

A Bidirectional Optimality Theoretic account

A Corpus Study

Conclusion

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Strong vs. weak

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- c. The steeplechaser ran round the corner
- d. The tourist drove round
- d. The driver took the long way round
- f. The woman came round again

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Completeness  $\gg$  Inversion  $\gg$  Orthogonality  $\gg$  Detour  $\gg$  ...  $\gg$  Criss-cross

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Specific vs. vague

# *lähe-* 'near'

- a. *Auto on talo-n lähe-llä*  
 car.NOM be.SG.PRES house-GEN near-ADE  
 'The car is near the house'
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## lähe- 'near'

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- b. *Auto on lähe-llä talo-a*  
 car.NOM be.SG.PRES near-ADE house-PART  
 'The car is near the house'
- c. *Ole-mme lähe-llä ratkaisu-a*  
 be.PRES-1PL near-ADE solution-PART  
 'We are close to a solution'
- d. \**Ole-mme ratkaisu-n lähe-llä*  
 be.PRES-1PL solution-GEN near-ADE  
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Concrete vs. abstract

# Bidirectional Optimality Theory

- Black Bart killed the sheriff.
- Black Bart caused the sheriff to die.

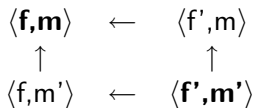


Figure: Weak Bidirectional OT

# The Constraints

\*M': avoid fuzzy or extended meanings

\*F': avoid partitive case

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\*M':

1. Primary function of adpositions is spatial (abstract is derived)
2. Weak meaning is derived from strong

\*F':

1. Most Ps assign genitive
2. Most P objects receive genitive
3. Partitive is already verbal default

# OT Tableau

	*M' *F'
⟨F,M⟩	
⟨F,M'⟩	
⟨F',M⟩	
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# OT Tableau

	*M'	*F'
$\langle F, M \rangle$		
$\langle F, M' \rangle$		
$\langle F', M \rangle$		*
$\langle F', M' \rangle$		*

# OT Tableau

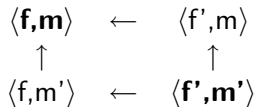
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$\langle F, M' \rangle$	*	
$\langle F', M \rangle$		*
$\langle F', M' \rangle$	*	*

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		*M'	*F'
✌	⟨F, M⟩		
	⟨F, M'⟩	*	
	⟨F', M⟩		*
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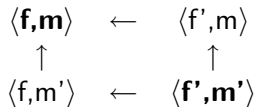
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		*M'	*F'
☞	⟨F,M⟩		
	⟨F,M'⟩	*	
	⟨F',M⟩		*
	⟨F',M'⟩	*	*



# OT Tableau

		*M'	*F'
✂	⟨F,M⟩		
	⟨F,M'⟩	*	
	⟨F',M⟩		*
✂	⟨F',M'⟩	*	*



## A corpus study

Procedure:

Approximately 27 million words. From five newspapers from the CSC, a Finnish on line corpus (<https://hotpage.csc.fi>).

All instances of *ympäri*- 'around', *keske*- 'in the middle' and *lähe*- 'near'

Removed: *kesken* 'during . . . , suddenly . . .'

# First Numbers

Table: Adpositional case

n partitive case	1684
n genitive case	2014
total n	3698

## Different groups of P objects

	n types	n tokens	mean (log) frequency
Gen	175	1247	7.1 (0.81)
Part	64	561	8.8 (0.84)
Diff	8	132	16.5 (1.09)
Alt	25	1758	70.3 (1.57)
	Total: 272	Total: 3698	Overall mean (log): 13.6 (0.89)

## Different groups of P objects: Gen

- a. *saare-n ympäri*  
**island-GEN** around  
'around island'
- b. *saare-n keske-llä*  
**island-GEN** in.the.middle.of-ADE  
'in the middle of the island'

## Different groups of P objects: Part

- a. *Keske-llä*                      *lattia-a*  
in.the.middle.of-ADE **ground-PART**  
'in the middle of the ground'
- b. *lähe-llä*    *lattia-a*  
near-ADE **ground-PART**  
'near the ground'

## Different groups of P objects: Diff

- a. *risteykse-n*            *lähe-llä*  
**intersection-GEN** near-ADE  
'near the intersection'
- b. *keske-lle*                *risteyksi-ä*  
in.the.middle.of-ALL **intersection-PART**  
'in the middle of the intersection'

## Different groups of P objects: Diff

- a. *risteykse-n*                    *lähe-llä*  
intersection-GEN near-ADE  
'near the intersection'
- b. *keske-lle*                        *risteyksi-ä*  
in.the.middle.of-ALL intersection-PART  
'in the middle of the intersection'

## Different groups of P objects: Alt

- a. *ympäri talo-a*  
around house-PART  
'around in the house'
- b. *talo-n ympäri*  
house-GEN around  
'around the house'
- c. *talon lähe-llä*  
house-GEN near-ADE  
'near the house'

## Case distribution per group

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Adpositional case alternation is particularly relevant for “good” adpositional objects.

## Case alternating nouns

Table: Examples of case alternating nouns

stem	meaning	case assigned by		
		lähe- 'near'	keske- 'in the middle'	ympäri 'around'
kenttä	field, area	part	part	alt
luonto	nature, wildlife	part	alt	-
asutus	settlement	alt	alt	-
kaupunki	city	alt	alt	part
talo	house	gen	part	alt

*lähe-* 'near' could appear in any case, except for abstract nouns.

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*keske-* 'in the middle of': precise vs. sloppy 'middle'.

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*ympäri* 'around' vs. 'around in'.

# Conclusion

BiOT: marked forms express marked meanings

- ▶ PP constructions with genitive case denote a standard spatial meaning of which an (abstract or fuzzy) extension is marked with partitive case

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Corpus

- ▶ Case alternating behavior does not hold across the board
- ▶ Mean frequency of case alternating objects is significantly higher than other types. Adpositional case alternation is particularly relevant for “good” (i.e., highly frequent) adpositional objects