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Abstract

This paper examines the morpho-syntactic puzzle of case suffixes and postpositions that Hungarian displays. Although these two categories show distributional similarities, they are distinguishable from a morphological and a syntactic point of view. Moreover, this language has defective postpositions which are in complementary distribution with case suffixes. I argue that there is no real argument for lumping case suffixes together with postpositions into the same syntactic category, as has been suggested in recent linguistics studies (Trommer, 2008; Asbury, 2007). I rather propose to treat case suffixes and postpositions as two different objects: case suffixes are inflectional material on nominal heads and postpositions as well as defective postpositions are independent words subcategorizing an NP. This distinction straightforwardly accounts for morphological and syntactic differences. Finally, the shared distributional properties between case suffixes, postpositions and defective postpositions are captured by means of the use of the MARKING feature.

1 Introduction

Hungarian displays an interesting morpho-syntactic puzzle of case suffixes and postpositions. Although these two categories show distributional similarities, they are distinguishable from a morphological and a syntactic point of view. In this paper, I focus on the similarities and dissimilarities between the two categories and show that an SBCG analysis (Sag, 2010) allows us to provide a descriptively adequate account of the phenomena and to capture their common syntactic behaviour.

2 Definitions

The delimitation of the category of case suffixes is a long-debated issue (Kiefer, 2000; Payne and Chisarik, 2000; Creissels, 2006). I define the class of case suffixes based on 3 criteria that ensure that the noun keeps noun properties after suffixation. Case suffixes may display the possibilities

i. for the noun host to be modified (Kiefer, 2000; Payne and Chisarik, 2000);

ii. for the case suffix to occur with a possessive suffix (Creissels, 2006);

iii. for the case suffix to be combined with the demonstrative (Creissels, 2006).

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This definition leads to a category containing 17 elements\(^1\).

As for the class of postpositions, I adopt the analysis of É. Kiss (2002), who limits the category of postpositions to items

i. taking a caseless NP as argument;
ii. realizing morphologically their pronominal argument;
iii. that get duplicated when used with the demonstrative.

This class is then composed of 34 elements\(^2\).

3 Description of the data

3.1 Differences

3.1.1 Gradient phonological integration

Case suffixes, but not postpositions, are prosodically bound forms and are monosyllabic. More precisely, if we consider six criteria, we observe that the relevant morpho-phonological properties define a scale rather than a binary distinction, as shown in Table 1. Four of these six criteria correspond to the phenomena of internal sandhi occurring with affixation (Creissels, 2006):

- Vowel harmony: the vowel of several suffixes is selected according to the vowels that the nominal base contains.

  (1) a. ház-ban  
      house-INE
  b. kert-ben  
      garden-INE

- Link vowel (LV): the link vowel appears between the nominal base and some suffixes when the base ends with a consonant.

  (2) bőrőnd-ö-t; könyv-e-t  
      book-LV-ACC  suitcase-LV-ACC

---

\(^1\) Accusative (ACC) -t; Dative (DAT) -nál/-nek; Instrumental (INS) -vel/-ve; Causal-final (CAU) -ért; Translative (TRA) -vál/-vé; Inessive (INE) -ban/-ben; Superessive (SUP) -m; Adessive (ADE) -nál/-nél; Sublative (SUB) -ral/-re; Delative (DEL) -ről/-ről; Illative (ILL) -hal/-hec; Elative (ELA) -bol/-ből; Allative (ALL) -hoz/-hez/-höz; Ablative (ABL) -tól/-től; Terminative (TER) -ig; Essive (ESS) -ként; Temporal (TEM) -kor.

\(^2\) alá 'to under'; alatt 'under'; alól 'from under'; mögő 'behind'; mögül 'from behind'; mellé 'next to'; melllett 'next to'; mellől 'from next to'; elé 'before'; előtt 'before'; elől 'from before'; felé 'towards'; felől 'from'; fölő 'above'; fölél 'from above'; körül 'round'; körül 'around'; közül 'between'; között 'in between'; közül 'from between'; által 'by'; ellen 'against'; helyett 'instead of'; szerint 'according to'; iránt 'towards'; miatt 'because of'; néhány 'without'; után 'after'; végett 'because of'; öta 'since', folytán.
• Lengthening of a and e: the affixation of a number of suffixes triggers the lengthening of final vowel of the nominal base, if it is an a or an e.

(3) \textit{alma; almá-ban}
apple apple-INE

• Selection of a suppletive stem

(4) \textit{ló; ló-ban; lov-on}
horse horse-INE horse-SUP

The last two criteria concern the number of syllables of these items and their interaction with the demonstrative.

• The monosyllabicity of the item (Trommer, 2008): case suffixes are monosyllabic, whereas postpositions are bisyllabic.

• The interaction with the demonstrative: postpositions beginning with a consonant and case suffixes both interact phonologically with the demonstrative\(^3\).

(5) \textit{ez; eb-ben; e mellett; ez allatt}
DEM DEM-INE DEM next.to DEM under

Given table 1, only one property distinguishes case suffixes from postpositions: the monosyllabicity. However, in section 4, I will show that the essive \textit{ként}, which is monosyllabic, should be reanalysed as a postposition, leading to the conclusion that it is not possible to draw a clear distinction between case suffixes and postpositions on the basis of phonological properties.

3.1.2 Derivational properties

Postpositions, contrary to case suffixes, can host the derivational suffix \textit{-i} and thus give rise to adjectives\(^4\).

(6) \textit{a polc mögött-i könyv}
the shelf behind-ADJR book

(7) *\textit{a János-ról-i könyv}

‘the book about János’

As noted by Creissels (2006), when the demonstrative is followed by a postposition beginning with consonant, the final ‘z’ of the demonstrative can:

– either be elided, as expressed by the Hungarian spelling (\textit{e mellett})

– or be assimilated to the initial consonant of the postposition (\textit{em mellett})

\(^4\)The \textit{-i} suffix is glosed ADJR.
interaction with demonstrative
monosyllabicity
lengthening of a and e
vowel harmony
link vowel
selection of a suppletive stem

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>A</th>
<th>B</th>
<th>C</th>
<th>D</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>interaction with demonstrative</strong></td>
<td>+</td>
<td>+</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>monosyllabicity</strong></td>
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<td>-</td>
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<td><strong>lengthening of a and e</strong></td>
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<td><strong>vowel harmony</strong></td>
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<td><strong>link vowel</strong></td>
<td>+</td>
<td>-</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>selection of a suppletive stem</strong></td>
<td>+</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

A. accusative, superessive
B. dative, inessive, elative, illative, adessive, ablative, allative, delative, sublative, instrumental, transformative
C. terminative, causal-final
D. temporal, essive
E. postpositions beginning with consonant
F. postpositions beginning with vowel

Table 1: Gradient phonological integration
These -i suffixed words can host inflectional affixes, as adjectives usually do.

(8) (Melyik virág-o-k a legszebb-e-k?) A fák köztött-i-e-k
which flower-LV-PL the most.beautiful-LV-PL the tree-PL between-ADJR-LV-PL
‘Which flowers are the most beautiful? The ones between the trees’

(9) (Melyik bolt-ban látt-t-ad a cipő-t?) A pályaudvar mellett-i-ben.
which shop-INE see-PST-2SG the shoe-ACC the station next.to-ADJR-INE
‘In which shop did you see the shoes?) In the one next to the station’

3.1.3 Coordination

The behaviour of suffixes and postpositions with respect to coordination can be viewed as the consequence of their different morpho-phonological statuses: suffixes, being morphologically bound, do not have wide scope over NP coordination, whereas postpositions, as independent words, do.

(10) a ház és a garázs előtt
the house and the garage before
‘in front of the house and the garage’

(11) *a ház és a garázs-ban
the house and the garage-INE
‘in the house and the garage’ (intended meaning)

Moreover, postpositions, in contrast with case suffixes, can be coordinated (examples (12) and (13)). Note that coordination between a postposition and a case suffix is not possible (example (14)).

(12) a ház előtt és mögött
the house before and behind
‘in front of and behind the house’

(13) *a ház-tól és -ből (14) *a ház-ban és mellett
the house-ABL and -ELA the house-INE and next.to

3.2 Common properties

3.2.1 Combinatorial property

Both postpositions and case suffixes appear on the right edge of an NP (examples (15) and (18)); they are strictly adjacent to the head noun (examples (17) and (20)). If the head noun is elided, both are adjacent to the rightmost element of the NP (examples (16) and (19)).
3.2.2 Demonstrative agreement

Case-marked NPs as well as postpositional phrases (PPs) can combine with a demonstrative (noted DEM in the examples). In this case, they are both obligatorily repeated after the demonstrative.

(21)  eb-ben a szép ház-ban  DEM-INE the beautiful house-INE  ‘in this beautiful house’

(22)  e mellett a szép ház mellett DEM next.to the beautiful house next.to  ‘next to this beautiful house’

3.2.3 Grammatical and predicative uses

Both postpositions and case suffixes (except the accusative suffix) can be used as predicative complements of the copula and are thus fully contentful. Additionally, according to Kiefer (2000), all case suffixes, except the temporal suffix, can be subcategorized by a head. Moreover, according to Szende and Kassai (2001), seven postpositions can introduce a subcategorized dependent of a head (ellen, előtt, elől, után, iránt, mellett, alól). Thus, their different morphological statuses do not correspond to different uses in the language.

4 Reanalysis of the essive kényt

Considering the 3 differences between case suffixes and postpositions, the essive kényt should be reanalysed as a postposition. From a phonological point of view, the essive does not show any affixal properties (cf. table 1). Moreover, using the online Hungarian National Corpus5, we observe that the essive can host the derivational suffix -i (example (23)).

5HNC: http://mnsz.nytud.hu/index-eng.html
Finally, using the HNC, we find occurrences of the essive suffix with possible wide scope over coordination (example (24)).

(24) Bloch Móricz, aki aztán később Ballagi Mór név-en neves
    Bloch Móricz who then later Ballagi Mór name-SUP renowned
    szótáriró és tanulmányíró-ként is ismer-t [...] know-PST.3SG
    ‘Móricz Bloch, who has later been known as Mór Ballagi and a renowned
    lexicographer and essayist [...]’

Under this new analysis, monosyllabicity cannot be viewed as a criterion to distinguish between case suffixes and postpositions. This reanalysis should be an issue for the analysis of Trommer (2008). According to his paper, case suffixes and postpositions are both functional heads belonging to the same morphosyntactic category (adposition), and monosyllabic adpositions are integrated into the Phonological Word of their nominal lexical head because they are prosodically too small. As an independent monosyllabic adposition, the essive does not fit into Trommer’s theory of the Phonological Word.

5 Person-marked postpositions and defective postpositions

Hungarian postpositions realize their complement as a person suffix, whenever the complement has a pronominal form (cf. Table 2). In that case, the nominative pronoun is optional (examples (25) and (26)). These person-marked postpositions cannot combine with NPs headed by a noun (example (27)).

(25) (é) mellett-em; *(én) mellett
    I next.to-1SG I next.to
    ‘next to me’

(26) (ő) mellett-e; *(ő) mellett
    he/she next.to-3SG he/she next.to
    ‘next to him/her’

(27) *A ház mellett-e; A ház mellett
    the house next.to-3SG the house next.to
    ‘next to the house’
Furthermore, following Creissels (2006), I consider that Hungarian displays defective postpositions, i.e. postpositions that appear only as hosts of person suffixes and cannot combine with non-pronominal NPs (example (28)). They are postpositions since they behave morphologically along the same pattern as person-marked postpositions (cf. Table 3) and have the same distributional properties (examples (29) and (30)).

(28) *A ház benn(e)  
the house in  
‘in the house’ (intended meaning)

(29) Ott van a bolt és mellett-e a ház  
there is the shop and next.to-3SG the house  
‘There is the shop and next to it the house’

(30) Ott van az erdő és benn-e a ház  
there is the garden and in-3SG the house  
‘There is the garden and inside the house’

Note that postpositions and defective postpositions can be coordinated as shown in (31), whereas postpositions and case suffixes cannot, as we have seen in example (14).

(31) benn-ünk és mellett-ünk  
in-1PL and next.to-1PL
There are only two paradigms of personal pronouns in Hungarian: one for nominative, the other for accusative (Table 4). The other case suffixes are in complementary distribution with the defective postpositions. Indeed, where case suffixes cannot appear (*én-ben), a defective postposition is used (benn-em). This is true only for 12 case suffixes, since transformative, terminative and temporal have no corresponding defective postposition and cannot be employed with a pronominal NP.

Thus, Hungarian displays
i. 35 postpositions that mostly can be inflected with person suffixes,
ii. 16 case suffixes, among which only the accusative has a pronominal form, and three suffixes have no person form,
iii. 12 defective postpositions that are in complementary distribution with 12 case suffixes.

6 An SBCG account
In the Hungarian grammatical tradition (Kenesei et al., 1998; Szende and Kassai, 2001; Rounds, 2001), postpositions and case suffixes are considered as two different objects, whereas, in recent linguistic studies (Asbury, 2007; Trommer, 2008), they tend to be analysed as realizing the same underlying syntactic category. In this paper, I consider case suffixes as inflectional material appearing on nominal heads, thus accounting for derivational- and combinatorial-specific properties. I use the MARKING feature (Pollard and Sag, 1994; Tseng, 1999, 2002; Van Eynde, 2001) to capture distributional similarities. Finally, I give an explicit analysis for defective postpositions, which accounts for their morphological and syntactic similarities to postpositions, and their distributional likeness to case-marked nouns.

6.1 Case suffixes
Hungarian nouns and adjectives can host a plural suffix, possessive suffixes and a case suffix. The plural suffix and the possessive suffixes belong to the same

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>1SG</th>
<th>2SG</th>
<th>3SG</th>
<th>1PL</th>
<th>2PL</th>
<th>3PL</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>nominative</td>
<td>én</td>
<td>te</td>
<td>ō</td>
<td>mi</td>
<td>ti</td>
<td>ōk</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>accusative</td>
<td>engem(et)</td>
<td>téged(et)</td>
<td>ōt</td>
<td>minket</td>
<td>titeket</td>
<td>ōket</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4: Nominative and accusative personal pronouns

‘inside us and next to us’
position class. So we can have: *noun-(PL)-(CASE) (híz-ok-ban, house-PL-INE) or noun-(POSS)-(CASE) (híz-am-ban, house-POSS.1SG-INE).* In order to account for this, I postulate the hierarchy of *sign* adapted from Sag (2010) and presented in figure 1, as well as the partial hierarchy of *inflectional-cxt* sketched in figure 2.

On one hand, the inflectional construction for plural and possession, *possessive-plural-cxt*, is satisfied only by *uninflected-lexeme* and produces an *incomplete-word*, as shown in (32). On the other hand, *case-cxt*, presented in (33), can be satisfied by *lexeme*, ensuring that case suffixes appear either directly on the noun or after possessive or plural suffixes.

(32) **poss-pl-cxt:**

\[
\text{MTR} \begin{bmatrix} \text{inflectional-sign} \end{bmatrix} \\
\text{DTRS} \begin{bmatrix} \text{uninflected-lexeme} \end{bmatrix}
\]

(33) **case-cxt:**

\[
\text{MTR} \begin{bmatrix} \text{word} \end{bmatrix} \\
\text{DTRS} \begin{bmatrix} \text{lexeme} \end{bmatrix}
\]

Each subtype of *case-cxt* concatenates the appropriate suffix to the PHON of the noun or adjective base. It specifies an appropriate value for the MARKING feature. Moreover, I postulate the partial hierarchy of *category* sketched in figure 3: *adjective* and *noun* are both subtypes of *noun-adj* because they share inflectional properties, and *noun* and *postposition* are subtypes of *noun-post* since they have common derivational properties (in particular, derivation with *i* suffix). For exam-
ple, inessive-cxt is presented in (34).\(^7\)

(34) inessive-cxt:

```
MTR
  word
  PHON 1 ⊕ bAn
  SYN [MARKING inessive]
DTRS
  lexeme
  PHON 1
  SYN [CAT noun-adj]
```

```
non-verbal

noun-adj noun-post

adjective noun postposition
```

Figure 3: Partial hierarchy for category type values

### 6.2 Postpositions

Postpositions are represented as lexemes\(^8\) having a specific CAT value and an inherent MARKING feature, which takes the form of the postposition as value. Postpositions can be realized as word either by means of the naked-post-cxt or of the person-marked-post-cxt. As shown in (35), the naked-post-cxt takes a uninfl-lexeme as daughter and produces a mother that is a word but otherwise identical to the daughter. This construction is satisfied by a lexeme containing an argument with non-pronominal content, thus giving a word which combines syntactically with an NP that cannot be a pronoun.

\[(35) \text{nkd-post-cxt:}\]

```
MTR
  word
  PHON 1
DTRS
  uninfl-lexeme
  PHON 1
  SYN [CAT postposition]
  MARKING marked
  ARG-ST ⟨CONT non-pro⟩
```

\(^7\)In this paper, I simplify the morphological rules and do not account for the internal sandhi phenomena that occur with affixation. The notation bAn means that the vowel of the suffix undergoes vowel harmony.

\(^8\)All the postpositions of Hungarian need to be uninfl-lexeme in the lexicon, in order to satisfy the derivational construction introducing the -i suffix (i-deriv-cxt).
As we saw previously, postpositions realize pronominal complements as person suffix with an optional nominative pronoun (cf. examples (25) and (26)). Considering that this is a case of optional pro-drop, I follow the treatment of Bonami and Samvelian (ms) for pro-drop in Persian. I use the non-canonical-pronoun type, which is a subtype of covert-expr (cf. hierarchy in figure 1). nc-pro is defined as having a pronominal value for the feature CONT. Then, if an argument is of type nc-pro, it is not syntactically realized and it has a pronominal content.

The morphological realization of pronominal complement is introduced by means of person-marked-post-cxt. An example for first-person singular postpositions is presented in (36).

(36) 1sg-mrkd-post-cxt:

```
[ uninflected-lexeme
  PHON [ ] ]
[ SYM [ CAT [ postposition ] ] ]
[ ARG-ST [ ] ]
```

The argument on the ARG-ST has a pronominal content and its type of sign is underspecified. Thus, depending on whether the argument has the nc-pro type or the overt-expression type, this construction accounts for both 'pro-drop' (mellet-em) and 'agreement' (én melletem) situations. If the argument has the nc-pro type, it is realized only in morphology and the person-marked postposition forms a PP on its own, as shown in example (37). In contrast, if the argument has an overt-expr type, it is realized both in morphology and in syntax (example (38)).
6.3 Demonstrative agreement

Using the MARKING feature, we can now handle the agreement of postpositions and case suffixes with the demonstrative. I postulate that Hungarian displays a sub-type of head-functor-cxt, called demonstrative-head-functor-cxt (presented in (39)) and specifying that the MOTHER and the DAUGHTERS must share their MARKING
value when one of the DAUGHTERS has a positive value for the DEMONSTRATIVE feature.

(39) \[ \text{dem-hd-func-cxt:} \]
\[
\begin{array}{c}
\text{MTR} \left[ \begin{array}{c}
\text{SYN} | \text{MARKING} \end{array} \right]
\end{array}
\begin{array}{c}
\left[ \begin{array}{c}
\text{DTRS} \left[ \begin{array}{c}
\text{SYN} \left[ \begin{array}{c}
\text{MARKING} \end{array} \right] \end{array} \right]
\end{array} \right]
\end{array}
\]

6.4 Defective postpositions

Defective postpositions are a subtype of postpositions which cannot satisfy the naked-post-cxt, because they lexically require an argument with pronominal content. The MARKING value of each defective postposition corresponds to that of the case suffix with which this postposition is in complementary distribution.

(40) \[ \text{defect-post-lxm:} \]
\[
\begin{array}{c}
\text{uninflected-lexeme}
\end{array}
\begin{array}{c}
\left[ \begin{array}{c}
\text{ARG-ST} \left[ \begin{array}{c}
\text{CONT pronominal} \end{array} \right] \end{array} \right]
\end{array}
\]

(41) \[ \text{inessive-defect-post-lxm:} \]
\[
\begin{array}{c}
\text{uninflected-lexeme}
\end{array}
\begin{array}{c}
\left[ \begin{array}{c}
\text{ARG-ST} \left[ \begin{array}{c}
\text{CONT pronominal} \end{array} \right] \end{array} \right]
\end{array}
\begin{array}{c}
\text{SYN} \left[ \begin{array}{c}
\text{MARKING inessive} \end{array} \right]
\end{array}
\]

As postpositions, defective postpositions head a PP in syntax. Thus, the heads subcategorizing a case suffix select the MARKING feature of their argument, which can be of part of speech noun, as in example (43), or postposition, as in example (42).

(42) Verb selecting an inessive PP: hiszek benned 'I believe in you'

\[
\begin{array}{c}
\text{VAL} \left[ \begin{array}{c}
\text{nc-pro} \end{array} \right]
\end{array}
\begin{array}{c}
\text{PHON} \begin{array}{c}
\text{hiszek}
\end{array}
\end{array}
\begin{array}{c}
\text{SYN} \left[ \begin{array}{c}
\text{CAT verb}
\end{array} \right]
\end{array}
\]
\[
\begin{array}{c}
\text{PP} \left[ \begin{array}{c}
\text{MRKG ine} \end{array} \right]
\end{array}
\begin{array}{c}
\text{word}
\end{array}
\begin{array}{c}
\text{benn} \oplus \text{ed}
\end{array}
\begin{array}{c}
\text{SYN} \left[ \begin{array}{c}
\text{MRKG ine} \end{array} \right]
\end{array}
\begin{array}{c}
\text{VAL} \langle \rangle
\end{array}
\]
\begin{array}{c}
\text{ARG-ST} \left[ \begin{array}{c}
\text{nc-pro}
\end{array} \right]
\end{array}
\begin{array}{c}
\left[ \begin{array}{c}
\text{CONT pronominal} \end{array} \right]
\end{array}
\]
\]
(43) Verb selecting an inessive NP: hiszek Jánosban 'I believe in János'

6.5 Derivational suffix -i

I also want to provide an account for the fact that postpositions can receive the -i adjectivizer suffix, unlike case-marked nouns or defective postpositions. The construction introducing this derivational suffix (i-deriv-cxt in (44)) is well formed if its argument has a non-pronominal content, ensuring that defective postpositions cannot satisfy this construction. The MTR of this construction is an uninflected-lexeme, thus allowing inflectional constructions to apply (cf. examples (8) and (9)). Following the hierarchy of category values in figure 3, I use a noun-post type in order to capture the fact that both nouns and postpositions can be -i suffixed. The impossibility for case-inflected nouns to host the -i suffix is straightforwardly accounted: i-deriv-cxt is a lexeme-to-lexeme construction, while case-marked nouns have the word type.

(44) i-deriv-cxt:
6.6 Nominative and accusative pronouns

Finally, in the case of the accusative suffix, we have an *accusative-cxt*, i.e. a subtype of *case-cxt* introducing an *accusative* value for the noun’s feature MARKING. The accusative personal pronouns as well as the nominative ones are lexically specified as having the *word* type, since they cannot satisfy any derivational or inflectional construction.

(45) ́en:  

\[
\begin{array}{c}
\text{word} \\
\text{ARG-ST} \text{ elist} \\
\text{SYN} \left[ \text{CAT noun} \mid \text{MARKING unmarked} \right]
\end{array}
\]

(46) engemet:  

\[
\begin{array}{c}
\text{word} \\
\text{ARG-ST} \text{ elist} \\
\text{SYN} \left[ \text{CAT noun} \mid \text{MARKING accusative} \right]
\end{array}
\]

7 Conclusion

In this paper, I have described the properties of case suffixes, postpositions and defective postpositions, showing that the *essive* suffix should be reanalysed as a postposition and that defective postpositions are true postpositions from both a morphological and a syntactic point of view.

In order to deal with these facts, I have proposed to analyse case suffixes and postpositions as two different objects: case suffixes are inflectional material on nominal heads, and postpositions as well as defective postpositions are independent words subcategorizing an NP. This distinction straightforwardly accounts for morphological and syntactic differences. Finally, the shared distributional properties between case suffixes, postpositions and defective postpositions are captured by means of the use of the MARKING feature.

References


Spencer, Andrew and Stump, Gregory. ms. Hungarian pronominal case and the dichotomy of content and form in inflectional morphology, draft of May 2011.


