

Spelling Out P

A Unified Syntax of Afrikaans Adpositions and V-Particles

Elements of language that are typically considered to have P (=adpositional) category status frequently exhibit divergent morphosyntactic properties, and it is often the case that one and the same element exhibits divergent morphosyntactic properties. Such elements are *syncretic*. An important fact about syncretism is that it poses a challenge to the ontologically primitive syntactic category.

With a concentrated focus on the Afrikaans spatial P domain, this dissertation develops a system in which observed patterns of syncretism fall out naturally from (i) the fine-grained cartographic structure of the non-primitive P domain, (ii) the “shape” of the formal featural specification on particular (classes of) P elements, and (iii) a theory of how lexical material is matched and inserted to express syntactic structure. In this system, syntactic categories are not ontologically primitive but are composite syntactic objects consisting of (overlapping) sets of hierarchically structured formal features. *Category effects* – all the morphosyntactic characteristics associated with a particular category – arise as epiphenomena of the particular set of features that an element lexicalises at a particular insertion site. As the book progresses, it is demonstrated how all the language-internal variation in expressions containing P elements – simplex and complex prepositional phrases, circumpositional phrases, doubling adpositional phrases, and particle verbs with P-based particles – can be derived from the same basic structure. On the proposed analysis, category boundaries are non-discreet and may be spanned by individual lexical items, accounting for the multiple macro-category membership of some P elements using precisely the same mechanisms that account for multiple micro-category membership.

This book is of interest to linguists working on the nature of syntactic categories, theories of Spellout, approaches to the formal modelling of spatial relations, and the morphosyntax of spatial expressions.

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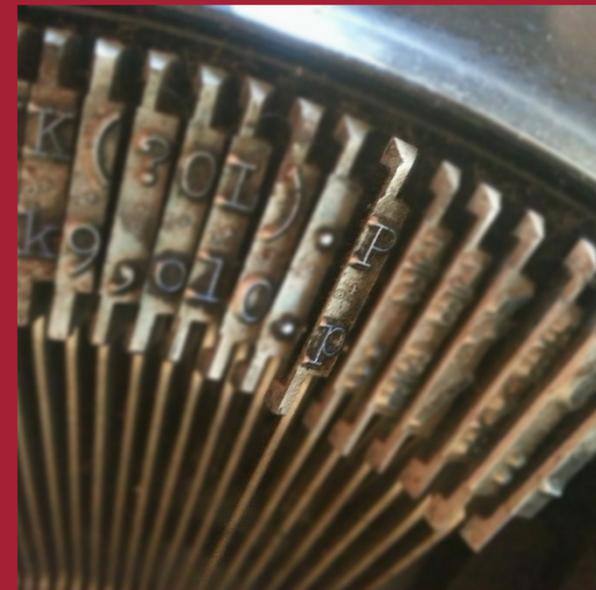
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