

## **Spatial postpositions and lexical change in Uralic**

The category of adpositions is universally wide-spread (Dryer 2013, Hagège 2010) and covers all Uralic languages. Typologically the language family is quite uniform as postpositions are attested in every languages, whereas prepositions occur only in Saamic and Finnic, the two northwestern branches, and a clearly less frequent than postpositions. Spatial relations are characteristically manifested by both case suffixes, adpositions and relational nouns. From the diachronical viewpoint new adpositions are constantly introduced while others take grammatically more specific functions or may be totally lost. Adverbs and relational nouns, most notably body-part-nouns, constitute the two main categories from which new adpositions are adopted (not only in Uralic, but typologically e.g. Haspelmath 2003: 40, Heine & Kuteva 2002: 46–50).

In this paper, we focus on the maintenance and renewal of the oldest reconstructable layer of Uralic spatial postpositions in terms of etymology, lexical semantics, morphology and language typology. There are five postpositions which have a geographically wide distribution in Uralic and, hence, can be reconstructed in Proto-Uralic: *\*ala-* ‘under, below’ (Sammallahti 1988: 536 *\*ila-*), *\*edi-* ‘front’, *\*miñä- ~ \*müñä-* ‘behind; after’, *\*taka-* ‘behind’ (cf. Finnic and Samoyedic ‘behind’ in (1a and 2a)), and *\*(w)üli-* ‘above’ (Aikio 2015: 33–34; Sammallahti 1988: 536, 541, 546; UEW: 6, 276–277, 506–507 573–574). The contemporary distribution indicates that in many cases the lexical stem has been replaced by a secondary adposition in various Uralic branches. Furthermore, the degree to which these adpositions are adapted to productive morphological rules and display earlier inflectional patterns varies considerably. This is illustrated in examples (1 and 2).

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|------|--------------------|-----------------|------|--------------------|-----------------|
| (1a) | <i>xarad-ʔ</i>     | <i>t'axə-na</i> | (1b) | <i>xarad-ʔ</i>     | <i>xew-xəna</i> |
|      | house-GEN          | behind-LOC(PP)  |      | house-GEN          | side-LOC        |
|      | ‘behind the house’ |                 |      | ‘beside the house’ |                 |

Finnish

(2a)	<i>talo-n</i>	<i>taka-na</i>	(2b)	<i>talo-n</i>	<i>viere-llä / viere-ssä</i>
	house-GEN	behind-ESS		house-GEN	side-ADE / side-INE
	‘behind the house’			‘beside the house’	

Our paper sheds light to the renewal and diachronic long-term stability of postpositions as a grammatical and lexical category by means of a detailed morpho-syntactic analysis of the spatial adpositions in Uralic.

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