# PREPOSITIONS IN AROMANIAN

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This contribution has two main purposes, to provide a description of the nature and distribution of prepositions and, more generally, of PPs in Aromanian, and to propose some points of a theoretical treatment of prepositions. We will consider the structures headed by a sub-set of Aromanian prepositions in varieties spoken in South Albania. Locative expressions include simple Ps, such as *ɣ/la* 'at, to', *kət* 'at', *tu* 'at, in', *a* 'at', and complex PPs, where the locative element is followed by a simple preposition or, alternatively, a possessive article (PA; cf. Dobrovie-Sorin, Giurgea 2013), such as *dəninti di/PA* 'before, in front of', *dənpoi di, dup* 'after, behind', *də ɟos di/PA*, *tsu da* 'under', *ndzənə di/pis*, *pisti* 'on, over' etc. Other elementary relators include *di*/*ti* 'of, for, by', *ku* 'with'. Complex PPs involve *di* or alternatively a Linker, i.e. a pre-nominal particle, followed by the oblique form of the noun; in the latter instance, Ps are syntactically constructed like nouns followed by a genitive possessor introduced by the Linker. This distribution, also known from standard Romanian, calls into question Svenonius (2006) as regards the categorial differentiation of AxPart from N (Franco *et al*. 2017). Elementary locative relators *tu, kət, a, la* 'at, to' are sensitive to the referential ranking of place, partially recalling the parallel phenomena in the distribution of Albanian (and other Romance languages) prepositions, which imply differential interpretations depending on animacy and person.

The data we will examine in the following sections have been collected through field investigations in the area around the Southern Abanian town of Fier. Specifically, the data here discussed are of informants from Libofshë.

## 1. SIMPLE PREPOSITIONS

Simple state-in or motion prepositions manifest an animacy split between low and high ranked referents, as in (1). Low ranked referents, in (1a), are associated to

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the locative *a* ‘at, to’, *tu* ‘at, in’, whereas high ranked referents, namely humans and 1st /2nd person pronouns, in (1b), are introduced by the locative *ɣa* to’.[1] The element *kət* ‘at, to’, is admitted with both of kinds of referents.

(1) a. *Low ranked referents*

atseu ini **a** kas
that.MSG comes to home
‘he comes home’

esti **a** / **tu** / **kət** kas
be.3rd at home
‘(s)he is at home’

Mini va s nɛg **tu** ðom
I will Prt go to/in room
‘I will go to my room’

atseu ini **tu** krəvat / local / bəsɛrk-a
that.MSG comes to bed / bar / church-FSG
‘he comes to bed/ bar / church’

b. *High ranked referents*

esti **ɣa** / **kət** mini / noi /atseu
be.3rd at me / us / him-MSG
‘he stays at my/ our/ his place’

atseu nɛdzi **ɣa** fɛt-a a mɛu / o tsu-i
that.MSG goes to girl-FSG PA my.FSG / PA him-OBL
‘he goes to my/ his daughter’

eu ini **ɣa** mini/tini/noi/voi/atseu/atsɛu
he comes to me/you/us/you.PL/him.MSG/her.FSG
‘He comes towards me/you/us/them/him’

The other simple prepositions exclude the split we have noticed for (1), as in the case of comitative, in (2a), instrumental, in (2a’), and temporal elements, in (2b).

(2) a. **ku** mini / atseu / atsɛu / noi
With me / him.MSG / her. FSG / us
‘with me/ him / her/ us’

vini **ku** tini/mini/noi/atse-u/məjɛr-i/fitʃor-u
he.comes with you/me/us/him.MSG/ woman-FSG/boy-MSG
‘He comes with me/you/us/him/the woman/the boy’

a’. **ku** kətsut-u
with knife-MSG
‘with the knife’

b. **dup** mini / atseu / noi
After me / him.MSG / us

[1] In these varieties the original **l* in simple onsets has changed to *ɣ*. Thus, *ɣa* ‘to’ corresponds to the form *la* occurring in Standard Romanian and other Aromanian varieties (Poçi 2009).

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The prepositional introducer *di* syncretizes benefactive, relational, agentive and sentential occurrences. (3) exemplifies nominal contexts, with different readings, whereby (3a) is benefactive, (3b) locative, (3c) material, (3d) agentive. (4) illustrates *di* as the introducer of infinitival sentences (Manzini and Savoia 2018a,b).

(3) a. o ar faptə **di / ti** mini/ atseu / məjɛr-a
It they.have made for me / him-MSG / woman-FSG
'They have made it for me/ him/ the woman'

mini o fakə **ti/di** mini/tini/voi/atse-ʎi/ fitʃor-u
I it make for me/you/you.PL/them.MPL/boy-SG
'I do it for myself/you/ you/them/ the woman / the boy'

b. Esti **di** kal-i
It.is in street-FSG
'it is in the street'

c. esti **di** dʒam
It.is of glass
'it is glass'

d. Aist kəmiʃ-li səntə ɣatə **di** ia
these shirt-FPL are washed by her
'these shirts are washed by her'

(4) a. mbari **ti** məkari
I.finished Prep to.eat
'I finished eating'

b. ma tsə dzɛk **di** fətsɛri
Progr to.you I.say Prep to.do
'I am telling you to do it'

In Aromanian simple prepositions select the direct case, substantially nominative, since the same forms, *mini* 'I/ me' and *tini* 'you', encompass subject and object contexts, as illustrated in (5). In nominal paradigms only definite feminine singular oblique and definite plural oblique are systematically registered by, respectively, *-i* in the feminine and *ru/ ʎu/ lu* in the plural (Manzini, Savoia 2018a).

(5)

| | 1sg | 2sg | 3sg | 3pl | 1pl | 2pl |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Direct | *mini* | *tini* | *eu/ia* | *eʎ/eli* | *noi* | *voi* |
| Dat | *a ɲia* | *a tsea* | *o ɣui/a jei* | *o ɣor(ə)* | *a nau* | *a vau* |
| Gen | *a mɛu* | *a tau* | *o ɣui/a jei* | *o ɣor(ə)* | *a nɔst* | *a vɔst* |

In standard Romanian no inflectional difference distinguishes nominative and accusative, in the nominal paradigm; nevertheless, the contrast between nominative and accusative in 1st/ 2nd singular pronouns justifies the conclusion that simple prepositions select accusative (Dobrovie-Sorin, Giurgea 2013).

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## 2. POSSESSIVE PARTICLES IN GENITIVE, DATIVE AND PREPOSITIONAL CONTEXTS

Differently from the other oblique contexts, dative and genitive require a specialized introducer (possessive article, PA; Dobrovie-Sorin, Giurgea 2013) that precedes the DP lexicalizing the possessor. Three alternants, *a, o, ali*, occur according to the phi-features of the possessor, as in (6).

| (6) | msg | fsg | mpl | fpl | $1^{st}/2^{nd}/3^{rd}F$ |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | *o* | *ali* | *o* | *o* | *a* |

Let us consider first the dative. The introducers are *ali* for feminine nouns, in (7b), and *o* for masculine nouns and 3rd person masculine pronouns, in (7a,a'); besides, *o* precedes feminine plural nouns/ pronouns, as in (7a"). $1^{st}/2^{nd}$ person pronouns are preceded by *a*, in (7c,c'); *a* combines also with 3rd person feminines in (7b'). The oblique inflection, if present, i.e. in $1^{st}$ / $2^{nd}$ singular person pronouns and in the plural of nouns, is lexicalized.

(7) a. i o ded o kusurinul-u o tou
to.him it I.gave PA.M cousin-MSG PA.m your.M
'I gave it to your cousin'

a'. i u ar datə o ts-ui/ɣ-ui/ɣ-ɔrə
to.him it they.have given PA him/him/them
'They gave it to him/them'

a". i o ded o fet-ru
to.them it I.gave PA girl-PL.OBL
'I gave it to the girls'

b. i o ded al-i fɛt-i
to.him/her it I.gave PA-F.OBL girl-FSG.OBL
'I gave it to the girl'

b'. i o r datə a je-i
to.her it they.have given PA her-OBL
'They have given it to her'

c. ɲ/ts/i u ar datə a ɲ-ia/ts-ea
to.me/you/him it they.have given PA/to me/you
'They gave it to me/you/her'

c'. n/v o r datə a noi/voi
to.us/you it they.have given PA us/ you
'they have given it to us/you'

d. i o ded al-i un məjer-i / o un bərbat
to.him/her it I.gave Itr- FSG.OBL a woman-F.OBL/PA a man
'I gave it to a woman/ to a man'

In genitive contexts, 3rd person pronominal possessors present the same oblique form as in dative contexts, thus reproducing in this respect the pattern of

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nouns, as in (8a,a'). 1st/ 2nd person possessors are lexicalized by possessive pronouns[2] agreeing with the head noun and preceded by the PA elements, as in (9a,a',b,b'). The same introducers appear before indefinite DPs, in 9c, and in predicative contexts, in (9d).

(8) a. mən-a o fitʃor-u/ al-i fət-i
the hand PA boy-MSG/ PA-F.OBL girl-FSG.OBL
'the hand of the boy/the girl'

kɛn-li o fitʃo-ʎ-u
dog.MSG PA boy-PL.OBL-M
'the dog of the boys'

a'. librə o ts-u-i /ts-u-ɣɔrə
books.DEF PA him-M.OBL /them-M-PL.Obl
'his/their books'

(9) a. libr-a/mən-a a mɛu/tau/nɔstər
book-FSG/hand-FSG PA my.FSG/your.FSG/our
'my/your/our book/hand'

a'. librə a mɛl-i/tal-i/nɔst-i
books.DEF PA my-FPL/your-FPL/our-FPL
'my/your books'

b. kɛn-li a ɲeu/tou/nɔstər
dog-MSG PA my.MSG/your.MSG/our
'my/your/our dog'

b'. kɛɲ-li a ɲeʎ-i/toʎ-i/nɔst-i
dog-DEF.PL PA my-MPL/your-MPL/our-PL
'my/your/our dogs'

c. aist esti a ɲeu / o ɣ-u-i / a j-e-i
this.MSG is PA. my.MSG /PA 3rd-M-OBL/ PA 3rd-F-OBL
'This is mine/ his/ her'

d. aist esti al-i sɔr-i a tau
this.MSG is PA sister-FSG.OBL PA your.FSG
'This is of your sister'

These elements are etymologically connected with standard Romanian possessive articles *al/ a/ ai/ ale* (Dobrovie-Sorin, Giurgea 2013) that introduce genitive DPs. Their origin is discussed: either from preposition *a* + definite article or from the demonstrative (Giurgea 2013). The invariable form *a* is attested in Old Romanian (Pană Dindelegane 2016). Naturally, *a* could be connected to the preposition *a*

[2] In 1st and 2nd singular possessives the final *–u* is the velarized outcome of an original *-l*. The gender difference is lexicalized by the different realizations of the stem vowels.

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(< Latin *ad*); this could explain why in Old Romanian *a* was admitted also as the dative introducer (Pană Dindelegane 2016). Some crucial properties differentiate the Romanian possessive articles and the Aromanian ones. In fact, Romanian PA agree with the head noun of the genitive construct behaving like other types of linkers (Franco *et al*. 2015, Manzini, Savoia 2018a), whereas Aromanian PA agree with the possessor. Furthermore, in Aromanian possessive articles introduce datives as well; in Romanian possessive articles only occur in genitives, while datives are introduced by the preposition *la* (selecting accusative; Dobrovie-Sorin, Giurgea 2013). The distribution based on the agreement properties of the possessor seems to be a cue in favor of the demonstrative nature of *a*.

### 3. COMPLEX PREPOSITIONS: *PLACE* + *DI/ PI* AND PPS + PA

In complex prepositions the place is specified by a lexical element introduced by a preposition, like in *dən-inti* 'before/ in front of', while the relation with the complement DP is lexicalized by *di/ti*, as in (10a–e).

(10) a. dən-inti di atseu / noi / karig-i
in front of that.MSG / we / chair-FSG
'in front of him/ us/ the chair'

b. də nə poi di mini/ karig-i
behind of me / chair-FSG
'behind me/ the chair'

c. də ɟɔs di mini / kɛn-li /karig-i
under of me/ dog-MSG / chair-FSG
'under me/ the dog/ the chair'

d. n dzənə di/ pi mini / kap-u a ɲe-u
On of me / head-MSG PA my-MSG
'over me/ on my head'

e. a prɔpa di mini/ karig-i
Prep near of me/ chair-FSG
'near to me/ chair'

In complex prepositions instead of *di* we can find the structure with PA between the place and the complement DP, as in (10a). In this case, the same distribution of the possessive articles is found as in the genitive contexts. So, 1st/ 2nd person pronouns occur in the form of possessive elements agreeing in the feminine, suggesting that the place element is interpreted as feminine, as in (11b).

(11)

a. dunə pɔi o ɣu-i / a je-i
behind PA he.MSG-OBL / PA she.FSG-OBL
'behind him/ her'

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dən-inti al-i tse-i mujɛr-i / fɛt-i
In front PA-OBL that-OBL woman-FSG.OBL / girl-FSG.OBL
'In front of that woman/ the girl'

də ɟɔs o kɛn-li / fitʃor-u / ɣɔrə
under PA dog-MSG / boy-MSG / them.OBL
'under the dog/ the boy/ them'

b. dən-inti a mɛu / nɔstr / tau / o ɣɔrə
in front PA my.FSG/ our.FSG/ your.FSG / PA them.OBL
'In front of me / us / you/ them'

In short, some asymmetries emerge: (i) The distribution of locative prepositions is sensitive to the animacy of the referent, whereby animacy low ranked nouns combine with a sub-set of prepositions that are not admitted with high ranked nouns; (ii) Genitive and dative imply a different type of introducer, i.e. the possessive article, that agrees with the possessor; (iii) 1st/ 2nd person possessors select the invariant PA *a*, followed by the oblique form of the pronoun in dative and the possessive pronoun in genitive.

## 4. PREPOSITIONAL AND OBLIQUE CONTEXTS: AN ANALYSIS

Location in natural languages is generally externalized by the same cases or adpositions which introduce genitive, dative, instrumental, i.e. non-spatial obliques; in other words, the two are syncretic (Franco, Manzini 2017). In Aromanian, genitives and datives do not show this syncretism since they require a different morphosyntactic mechanism based on possessive articles that introduce the possessor/ recipient. In keeping also with Franco, Manzini (2017), we pursue the idea that prepositions are instantiations of a basic relation that we characterize as the part-whole relation, i.e. inclusion [⊆], in the sense discussed in Belvin, Den Dikken (1997: 170). According to them, 'entities have various zones associated with them, such that an object or eventuality may be included in a zone associated with an entity without being physically contained in that entity… The type of zones which may be associated with an entity will vary with the entity'. Hence possession on a par with location can be understood as types of 'zonal' inclusion (Manzini, Savoia (2011). An example is provided by the different interpretations associated to *di*, that includes readings for 'for', 'of' and 'in', as illustrated in (3). This syncretism strengthens our idea that *di* can be treated as the elementary relator [⊆], as in (12).

(12) **di**: [⊆] 'at, to, of, in'

This analysis accounts for the occurrence of *di* as the introducer of nominal and sentential complements. By way of example, the benefactive interpretation may be

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reduced to a simple inclusion reading, as in (13), where it is the event type that contributes to interpreting *mini* ‘me’ as the beneficiary.

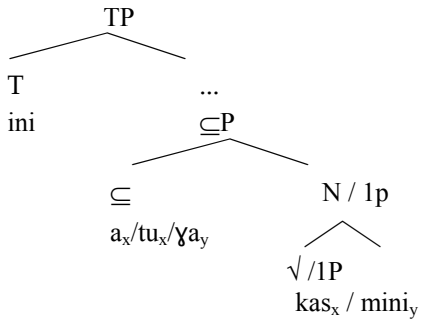
(13) o ar faptə [ $_{PP\subseteq}$ di [$_{NP}$ mini]] ‘They have made it for me’

As to its sentential occurrence in (4), the preposition *di* (or *a*), as in (14), is required to license the infinitive, treated as obliques, as generally in Romance languages (Manzini, Savoia 2018a,b).

(14) ma tsə dzɛk [ $_{PP\subseteq}$ di [$_{CP}$ fətsɛri]] ‘I am telling you to do (it)’

Coming now to the locative readings, we assume that state-in and motion prepositions do not contribute a fixed spatial meaning to the sentence. What they do is to relate a complement DP to a locative event, establishing a part-whole relation between location and DP, as in the structure in (15) for the sentences *ini a/ tu kas* ‘(s)he comes home’ vs. *ini ɣa mini* ‘(s)he comes to me’ in (1a,b). In (15) the prepositions are assigned the property [⊆].

(15)




In the spirit of the proposal in Franco, Manzini (2017), the motion or state-in interpretation is derived from the type of locative event introduced by the verb in conjunction with the locative noun. This seems to be confirmed by the fact that prepositions are sensitive to the lexical content of the place noun, specifically, as noticed, as regards its animacy properties, as illustrated in (1a,b). We may think that simple prepositions specialized for the locative reading implement a spatial specification, understandable as a lexical restriction on the elementary relator ⊆, as in (16).

(16) **tu**:[3] [[ Loc] ⊆ ] ‘at, to’

As a consequence, the DOM effect, contrasting *ɣa / kət* and *a/ tu*, can be imputed to the lexical properties of these prepositions, sensitive to the animacy/ deicticity

[3] As for the preposition *tu*, we may connect it with the Latin adverb *intus*, well attested in Italian dialects (we thank Ion Giurgea for the suggestion).

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(1st/2nd person) of the complement. In fact, natural languages tend to conceptualize highly ranked (animate) referents as atomic individuals with a surrounding 'inclusion zone', as opposed to extended surfaces, locations and objects in the space. For instance, in Romance there are different ways of introducing animate locations, *chez* in French, *da* in Italian, *ddu* 'where' in South Italian varieties. In conclusion, high ranked elements cannot be introduced by prepositions such as *tu*, that have an extended surface restrictor.

Consider, finally, the contexts where *di* introduces a nominal complement in complex PPs. It, again, lexicalizes the basic inclusion relation, as in (17).

(17) də $[_{DP}$ ɟɔs $[_{PP\subseteq}$ di $[_{NP}$ karig-i]]] 'under the chair'

In (17) we also suggest an analysis of the complex PPs by treating the locative element (Axial Part), as a locative element followed by the its 'possessor', more precisely, its 'zonal inclusion' space fixed by the noun. In this, we adhere to the analysis of Franco, Manzini (2017), whereby there is no need to assume a special category Axial Part in the sense of Svenonius (2006), and that the relation between the complement DP (Ground) and the spatial point specification introduced by the preceding element is adequately expressed by means the structure N [P [DP]]. *di* in (17) is able to express the relation between (*də*) *ɟɔs* 'the bottom' and the zonal inclusion of *karigi* 'the chair'. The initial preposition, if present, lexicalizes the sequence as a complement of the verb.

## 5. GENITIVE AND DATIVE

Genitive and dative contexts are expressed by means of possessive articles, as seen in section 2. Possessive articles agree with the possessor DP, which presents the specialized oblique case in the plural forms of the noun paradigm and in the 1st /2nd singular pronouns at least in dative. This syncretic distribution significantly fits in with the proposal in Manzini, Savoia (2011, 2018) whereby all types of possession imply the same basic inclusion relation, so that the conceptual closeness of 'dative' and 'genitive' is reproduced by the morpho-syntactic coincidence, also characterizing Albanian. As underlined in section 2, the introducer of genitive/dative of Aromanian agrees with the following DP, showing the oblique inflection. Differently from Aromanian, Albanian genitival article agrees with the possessum, as in (18), where the Linker *e* agrees in the feminine with *dor-a* 'the hand'.

(18) dor-$a_F$ [ [ e $_F$] [[[burr]i $_{M/N}$] t $_{OBL\subseteq}$] $_{DP}$]
hand-DEF.F Lkr.F man-MSG-OBL
'the hand of the man' Albanian

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The analysis in (18) treats the Albanian pre-nominal article as a type of Linker (Manzini et al. 2014), i.e. a D element which embeds the oblique DP. The idea is that a possessor/inclusion relation connects two arguments and the article (Linker) provides a (partial) saturation of the external possessum argument of the genitive DP. The fact that the introducer of Aromanian agrees with the possessor, could suggest that it is the conjunction of *a*, by now understood as a relator, and an inflectional element fully lexicalized only in a sub-set of the contexts. In other words, *a* lexicalizes the possessive relation letting agreement work normally via inflectional mechanisms, as in (19).

(19) [ [ $a_{\subseteq P}$] [[ $li_{FEM}$] [[fɛt √] $i_{F.OBL \subseteq /N}$] DP] PP]

We may wonder how an elementary prepositional element such as *a* is able to satisfy the properties of Linkers, usually simple D elements (Manzini *et al*. 2014, Franco et al. 2015). The point is that Lkr structures duplicate different parts of the possession structure, for instance through a D element doubling the possessum/head noun. Nevertheless, in Aromanian it actually provides a double of the (morphologically reduced) genitive inflectional properties of the possessor/embedded noun. As to 1st/2nd persons, in the genitive, in (20), *a* precedes the possessive pronoun agreeing with the head noun. So, *a* is the basic exponent for the part-whole relation, while the possessive lezicalizes both arguments of the inclusion relation, agreeing with the head noun[4].

(20) kɛɲ-$li_{MPL}$ [ [ $a_{\subseteq P}$] [[ɲeʎ$_{1P.M}$ √] –$i_{PL}$ ]] PP] ‘my dogs’

1st/2nd person possessive pronouns are also embedded under spatial/temporal expressions such as ‘behind’, ‘in front’ in (6), which otherwise select the oblique form of 3rd person pronouns or of nouns. Following Mardale *et al*. (2013), the form of the possessive agrees with the head of the spatial/temporal phrase, which has nominal in character, as in (21).

(21) dən- inti a mɛu
Prep front PA my.FSG
‘before/ in front of me’

[4] It is of note that possessive structures of this type - *Prep+article+possessive* agreeing with the head noun - are attested also in other languages. More precisely, this structure characterizes many Southern Italian dialects, as, for example, the Calabrian variety of Morano in (i) (Baldi, Savoia 2019).

(i) kwiss-u jɛ ɖɖ- u mej-u/ toj-u/ soj-u/ noʃʃ-u
this-MSG is OF MSG my-MSG / your-MSG/his-MSG/ our-MSG

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This supports the conclusion that the Axial Part is nothing else than a nominal expression embedding a PP introducing the inclusion relation between the axial noun and the location/ possessor.

## 6. CONCLUSIONS

In this contribution we pursue the idea that the basic relation expressed by prepositions is the inclusion relation between two nouns, the place / possessor and the contained/ possessum element. This has allowed us to unify the treatment of different prepositional structures – locative contexts and other types of relations - under the same conceptualization, making it possible to explain the syncretism phenomena. The DOM effects emerging in the distribution of the prepositions can be referred to their lexical content. Moreover, we have proposed an analysis of the complex prepositions whereby there is no need of a special syntactic category of AxialPart, but they can be reduced to N [P [PP]] structures.

Finally, we have examined the genitive and dative structures in Aromanian, characterized by the recourse to an introducer recalling Linkers, present in Albanian as well as in many other languages. However, in Aromanian introducers show peculiar properties, that we have analysed as implying the basic relator *a*.

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## LES PREPOSITIONS EN AROUMAIN

### Abstract

Cet article a deux principaux objectifs, c'est-à-dire décrire la distribution des prépositions et des syntagmes prépositionnels dans les variétés aroumaines parlées dans l'Albanie du Sud, et délinéer une analyse des propriétés lexicales et morpho-syntactiques des prépositions dans le cadre théorique du minimalisme. Nous considérons les prépositions simples avec une particulière attention pour les structures locatives, qui présentent différentes réalisations entre les noms de référents animés et les noms de référents inanimés. Quant aux prépositions complexes, nous proposons une analyse de leur structure interne. Enfin nous étudions les contextes de génitif et de datif qui montrent le recours à un élément introductif qui se combine avec la forme oblique du nom ou du pronom, du quel nous discutons les propriétés morpho-syntactiques.

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