

How much structure do Beserman pseudopartitives have

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Since Selkirk (1977) pseudopartitive constructions (PPCs) in many languages have been described as structures involving one DP, unlike true partitives, which are structured as one DP hosting another one (Hoeksema 1996; Stickney 2007). Specifically, in Russian PPCs hardly allow pronominalization of the quantified noun.

In Beserman (Uralic > Permian), however, PPCs allow pronominalization of the Quantified (1). Furthermore, the quantified noun takes demonstratives (2) and possessive markers (with “faded partitive” semantics in terms of de Hoop 2003; Seržant 2012). The aim of this paper is to reveal the structural properties of PPCs in Beserman. We examine constructions with measure nouns (“Cardinal + Quantifier + Quantified”) with various lexical types of nouns: Quantifiers as physical objects (spoons of sugar) vs. non-physical objects (handfuls of sugar); Quantified mass nouns (silver) vs. count nouns (mushrooms), Quantified animate (geese) / inanimate nouns (mushrooms, liquids).

First, we offer examples showing that the whole construction syntactically represents a full-fledged DP, since it includes demonstrative modifiers and morphological marking: the markers of case, plurality and possessive markers must occur on the Quantified, cf. (3ab).

Next, we show that the Quantifier in Beserman PPCs is higher than N-level. Unlike the modifier and in nominal juxtaposition constructions (see Arkhangelskiy 2018), it allows modification (4), linear separation from the nominal head (5) and change of positions with the nominal head (6), replacement by question words. However, it cannot take nominal morphological markers, be replaced by anaphoric pronouns and occur in constructions specific to DPs.

By contrast, the Quantified can be replaced by an anaphoric pronoun (1) and take demonstrative modifiers (2). However, it is only possible in case of “faded partitive” and kind reference reading, hence, the anaphora and the demonstrative do not refer to concrete entities.

Therefore, we claim that a PPC in Beserman is structured as follows:

[[two glasses]_{NP} [this milk]_{DP}]

The comparison of PPCs to NPs gives the following results. It has been shown that NPs with the genitive fall into two types: the first type, canonical NPs with the genitive (see Serdobolskaya 2022), which include relational nouns and nominalizations, do not allow change of linear positions and non-adjacency. By contrast, the second type of groups, the ‘loose’ type, including common nouns as a head, allows both of them. Thus, it follows the pattern observed with non-marked adjectives.

PPC follow the ‘loose’ type, since the Quantifier and the Quantified may change linear positions and be non-adjacent: they may be separated by focus particles (5) and by the verb (6). Thus, they form structures similar to common nouns. However, this phrase is different from genitive and adjectival adjuncts in the following way: it occurs non-marked in the contexts where genitive modifiers and adjectives, participles and other nominal adjuncts obligatorily (or predominantly) take the possessive: by head ellipsis, in narrow focus (also in contrastive focus), in independent sentences (e.g. answers to question), in case of linear separation from the nominal head. We suggest that the Quantifier is a specific phrasal constituent, which may possibly be termed as a “measure phrase” (MeasP) as in Yadoff (1999) for prepositional phrases in Russian and in Soloveva (2019) for PPCs in Hill Mari.

Examples

- pronominalization of the Quantified:

(1) *keña piñâ pun-i-d slal-z-e? – kâk piñâ so-je pun-i.*
 how.many spoon put-PST-2SG salt-P.3SG-ACC two spoon that-ACC put-PST.1SG
 ‘How many spoons of salt did you put? – I put two spoons of salt (lit. of that).’ (EL)

- demonstrative modifiers on the Quantified:

(2) *mon tak-to ič’i slalze puniš’ko, kâk č’âpâl’â ta slal-en sil’-ez sofs’em kuž’ât e-z lu.*
 two pinch this salt-INSTR meat-P.3(SG) at.all salted NEG.PST-3(SG) become
 ‘Usually I don’t put much salt, but with two pinches of THIS (kind of) SALT the meat came out as unsalted.’ (EL)

- morphological marking

(3) a. *sura-no š’ima vâj-en kâk š’uš’ piž’-en.*
 mix-DEBIT sunflower oil-INSTR two handful flour-INSTR
 b. ... **kâk š’uš’-en piž’-en.*
 two handful-INSTR flour-INSTR

‘Mix some sunflower oil with two handfuls of flour.’

(4) *kwin’ pič’i š’uš’ kule jedâ piž’.*
 three little handful need barley flour

‘[I] need three little handfuls of barley flour.’

- pseudopartitive construction: the Quantified is modified by an adjective; the Quantifier and the Quantified are separated by a focus particle:

(5) *mânam kâšno-je tunne odig pu gâne vil’*
 my wife-P.1SG today one tree only new
kartoška kop-âšt-i-z=n’i.
 potatoes dig-SMLF-PST-3(SG)-already

‘Today my wife dug just one bush of potatoes.’

- pseudopartitive construction: preposing of the Quantified and non-adjacency

(6) *slal baš’t-â kâk pin’â*
 salt give-IMP(SG) two spoon

‘Give me two spoons of salt.’

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