

## WHY PARTITIVE? POSSIBLE MOTIVATIONS FOR THE PARTITIVE COMPLEMENT OF FINNIC ADPOSITIONS

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**Abstract.** Adpositions localize an entity (*Figure*) with respect to another entity (*Ground*), designated by the complement of the adposition. Most Finnic adpositions are postpositions with a genitive *Ground*, while prepositions typically have a partitive *Ground*. This work is a cognitive-linguistic study of the synchronic and diachronic semantics of partitive-*Ground* adpositions. It is argued that adpositions with a partitive *Ground* select a proximal perspective to the locational relationship, while those with a genitive *Ground* select a distal perspective. Three alternative hypotheses are introduced and compared concerning the origin of two Finnish partitive-*Ground* adpositions, *kohti* ‘towards’ and *päin* ‘towards’: 1) These adpositions originated as instructive-case body-part expressions of position (cf. *selin* ‘with one’s back at’), and their partitive *Ground* indicated a viewpoint person; 2) They were instructive forms with a meronymic-locative meaning, expressing a more precise target area within the *Ground*, together with a directionality toward that area; 3) The *Ground* of *kohti* and *päin* was originally a partitive object of ‘aiming’ or ‘shooting’ verbs, and the soon-to-be adpositions themselves were lexicalized adverbs of direction.

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### 1. Introduction

In cognitive-linguistic terms, the basic function of an adposition is to localize an entity (*Figure*) with respect to another entity (*Ground*; see Talmy 2000: Ch. 5). It does so by indicating *Figure*’s presence in a *search domain*, which is a Cognitive Grammar term for the region in which *Figure* can be situated (Langacker 1987: 286). For example, in *the gazebo behind the house*, the preposition *behind* expresses a locative relationship with ‘the gazebo’ as *Figure* and ‘the house’ as *Ground*.

*Behind* establishes a search domain that is adjacent to the ‘back’ side of the house (regardless of whether ‘back’ is understood in the intrinsic or the relative sense, in terms of Levinson 2003). The precise size and shape of the search domain are variable and depend on the context: it can be a smaller or larger region, or a three-dimensional space, but may also be a direction extending unimaginably far from Ground (as in *Can you see the Moon behind those treetops?*).

In the article, I discuss possible semantic motivations for the partitive (PAR) case marking the Ground of many adpositions in the Finnic languages. My chief focus is on Finnish, but to clarify historical issues I also consider data from other Finnic languages, on the basis of the previous literature, dictionaries, and other sources. For purposes of illustration, I use examples from the earlier literature, as well as both authentic and self-constructed examples from my native language, Finnish. My main objective is to examine the rationale for the PAR marking of Ground. A cognitive-linguistic approach is useful, in that it equates meaning with conceptualization. This consists of the conceptual strategies chosen by the language-user in representing the situation being designated: for example, what is expressed and what is left unexpressed, how the designated entities and relations between them are conceived, what kind of perspective is chosen, how imagery and fictive elements contribute to the meaning, what is foregrounded and what backgrounded, and so on.<sup>1</sup> As I argue in this paper, many such elements play a central role in the meaning of Finnic adpositions.

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1 Langacker (2008: 4) characterizes the significance of conceptualization for linguistic meaning as follows: “Analyzing language from this perspective leads to remarkable conclusions about linguistic meaning and human cognition. Remarkable, first, is the extent to which an expression’s meaning depends on factors other than the situation described. On the one hand, it presupposes an elaborate conceptual substrate, including such matters as background knowledge and apprehension of the physical, social, and linguistic context. On the other hand, an expression imposes a particular construal, reflecting just one of the countless ways of conceiving and portraying the situation in question. Also remarkable is the extent to which imaginative abilities come into play. Phenomena like metaphor (e.g. *vacant stare*) and reference to “virtual” entities (e.g. *any cat*) are pervasive, even in prosaic discussions of actual circumstances. Finally, these phenomena exemplify the diverse array of mental constructions that help us deal with – and in large measure constitute – the world we live in and talk about. It is a world of extraordinary richness, extending far beyond the physical reality it is grounded in.”

In Finnic, the most common and historically oldest adpositional construction consists of a genitive (GEN) Ground followed by a postposition (GEN + ADP; for a recent account, see Jaakola and Ojutkangas 2023). However, quite a few Finnic adpositions take their Ground in the partitive (PAR) case. These *PAR adpositions* tend to be either prepositions or bipositions, the latter of which can serve as either prepositions or postpositions (for detailed accounts, see Grünthal 2003, 2005, 2019). Some *PAR adpositions* in Finnish have apparently undergone changes in their case government (GEN > PAR) during the history of written Finnish (Merimaa 2004, 2007). It is also worth noting that Finnic adpositions are a semi-open class, including both more and less grammaticalized items; it is extremely difficult to draw a line between adpositions and other linguistic elements, such as lexicalized noun and verb forms (see Grünthal 2003: Ch. 4).

The Finnic partitive is historically a SEPARATIVE<sup>2</sup> ('from') local case that has grammaticalized into a marker of some objects, some existential S arguments ("pivots"), and some predicate nominals in Finnic (for a brief historical overview, see Kittilä, Laakso & Ylikoski 2022). In those functions, the partitive signals unboundedness of quantity, non-culminating aspect, or both, as well as negative polarity when under negation (for a recent cognitive-linguistic account, see Huumo 2023). In addition, the partitive case marks many lexicalized adverbs.

According to Grünthal (2003, 2019), the first *PAR adpositions* arose from comparative expressions such as *ennen* 'before'; i.e., 'earlier than', for instance, *ennen sota-a* [before war-PAR] 'before the war'. This development was motivated by an important extension of the SEPARATIVE meaning of the partitive: that of indicating a STANDARD of comparison. Other common *PAR adpositions* include (examples in Finnish) *edellä* 'ahead of [in-tandem motion by Figure and Ground]', *ilman* ~ *paitsi* 'without', *keskellä* 'in the middle of', *kohti* 'towards', *päin* 'towards; against', *lähellä* 'near', *pitkin* 'along', *varten* 'for' (i.e. serving a function), *vastapäätä* 'opposite', *vasten* 'against', *ympäri* 'around' (Penttilä

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2 I use small capitals 1) for glosses (PAR, GEN), 2) for the semantic roles of NPs (AGENT, PATIENT, STANDARD, etc.) and 3) for other semantic terms or concepts. Thus, SEPARATIVE is a semantic label for elements that express a direction out of or away from a search domain. I write the names of concrete cases in standard orthography (e.g., elative, ablative). To save space, however, I use gloss-style abbreviations (GEN, PAR) even in the main text for grammatical elements that are mentioned frequently.

2002[1963]: 370–371; for other Finnic languages, see Stoebke 1968; the list is not exhaustive).

The article has two main objectives: 1) to present an overview of the semantics of the central spatial PAR adpositions in Finnish, followed by a summary and discussion of earlier explanations for their PAR Ground, in section 2, and 2) to evaluate three alternative hypotheses regarding the origin of the PAR Ground of two near-synonymous adpositions, *kohti* and *päin* (both meaning ‘towards’), in section 3.

In section 2, I analyze earlier accounts and semantic subgroups of PAR adpositions. In the spirit of Talmy’s (2000) *Cognitive Semantics*, I follow Haukioja (1998) in arguing that these adpositions select a proximal perspective on Figure and search its environment for Grounds to localize Figure. They contrast with genitive-Ground (GEN) adpositions, which in most cases present a global and holistic perspective on the locational relationship, including Figure, Ground, and the whole search domain. I also point out that scalar meanings are central in the semantics of many PAR adpositions. This is apparently the (semantic) reason why many PAR adpositions accept degree modifiers that specify the scalar meaning of the locational relationship, as in *hyvin lähellä taloa* [very near house-PAR] ‘very near the house’.

In section 3, I focus on two particular PAR adpositions, *kohti* and *päin*, both meaning ‘towards’. These are an interesting case in point, since their directional meaning is the opposite of the old SEPARATIVE meaning of the partitive: they indicate a direction towards, not away from Ground. I present and compare three alternative hypotheses regarding the grammaticalization of *kohti* and *päin* into PAR adpositions:

#1) They originated in expressions of posture or position, i.e. ‘Figure’s (body) part is facing Ground’. Thus the directional meaning of *kohti* and *päin* may have originated in the expression of Figure’s orientation (not necessarily motion) with respect to Ground. Orientation, as a directional concept, is based on fictive motion (more precisely, the ‘emanation’ subtype; cf. Talmy 2000: 105–111). Unlike in the case of actual motion, its direction (Figure > Ground or vice versa) depends purely on the conceptualization used. The original direction of such fictive motion may thus have been Ground > Figure, based on the SEPARATIVE meaning of the partitive (more concretely: ‘Figure is oriented in a certain way, as seen from Ground’s point of view’).

#2) The earlier function of *päin* and *kohti* was spatial-meronymic: they designated a more precise subregion within the encompassing region indicated by the PAR Ground, which itself had a holonymic function. When preceded by a demonstrative, they still serve such a function: *tä-hän kohti ~ päin metsä-ä* [this.ILL place.INSTR ~ head.INSTR forest-PAR] ‘to (toward) this part (~ this end) of the forest’. Thus, the historical referents of *kohta* ‘place; front side’ and *pää* ‘end; head’ would not have been body-parts of Figure but topographical subparts of Ground.

#3) The PAR Ground of *kohti* and *päin* was originally a partitive object in the semantic role of a TARGET, typical with verbs of (concrete or metaphorical) ‘aiming’, ‘throwing’, or ‘shooting’ (e.g., *a bear* in *To shoot a bear*). The elements *kohti* and *päin* were lexicalized adverbs of direction. The combination of the two was reanalyzed as an adpositional construction, with the original partitive object as Ground. This would mean that the grammaticalization of *kohti* and *päin* into PAR adpositions was a more recent development than is assumed in Hypotheses #1 and #2.

In my view, all three hypotheses provide plausible explanations for the counter-intuitive use of the PAR Ground with the two directional adpositions indicating direction ‘towards’ G.

## 2. An overview of the semantics of PAR adpositions

### 2.1. The class of PAR adpositions

The PAR complement of some Finnic adpositions is a relatively recent development and has its roots in the emergence of prepositional constructions in the Finnic languages (see Stoeckle 1968; Grünthal 2003, 2005, 2019). Its origin has been dated to a phase when the old SEPARATIVE (‘from’) case partitive had already started grammaticalization toward its present-day functions of marking objects, existential S arguments, and some predicate nominals. According to Grünthal (2005: 42–45), the PAR complement of prepositions had its origin in expressions of comparison, where PAR expressed the STANDARD of comparison, as in *ennen ilta-a* [before evening-PAR] ‘before evening’ (i.e., ‘earlier than’), *minu-a pite-mpi* [1SG-PAR tall-CPR] (or *pitempi minu-a*) ‘taller than [lit. from] me’, and *Lahte-a suure-mpi* [Lahti-PAR big-CPR]

‘bigger than Lahti’.<sup>3</sup> In cognitive-linguistic terms, the SEPARATIVE case of the STANDARD (Ground) is motivated by the conceptual operation known as *scanning* (see Langacker 2008: 82; 109–112), which in this case begins from Ground (the STANDARD) and proceeds towards Figure (the COMPAREE) to assess their respective positions on a scale. The SEPARATIVE case of Ground reflects Ground’s status as the starting point of the scanning. The SEPARATIVE strategy in comparative expressions is still productive, as shown by the adaptation of the younger ‘from’ case relative to the comparative construction in, for example, Estonian (*minu-st vane-m* [1SG-ELA old-CPR] ‘older than me’). Grünthal (2003) argues that it was the comparative construction that formed a structural model for other prepositional constructions with a PAR complement. He mentions the adposition (Fi.) *ennen* ‘before’, e.g., *ennen minu-a* [before 1SG-PAR] ‘before me’; *ennen ilta-a* [before evening-PAR] ‘before evening’. A noteworthy feature in the comparative construction as a possible source of PAR adpositions is that the comparative meaning is not (usually) a concrete spatial meaning, and that *ennen*, in particular, is first and foremost temporal. It is also worth noting that the Ground of such expressions is not prototypical: it is not a fixed spatial element used to localize Figure, but more of an equal participant (commonly of the same conceptual type as Figure) being evaluated together with Figure (for details, see section 2.4.1).

In the present-day Finnic languages, adpositional expressions of comparative meanings (in a broad sense) form a minority even among PAR adpositions. Penttilä’s (2002[1963]: 370–371) list of central Finnish PAR adpositions is illustrative: *ennen* ‘before’, *edelle* ~ *edellä* ‘ahead of’ [in-tandem motion by Figure and Ground in the same direction], *ilman* ‘without’, *keskelle* ~ *keskellä* ~ *keskeltä* ‘to ~ in ~ from the middle of’, *keskemmä* ‘further to the middle of’, *kesken* ‘among; in the middle of (a process)’, *kohden* ‘toward’, *kohtaan* ‘against; with respect to’, *kohti* ‘toward’, *liki* ‘near’, *likemmä* ‘nearer (to)’, *likelle* ‘to-near’ ~ *likellä* ‘near’ ~ *likeltä* ‘from-near’, *lähelle* ‘to-near’ ~ *lähellä* ‘near’ ~ *läheltä* ‘from-near’, *paitsi* ‘without’, *pitkin* ‘along’, *poikki* ‘across’, *puolella* ‘on the side of’ ~ *puolelta* ‘from the side of’ ~ *puolelle* ‘to the side of’,

3 An anonymous reviewer points out that similar relative or separative comparative constructions are common in most of the European Uralic languages (Komi, Udmurt, Mari, Mordvinic). I thank the reviewer for this important point.

*puolen* ‘on the side of’, *päin* ‘towards, against’, *varten* ‘for’, *vastapäätä* ‘opposite’, *vasten* ‘against’, *vastoin* ‘against’, *ympäri* ‘around’. As can be seen, these PAR adpositions are clustered around a few general meanings: in-tandem motion (Figure and Ground moving in the same direction, either concretely or metaphorically), distance, opposite location, direction, lack of something, and medial (‘middle’) location. The list also includes a large number of near-synonymous expressions.

Many of the PAR adpositions on Penttilä’s list are bipoositions, which can be used as either prepositions or postpositions. In some cases, there is only a subtle (or stylistic) difference in meaning between the two uses (e.g. *metsä-ä kohti* [forest-PAR towards] ~ *kohti metsä-ä* [towards forest-PAR] ‘towards a/the forest’), while others show a clear semantic contrast (e.g., *opettaj-i-en kesken* [teacher-PL.GEN between] ‘[the matter was discussed] among the teachers’ vs. *kesken konserti-n* [in.the.middle.of concert-GEN] ‘in the middle of a/the concert’). In some cases, the prepositional use triggers a PAR Ground and the postpositional use a GEN Ground. For example, the prepositional *keske-llä metsä-ä* [middle-ADE forest-PAR] ‘in the middle of the forest’, *ympäri kaupunki-a* [around town-PAR] ‘[to wander] around [in] town’, and *ede-llä minu-a* [front-ADE 1SG-PAR] ‘ahead of me [in-tandem]’ are only acceptable with a PAR Ground. The postpositional use requires GEN as the only option in *kaupungi-n ympäri* [town-GEN around] ‘[make a full circle] around the town’, while both PAR and GEN are fine in *suomalaise-n ede-llä* [Finn-GEN front-ADE] ‘ahead of the Finn [as in a steady arrangement]’ vs. *suomalais-ta ede-llä* [Finn-PAR front-ADE] ‘ahead of the Finn [as in a race]’, cf. Huumo (2019); or *talo-n lähe-llä* [house-GEN near-ADE] ‘near the house (in a search domain with clear boundaries)’ vs. *talo-a lähe-llä* [house-PAR near-ADE] ‘near the house’ (where ‘nearness’ is conceived of as gradual ‘more or less’ phenomenon; cf. Huumo 2021).

Penttilä’s (2002[1963]) list of PAR adpositions also shows that they cluster around a few lexical stems, many formed by derivation, mostly by lexicalization of case-inflected forms: *e(te)-* ‘front’, *keske-* ‘middle’, *kohta-* ‘place [in front]’, *like-* ‘near’, *lähe-* ‘near’, *puole-* ‘half; side’, *vasta-* ‘opposite’. One noteworthy semantic feature of these stems is that they do not indicate typical region-like, bounded search domains but TARGETING points, distances, or directions. In the last-mentioned category, the direction expressed can reflect Figure’s actual motion or merely its orientation vis-à-vis Ground, estimated with respect to an

“ideal” vector (for the term, see Huumo 2021) pointing directly from Figure to Ground (*kohti, päin* ‘towards’). The search domain of such directional grams has been defined as comprising all locations from which Figure can have a direct orientation toward Ground (Huhtala 2023). A few directional PAR adpositions express Figure’s location on an axis projected from Ground: for example *vastapäätä* ‘opposite’ and *vastoin* ‘against’. Such meanings are often compatible with a scalar conceptualization in the sense of Talmy (2017: 315), meaning that the relationship can be realized to a greater or lesser degree.

Morphologically, the stems of the PAR adpositions quite often end in *-n*. This has been seen as an old instructive<sup>4</sup> form: *ennen* ‘before’, *ilman* ‘without’, *kesken* ‘between/among [people]’, *kohden* ‘toward’, *kohdin* ‘toward’, *pitkin* ‘along’, *puolen* ‘[on] half’, *päin* ‘toward’, *varten* ‘for’, *vasten* ‘against’, *vastoin* ‘against’. We may ask why specifically such *-n* forms are so common in PAR adpositions, while GEN adpositions are more often local-case forms (typically consisting of a full three-member LATIVE VS. LOCATIVE VS. SEPARATIVE series).

The PAR ~ GEN alternation in the case marking the Ground concerns some adpositions in Modern Finnish, but there are traces of the use of a few present-day PAR adpositions with a GEN Ground in Old Finnish, as well as in other Finnic languages (Estonian in particular). According to Stoebeke (1968), these include at least (the cognates of the Finnish) *kohdin* ‘towards’, *päin* ‘towards; against’, *vastapäätä* ‘opposite’, and *vastaan* ‘against’. In Estonian (standard language or dialects), their cognates are often bipositions that can be used as either GEN postpositions or PAR prepositions, e.g. *minu kohe* [1SG.GEN towards] ‘towards me’ vs. *kohe us-t* [towards door-PAR] ‘towards the door’ (Stoebeke 1968: 174; Kendla, Kalvik et al. 1994–2024, *kohe*), *minu vastu* [1SG.GEN against] ‘against me’ vs. *vastu mind* [against 1SG.PAR] ‘against me’. According to Merimaa (2007), the Finnish *päin* ‘towards’ was used with GEN but not with PAR Grounds in the sixteenth-century works of Mikael Agricola. The Finnish grammars by Yrjö Koskinen (1860) and Konstantin Hämäläinen (1883), cited by Merimaa (2004), suggest that even *kohti* ‘toward’ was earlier used with a GEN Ground as an alternative to the PAR

4 An anonymous reviewer points out that some PAR adpositions ending in *-n* may in fact be illative forms, for instance, *varten* also occurs as *varteen*; cf. Karelian *varteh*, and also *kohti* has a frequent illative variant *kohtaan*, Karelian *kohtah*.



Ground. To my knowledge, however, there are no relics of such use in the Old Finnish corpora available. Likewise the Dictionary of Finnish dialects mentions only uses with PAR Ground (Vilppula 2003: 731–732, *kohti*). If Agricola’s use of GEN Grounds with *päin* ‘towards, against’ is a relic of an older period, it suggests that PAR has been gaining ground at the expense of GEN as a marker of Ground with these adpositions. Another possibility is that the directional adpositions *kohti* ‘towards’ and *päin* ‘towards; against’ have lived longer with case-alternating Grounds, just as some other adpositions still do (e.g., *lähellä* ‘near’ and *keskellä* ‘in the middle of’).

## 2.2. Sadeniemi’s historical account of PAR adpositions

To my knowledge, the most thorough account of possible motivations for PAR adpositions is Sadeniemi (1970). Unfortunately, Sadeniemi’s discussion is very brief and includes no detailed account of the meaning, morphology, or syntax of individual PAR adpositions. Like Grünthal (2003), Sadeniemi mentions the comparative meaning as an important source for the development of PAR adpositions, in particular the adposition *ennen* ‘before; earlier than’. Another important subcategory he mentions are PAR adpositions with a meronymic (‘part – whole’) meaning. The stem of such adpositions refers to some part of Ground, construing that part as a search domain within which Figure is situated. Meronymic adpositions are often bpositions, taking a PAR Ground when used as prepositions but a GEN Ground when used as postposition, for example *vuode-n alu-ssa* [year-GEN beginning-INE] vs. *alu-ssa vuot-ta* [beginning-INE year-PAR] ‘in the beginning of the year’, or *metsä-n keske-llä* [forest-GEN middle-ADE] vs. *keske-llä metsä-ä* [middle-ADE forest-PAR] ‘in the middle of a/the forest’.

Other semantic groups Sadeniemi (1970) lists include the near-synonymous *ilman*, *paitsi*, and *vailla*, all meaning ‘without’. He associates these with the function of the partitive called *partitivus copiae et inopiae*, i.e., (rare) partitive adverbs that indicate ‘abundance’ or ‘paucity’ of something. Alternatively, the PAR Ground of adpositions meaning ‘without’ can be seen as metaphorically motivated by the old SEPARATIVE function of the partitive, based on the metaphor ABSENCE OF X IS MOTION OUT OF X, which probably also motivates the SEPARATIVE (mostly relative) case government of verbs indicating the non-fulfillment

of a relationship (e.g., *luopua* ‘give up’ + elative ‘from’, *pidättäytyä* ‘refrain’ + elative, *estyä* ‘be prevented’ + elative). Sadeniemi (1970) also points out that the PATH-indicating PAR adposition *pitkin* ‘along’ may have taken its PAR Ground from object-like elements indicating a PATH; consider *Kävel-lä tie-tä* [walk-INF road-PAR] ‘walk a road’ vs. the adpositional *Kävel-lä tie-tä pitkin* [walk-INF road-PAR along] ‘walk along a road’. Most other PATH adpositions, such as *läpi* ‘through’, *halki* ‘through’, *yli* ‘over’, and *kautta* ‘via, by way of’ are GEN adpositions. Siro (1964: 45) and later Haukioja (1998) have associated this PAR ~ GEN opposition with the case marking of the object, where an ending *-n* (historically a distinct accusative case ending in *\*-m*; cf. Kittilä, Laakso & Ylikoski 2022) similarly designates events that culminate, while PAR objects are used for atelic, semelfactive or progressive, non-culminating events. It is thus possible that the PATH adpositions were originally adverbs specifying the route’s relationship to Ground, and the PAR and GEN (or accusative) Grounds were formerly grammatical objects designating a PATH. In fact, GEN Ground expressions of Finnish path adpositions are still alternatively analyzable as grammatical objects that occur together with a PATH adverb (1). The difference becomes visible under negation: the adpositional construction keeps the GEN Ground (2), while an object under negation turns into PAR (3).

- (1) *Kävel-i-n*            *kaupungi-n*            *läpi*.  
 walk-PST-1SG      town-GEN/ACC      through  
 ‘I walked through the town.’ [ADP] / ‘I walked the town through.’  
 [OBJ+ADV]
- (2) *E-n*            *kävel-lyt*            *kaupungi-n*            *läpi*.  
 NEG-1SG      walk-PTCP      town-GEN            through  
 ‘I did not walk through the town.’ [ADP]
- (3) *E-n*            *kävel-lyt*            *kaupunki-a*            *läpi*.  
 NEG-1SG      walk-PTCP      town-PAR            through  
 ‘I did not walk the town through.’ [OBJ+ADV]

If the GEN complements of PATH adpositions were indeed formerly ACC objects indicating a PATH in a culminating motion event (where the complete PATH is traversed by a MOVER), then their historical background would of course be quite different from that of most GEN adpositions,

which go back to noun phrases with a genitive modifier (see Jaakola 2006; Jaakola & Ojutkangas 2023 and the literature cited).

Sadeniemi (1970) also mentions meronymy as a semantic source for the grammaticalization of (some) PAR adpositions. Meronymic expressions are particularly interesting for the case marking of Ground, since holonyms (of which one part is mentally detached for scrutiny) can be expressed by both GEN and PAR elements (a detailed account is Leino 1993: 289). In general, the holonymic construction with GEN is felicitous when a bounded subpart of a whole is referred to, while PAR is preferred if the entity designated by the holonym is conceptualized as substance-like, with vague boundaries. Consider examples (4–9), which show a continuum from GEN only to PAR only expressions.

- (4) *Tyttö-n käsi* [girl-GEN hand] ~ \**Käsi tyttö-ä* [hand girl-PAR] ‘A girl’s hand’
- (5) *Auto-n pyörä* [car-GEN wheel] ~ \**Pyörä auto-a* [wheel car-PAR] ‘A car’s wheel.’
- (6) *Auton osa* [car-GEN part] ~ *Osa auto-a* [part car-PAR] ‘(A) part of the car’
- (7) *Maa-n itäosa* [country-GEN eastern.part] ~ *Itäosa maa-ta* [eastern.part country-PAR] ‘The eastern part of the country’
- (8) *Järve-n keskiosa* [lake-GEN midpoint] ~ *Keskiosa järve-ä* [midpoint lake-PAR] ‘The middle part of the lake.’
- (9) \**Maido-n litra* [milk-GEN litre] ~ *Litra maito-a* [litre milk-PAR] ‘A litre of milk’

As the examples demonstrate, the PAR construction is infelicitous if the expression profiles a specific, bounded part of a whole (4, 5). Correspondingly, the GEN construction is infelicitous if the expression designates only a quantified amount of a substance expressed by the holonym, but does not specify its precise relationship to the holonym (9). In examples (6–8), both alternatives are fine, with a slight difference in meaning: the GEN version is better if the reading is specific and bounded, while the PAR version is better if the expression designates a sub-quantity without clear boundaries. In (6), for example, GEN may designate a particular component of a car (a wheel, battery, carburetor, etc.), while PAR can refer to any vaguely bounded sub-region of the

car (such as the part damaged in a collision). In (7), GEN may refer to an established geographical region, such as a province, while PAR expresses a less specific subpart. For example, in weather forecasts we often hear expressions such as (10).

- (10) *Suur-imma-ssa osa-ssa maa-ta on pilvis-tä.*  
 large-SUP-INE part-INE country-PAR be.PRS.3SG cloudy-PAR  
 ‘It will be cloudy/overcast in most of the country.’

The meaning of (10) is purely quantificational: cloudy weather is prevalent in most of the country, possibly in a noncontinuous and constantly shifting area rather than in some particular ‘largest part’ (the largest province, for example), which would be the meaning foregrounded by the GEN construction. This is compatible with the felicitousness of the PAR construction in expressions designating no bounded sub-region but only a quantity (10).

In adpositions, meronymic meaning is central in *keske-llä* [middle-ADE] ‘in the middle of’ (and its directional counterparts *keske-lle* [middle-ALL] ‘to the middle of’ and *keske-ltä* [middle-ABL] ‘from the middle of’), which are external local case forms of the (historical) noun *keski* ‘midpoint; center’ (Vilppula 1999: 868–869, *keski*). This series of adpositions is still used with both GEN and PAR Grounds, e.g., *metsä-n keske-llä* [forest-GEN middle-ADE] vs. *keske-llä metsä-ä* [middle-ADE forest-PAR] ‘in the middle of a/the forest’. According to Haukioja (1998), the GEN construction profiles a search domain within the clearly bounded region designated by GEN (the midpoint of the forest), while PAR indicates unboundedness: it can merely designate a search domain surrounded by forest on all sides, not necessarily the precise midpoint of a forest. Thus, it renders Ground unbounded by limiting the conceptualizer’s view to the immediate surroundings of Figure.

As regards the adpositions *kohden* ‘toward’, *päin* ‘toward; against’, *kohti* ‘toward’, *vastaan* ‘against’, *vasten* ‘against’, *vastoin* ‘against’, *edellä* ‘ahead of’, *likellä* ‘near’, *liki* ‘to near’, *lähellä* ‘near’, and *vastapäätä* ‘opposite’, Sadeniemi (1970), like his predecessors, explains their partitive complement as a *partitivus respectus*, expressing “an entity or a location from which or with respect to which” the locational meaning is assessed. This vague definition apparently refers to adverbial uses,

in which PAR has lost its SEPARATIVE ‘from’ meaning. Indeed, some of these adpositions are semantically LATIVE (the opposite of SEPARATIVE), for instance, the triplet *kohti*, *kohden*, and *kohdin* ‘towards’ and *päin* ‘towards; against’. Sadeniemi (1970), as well as Hakulinen (1979: 501 fn.) and Penttilä (2002[1963]: 593), see a parallel between such PAR complements and independent *partitivus respectus* adverbials, illustrated by (11) and (12).

- (11) *Kivi*      *sattu-i*              *poika-a*      *ohimo-on.*  
 stone    hit-PST.3SG    boy-PAR    temple-ILL  
 ‘The stone hit the boy on the temple.’

- (12) *Tule-t-ko*                      *minu-a*      *asema-lle*      *vasta-an?*  
 come-PRS.2SG-Q    1SG-PAR    station-ALL    against-ILL  
 ‘Will you meet me at the station?’

In (11), the PAR *poikaa* is a holonym: the temple hit by the rock is his body part. In (12), the PAR *minua* ‘me’ is semantically more independent and expresses a participant in the ‘meeting’ event. Since the addressee (indicated by the 2nd-person verb form) is the more agentive participant in the activity, the PAR form can also be associated with some PAR objects, as pointed out by Penttilä – even though the verb *tulla* ‘come’ is intransitive. Were the forms *minua* ‘me’ and *vastaan* ‘against’ adjacent, they would be understood as the adpositional phrase *minu-a vastaan* [1SG-PAR against-ILL], literally ‘against me’, but with the verb *tulla* ‘come’, indicating the idiomatic meaning of contra-approximative motion (a term from Hammari 1993; for the semantics of the *tulla vastaan* construction, see Teeri and Huumo, forthcoming.). In contra-approximative motion, Figure and Ground both move towards one another until they meet.

As noted above, the term *partitivus respectus* is vague, and the usages it designates are motivated neither by the old SEPARATIVE (‘from’) meaning nor by the more recent, grammaticalized functions of the partitive (quantification, aspect, negation). The *partitivus respectus* can be thought of as an adverbial use (or a loosely connected set of uses) in which PAR has lost its directional ‘from’ meaning and has taken on a more schematic locative meaning without directionality (a number of examples are discussed by Denison 1957: 32–42). In this respect it resembles

the instructive case, which (when indicating location) is likewise neutral in directionality. For example, the instructive forms *ma-i-n* [land-PL-INSTR] or *seudu-i-n* [terrain-PL-INSTR] can express LATIVE, LOCATIVE, and SEPARATIVE meanings, which are often disambiguated by a demonstrative pre-modifier: *nä-i-lle / nä-i-llä / nä-i-ltä seudu-i-n* ‘to/in/from these terrains’ (cf. Ross 1988). However, many uses classified as *partitivus respectus* lack such a meaning, most notably the PAR Grounds of the directional adpositions listed above. It seems unlikely that Hakulinen’s (1979) example *Lintu lens-i taivas-ta kohti* [bird fly-PST.3SG sky-PAR towards] ‘The bird flew towards the sky’ would have meant ‘The bird flew towards, with respect to the sky’ (as he suggested). It also seems unlikely that such PAR Grounds were originally independent adverbials used with (motion or other) verbs, since these verbs nowadays reject such adverbials: for instance, *\*Lintu lensi taivasta* (intended to mean ‘The bird flew towards the sky’) is ill-formed. The matter is different with the PATH adposition *pitkin* ‘along’, since the meaning of a PATH can be alternatively expressed by a PAR object alone: *Kävel-i-n polku-a* (~ *pitkin*) [walk-PST-1SG path-PAR (~ along)] ‘I walked (along) the path.’ Unlike expressions of a PATH, however, PAR elements that indicate a SOURCE or a GOAL (as in the ‘bird’ example) do not seem to fit such constructions.

### 2.3. PAR vs. GEN Grounds: a cognitive-linguistic point of view

It is notoriously difficult to present a general semantic account of PAR and GEN adpositions, because both groups comprise elements with diverse meanings. As we saw above, common meanings for PAR adpositions are directions (typically toward Ground) and distances (near Ground), as well as comparative-style meanings in which Ground is not merely a reference point for the localization of Figure but in some sense equal to Figure, in such a way that the two can be compared. However, similar meanings can be expressed by GEN adpositions, and there are indeed many adpositions (such as *lähe-* ‘near’ and *keske-* ‘in the middle of’) that take both GEN and PAR Grounds. In other words, such relatively specific semantic labels do not distinguish between GEN and PAR adpositions generally. Semantic differences between the two groups have therefore recently been sought at a more schematic level, one not based directly on the content expressed but rather on a particular way

of conceptualizing the content. This is the approach of Haukioja (1998), who argues that the GEN construction canonically indicates boundedness of its Ground (and the search domain), while PAR indicates unboundedness (as argued in section 2.2.).

This difference instantiates Talmy's (2000: 69–70) distinction between distal and proximal perspectives on a locational configuration. Applying Talmy's terms, the GEN construction assumes a distal perspective, profiling (referring to) the whole Figure, the whole Ground, and the whole search domain at once. The PAR construction, on the other hand, selects a proximal perspective on Figure and its immediate surroundings, "fading out" the outer boundaries of Ground and the search domain. The distinction is not absolute: even the PAR construction allows the perspective to fluctuate on the distal–proximal continuum, and does not reject a holistic conceptualization comprising the outer boundaries of Ground and the search domain. This meaning can be explicitly evoked by modifiers such as *melkein* 'almost' or *täsmälleen* 'precisely': one can say both *melkein metsä-n keske-llä* [almost forest-GEN middle-ADE] and *melkein keske-llä metsä-ä* [almost middle-ADE forest-PAR], to mean 'almost in the middle [= the mid-point, center] of the forest'. The approximative meaning 'almost' necessarily involves a conceptualization with an exact middle point and thus coerces the PAR construction into a distal perspective: the middle point can only be defined when the whole Ground and the search domain are in sight. On the other hand, it is easy to construe minimal pairs in which the opposition between distal (GEN) vs. proximal (PAR) is clear, such as *tie-n keske-llä* [road-GEN middle-ADE] 'in the (exact) middle of the road' vs. *keske-llä tie-tä* [middle-ADE road-PAR] 'in the middle of the road' (= anywhere in the car lane, perhaps blocking traffic); or *kaupungi-n keske-llä* [city-GEN middle-ADE] 'in the (exact) center of the town' vs. *keske-llä kaupunki-a* [middle-ADE town-PAR] 'in the middle of the town (within the urban area)'. Consider (13) and (14).

- (13) *Älä kävele keske-llä tie-tä!*  
 NEG.IMP.2SG walk.CNG middle-ADE road-PAR  
 'Don't walk in the middle of the road!' (= in the car lane)

- (14) *Älä kävele puoli.alasti keske-llä kaupunki-a!*  
 NEG.IMP.2SG walk.CNG half.naked middle-ADE town-PAR  
 'Don't walk half-naked in the middle of the town!'

Examples (13) and (14) are negative imperatives serving as directions to avoid danger (13) or inappropriate behavior (14). In this context, PAR is the natural choice, while GEN would be awkward. This is because (13) in fact means that it is dangerous to walk anywhere in (the car lane of) the road, not just at the very middle, and (14) that it is inappropriate to walk half-naked anywhere in town (the urban area), not just at its precise center.

## 2.4. A closer look at Grounds

### 2.4.1. PAR adpositions with a relative Ground

As we saw in section 2.1, semantic motivations for PAR Grounds have mostly been sought in the old SEPARATIVE function of the case. The SEPARATIVE function does indeed explain a number of these uses, most straightforwardly in expressions of comparison, where the PAR Ground is a STANDARD of comparison and Figure is a COMPAREE. The STANDARD serves as a starting point for a mental scanning that advances towards Figure along a scale to assess the relative positions of Figure and Ground by comparing them with regard to some property (e.g., their position in space or another kind of dimension). I will refer to such Grounds as *relative Grounds*, as opposed to prototypical *main Grounds*, which are used purely to localize Figure. In addition to comparative expressions, relative Grounds are typical with adpositions that express in-tandem motion by Figure and Ground in the same direction. In Finnish, these include *edellä* ‘ahead of [in-tandem]’, *perässä* and *jäljessä* ‘behind [in-tandem]’. These adpositions compare the concrete or metaphorical advancement of Figure and Ground to assess which one is more advanced in their common direction of motion. The basic meaning of the triplet is spatial advancement, but they also have many metaphorical uses in the expressions of time, as well as a few other relationships metaphorically conceptualized as motion (Teeri-Niknamoghdam 2019). They accept both PAR<sup>5</sup> and GEN Grounds, the difference being that GEN is more compatible with the meaning of a stable and PAR with a volatile arrangement (as in a race scenario; see Huumo 2019).

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5 With *perässä* ‘behind’, however, a partitive Ground is very rare (Kelloniemi 2018: 26–27) and may have a colloquial flavor.



A common and regular context for relative Grounds are comparative forms of some adpositions, including *lähe-mpä-nä* [near-CPR-ESS] ‘nearer’ or *keske-mmä-llä* [middle-CPR-ADE] ‘closer to the middle’. Such forms in fact allow two different PAR Grounds, a main Ground and a relative<sup>6</sup> Ground. They are thus useful in explicating the difference between the two. The main Ground is the element with respect to which both Figure and the relative Ground are localized. Additionally, the expression compares the positions of Figure and relative Ground. Consider (15) and (16).

- (15) *Asu-n*            *mu-i-ta*            *lähe-mpä-nä*        *keskusta-a*.  
 live-PRS.1SG    other-PL-PAR    near-CPR-ESS       center-PAR  
 ‘I live nearer the center than the others (do).’
- (16) *Istu-i-n*        *mu-i-ta*            *keske-mmä-llä*        *luentosali-a*.  
 sit-PST.1SG    other-PL-PAR    middle-CPR-ADE    lecture.room-PAR  
 ‘I was sitting closer to the center of the lecture room than the others were.’

In (15), Figure is ‘my’ place of residence. The ‘center’ is the main Ground, and the place (or places) of residence of ‘the others’ is a relative Ground. The comparative adposition means that Figure’s location (‘my’ place of residence) fulfills the relationship of ‘being near’ the main Ground (‘center’) to a higher degree than does the relative Ground, ‘the other’s’ place of residence. Since ‘near’ is a centripetal adposition with a gradable meaning (cf. Talmy 2017: 315), the degree expressed is inversely proportional to distance from the main Ground. Example (15) thus means that the distance from my home to the town center is less than the distance from ‘the other’s’ home(s) to the center. It is important to note that such expressions do not localize Figure directly with respect to the relative Ground: example (15) says nothing about the distance between the two homes, which may be on the same side or on different sides relative to the center. Thus, (15) does not mean, for example, that my home is located somewhere between ‘the other’s’ home and the center. This is a good illustration of the function of a relative Ground:

6 Though it is more common to express the relative Ground with the analytic *kuin* ‘than’ construction: *lähe-mpä-nä ove-a kuin Liisa* [near-COMP-ESS door-PAR than name.NOM] ‘nearer the door than Liisa’.

the relative Ground serves as a standard of comparison, and it is compared to Figure with regard to a property, but is not directly used to localize Figure.

The same applies to the relative Ground (the only Ground) of semantically comparative adpositions that are not formally comparative, including *ennen* ‘before [in time]’, *edellä* ‘ahead of [in-tandem]’, *perässä* ‘behind [in-tandem]’ and *jäljessä* ‘behind [in-tandem]’. For example, *edellä* ‘ahead of’ compares the advancement of Figure and a relative Ground in their shared direction of motion. It does not stipulate that Figure be located on a ‘frontal’ axis projected from the relative Ground (though this may well be the case). In fact, *edellä*, *perässä* and *jäljessä* can be used even if Figure and Ground are approaching a GOAL from different directions, and even if each one is approaching its own GOAL. In such a scenario, the MOVER who is nearer (its respective) GOAL is ‘ahead of’ (*edellä*) MOVERS further away from their respective GOALS. Like the formally comparative *lähe-mpä-nä* ‘nearer’ in (15), *edellä* thus compares the degrees of advancement of Figure and Ground.

An idiosyncratic feature of relative-Ground adpositions is that they allow accusative-case quantitative phrases to indicate a (spatial or other) distance between Figure and Ground. Consider examples (17–18).

- (17) *Liisa on kilometri-n edellä Pekka-a.*  
 Liisa be.PRS.3SG kilometer-ACC front-ADE Pekka-PAR  
 ‘Liisa is one kilometer ahead of Pekka.’
- (18) *Liisa on minuuti-n jäljessä Pekka-a.*  
 Liisa be.PRS.3SG minute-ACC behind-INE Pekka-PAR  
 ‘Liisa is one minute behind Pekka.’

In (17), the term of measurement ‘kilometer’ indicates the difference in advancement (but not necessarily the distance<sup>7</sup>) between Liisa (Figure) and Pekka (relative Ground), who are both MOVERS. Example (18) shows that in expressions of motion, such quantitative terms of

7 Again, the example is felicitous if Liisa and Pekka are both running a marathon, simultaneously but in different countries, and their advancement is being compared, or even if Liisa is the only one actually running and her advancement at a certain time in the race (e.g., exactly one hour after the start) is compared to Pekka’s advancement at the corresponding time when he ran the marathon ten years earlier.

measurement can alternatively indicate a difference in advancement as the estimated duration of traversing the distance. Those PAR adpositions that take a main Ground rather than a relative Ground typically reject terms of measurement (19 and 20), or allow them in a different meaning, such as the indication of a distance actually traversed by Figure (21).

- (19) *??Kirkko on kilometri-n lähe-llä asema-a.*  
 church be.PRS.3SG kilometer-ACC near-ADE station-PAR  
 ‘The church is a kilometer near the station.’
- (20) *\*Mökki on kilometri-n keske-llä metsä-ä.*  
 cottage be.PRS.3SG kilometer-ACC middle-ADE forest-PAR  
 ‘The cottage is a kilometer in the middle of the forest.’ (E.g., measured from the edge of the forest.)
- (21) *Liisa juoks-i kilometri-n kylä-ä kohti.*  
 Liisa run-PST.3SG kilometer-ACC village-PAR towards  
 ‘Liisa ran a kilometer towards the village.’

As can be expected, expressions of measurement are also felicitous with morphologically comparative adpositions, where they again specify the difference between Figure and a relative Ground (22).

- (22) *Liisa asu-u minu-a kilometri-n lähe-mpä-nä*  
 Liisa live-PRS.3SG 1SG-PAR kilometer-ACC near-CPR-ESS  
*keskusta-a.*  
 center-PAR.  
 ‘Liisa lives a kilometer nearer the center than I do.’

#### 2.4.2. PAR adpositions with a main Ground

Let us now take a closer look at those PAR adpositions that take a main Ground only (not a relative Ground). These form a majority of PAR adpositions, and can be further divided into a few semantic sub-categories. One important category consists of adpositions based on a meronymic meaning. Their Ground is a holonym, of which one part is mentally detached for scrutiny. The partitive case of their Ground is historically motivated by this SEPARATIVE meaning. As examples of this group, Sadeniemi (1970) mentions *alu-ssa* [beginning-INE] ‘in/at the beginning of’ and *keske-llä* [middle-INE] ‘in the middle of’ (section 2.2).

They stem from the meronymic nouns *alku* ‘beginning’ and *keski* ‘midpoint; center’ (the latter was still used as a noun in Old Finnish and in some Finnish dialects, cf. Vilppula 1999: 868–869). As adpositions, they accept both GEN and PAR Grounds (examples were given in section 2.1).

In addition to being meronymic, *keskellä* ‘in the middle of’ also has a scalar meaning. In this respect it resembles *lähellä* ‘near’, and the two can thus be categorized as PAR adpositions of scalar targeting. In scalar targeting, the localization of Figure is gradable in the sense that it has different degrees and concentrates either around Ground itself (e.g., *lähellä* ‘near’) or around a targeting point defined with respect to Ground (e.g., *keskellä* ‘in the middle of’). Their scalar meaning (in the sense of Talmy 2017: 315) is why they allow open-scale degree modifiers (such as *melko* ‘rather, quite’ or *hyvin* ‘very’) to specify the locational relationship, which can be realized to different degrees (see Huumo 2021). In Talmy’s classification, these adpositions are centripetal; in other words, the degree expressed is inversely proportional to the distance between Figure and Ground (or between Figure and a targeting point). For example, *melko lähe-llä* [quite near-ADE] ‘quite near’ expresses a lesser degree but a greater distance (between Figure and Ground) than *hyvin lähe-llä* [very near-ADE] ‘very near’, which expresses a higher degree but a lesser distance. The adposition *keske-llä* [middle-ADE] ‘in the middle of’ expresses Figure’s relationship to a targeting point located at the exact center of Ground. Again, *melko keskellä* [quite middle-ADE] ‘pretty much in the middle’ expresses a lesser degree and a greater distance (between Figure and the targeting point) than *hyvin keske-llä* [very middle-ADE] ‘well in the middle’.

Note that such a scalar meaning is different from the spatial directional meaning of the adpositions. For example, while *lähe-lle* [near-ALL] ‘to-near’, *lähe-llä* [near-ADE] ‘near’ and *lähe-ltä* [near-ABL] ‘from-near’ express different directionalities (LATIVE, LOCATIVE, and SEPARATIVE), they share the centripetal scalar meaning. The centripetal meaning is thus different from the directionality expressed by the cases, which in their most concrete and basic sense indicate whether Figure is approaching Ground (allative), located at Ground (adessive), or moving away from Ground (ablative; cf. Huumo 2021). In more general terms, a scalar meaning is present in many PAR Ground adpositions. More commonly, however, this relates to a closed scale that includes some kind

of limit; thus, so-called totality modifiers, such as *melkein* ‘almost’ (an APPROXIMATOR) or *aivan* ‘totally, completely’ (Paradis 2001), are felicitous modifiers for the adpositions. It is less common for an adpositional construction to allow open-scale degree modifiers such as *hiukan* ‘somewhat’, *hyvin* ‘very’, or *äärimmäisen* ‘extremely’, but adpositions formed with the stem *lähe-* ‘near’ are a case in point (cf. Huumo 2021).

Yet another important category of PAR adpositions are those indicating a direction. This category comprises a relatively large number of adpositions, that can be divided into semantic sub-categories. In the first subcategory (a), the adpositions express a directionality of motion or orientation conceptualized as beginning at Figure and pointing at Ground, for example, *kohti* ‘towards’ and *päin* ‘towards; against’. In semantic terms, *kohti* and *päin* are perhaps the most problematic group of PAR adpositions, considering the old SEPARATIVE function of the partitive: they indicate a directionality that is the exact opposite of the SEPARATIVE meaning. Three hypotheses concerning their historical development will be discussed in section 3. The second subcategory (b) of directional PAR adpositions comprises DIAMETRIC ones, such as *vastapäätä* ‘opposite’, *vastaan* ‘against [in the opposite direction]’, *vastoin* ‘against’. All of these are based on the stem *vasta-*, which according to Uotila (1985) originally meant ‘an opposite place’. Uotila does not specify the notion ‘opposite’, but apparently Figure and Ground are either “facing” each other or moving towards each other. In other words, both Figure and Ground are conceptualized with a ‘front’ side, and those ‘front’ sides are oriented at each other. This is a prominent feature in the meaning of *vastapäätä* ‘opposite’. Another relevant facet of *vastapäätä* is that Figure must be located on a ‘front’ axis projected from Ground (in an intrinsic frame of reference; see Levinson 2003). In this sense, *vastapäätä* resembles semantically the GEN adposition *edessä* ‘in front of’, which likewise means that Figure is located on a ‘front’ axis. The difference is that *edessä* is indifferent as to the orientation of Figure itself, while *vastapäätä* stipulates that Figure likewise has a ‘front’ side facing Ground.

Degree modifiers compatible with *vastapäätä* include the closed-scale elements *melkein* ‘almost’ and *täsmälleen* ‘exactly’. They show that the scalar meaning of *vastapäätä* is related to the degree of precision of Figure’s location on the ‘front’ axis projected from Ground. If Figure deviates from this axis (slightly), it can be *melkein vastapäätä*

‘almost opposite’ Ground. Distance between Figure and Ground, on the other hand, seems to play a lesser role in the meaning of *vastapäätä* than in *edessä*. Thus, example (23) is felicitous while (24) is not, because of the relatively great distance separating Figure (Tallinn) and Ground (Helsinki).

(23) *Tallinna on melkein vastapäätä Helsinki-ä.*  
 Tallinn be.PRS.3SG almost opposite Helsinki-PAR  
 ‘Tallinn is almost opposite Helsinki.’ (Across the Gulf of Finland.)

(24) *?Tallinna on melkein Helsingin edessä.*  
 Tallinn be.PRS.3SG almost Helsinki-GEN in.front.of  
 ‘Tallinn is almost in front of Helsinki.’

Other DIAMETRIC adpositions based on the stem *vasta-* ‘opposite’ do not indicate stationary location but either actual motion by Figure and Ground towards each other (25) or a force-dynamic arrangement in which Figure and Ground exert opposing forces upon each other (26). In such cases, the ‘front’ can be assigned to Figure and Ground by their direction of motion or by the force they are exerting.

(25) *Traktori tuli meitä vastaan.*  
 tractor come-PST.3SG 3PL-PAR against-ILL  
 ‘A tractor came the other way (against us).’

(26) *Nojas-i-n seinää vasten.*  
 lean-PST-1SG wall-PAR against-INSTR  
 ‘I was leaning against the wall.’

A fundamental semantic facet of DIAMETRIC adpositions is ‘opposition’. This meaning apparently derives from the semantics of the stem *vasta-* itself (cf. Uotila 1985). In this case, the motivation for the PAR Ground can be sought in the old SEPARATIVE function, assuming that Ground serves as a viewpoint from which Figure’s orientation is assessed (cf. Jaakola 2006: 178). The morphology of the DIAMETRIC adpositions themselves is also interesting, in particular that of *vasta-pää-tä* [opposite-end-PAR] ‘opposite’, which combines three morphemes: *vasta-* ‘opposite’ + *pää* ‘head; end’ + PAR. It thus turns out that the locations of both Figure and Ground are expressed by the partitive.

The noun *pää* means both ‘head’ (a body part) and ‘end’ (of an elongated entity). According to Suutari (2006), it is the latter meaning that underlies the grammaticalization of *pää-* into an adposition in local cases (e.g., *pää-llä* [end-ADE] ‘on top of’, *pää-ssä* [end-INE] ‘at the end of’). Suutari’s explanation seems to be compatible with *vastapäätä* as well: it might have referred to ‘the opposite end’ of some secondary, encompassing reference object in a field-based frame of reference (cf. Talmy 2000: 212–213), as in ‘She was standing at the opposite end of the yard from me.’ In that case, however, the PAR ending of the adposition is difficult to motivate; one might rather expect a LOCATION case (such as the inessive: *\*vasta-pää-ssä* [INE]), which is not used. It would also be difficult to derive the PAR ending of the adposition from the SEPARATIVE meaning: intuitively, it is the location of Ground (expressed by the PAR Ground), not of Figure, that serves as the viewpoint location for localizing the other participant.

In an alternative explanation, based on the body-part meaning of *pää* ‘head’, the original meaning might have been one of posture: Figure and Ground are standing ‘head to head’, their heads pointed at each other. There are a number of formally similar lexicalized PAR adverbs expressing manner or posture, based on body-part terms, for example *tasa-jalka-a* [even.foot-PAR] ‘[to jump etc.] with both feet together’, *juoks-u-jalka-a* [run-NMLZ-foot-PAR] ‘running’, *käsi-kynkkä-ä* [hand-elbow-PAR] ‘arm in arm’, *käsi-pohja-a* [hand-bottom-PAR] ‘[to “swim” with] one’s hands touching the bottom’, *äkki-pää-tä* [sudden-head-PAR] ‘abruptly, at once’, *oiko-pää-tä* [straight-head-PAR] ‘straight away, without hesitation’. These lexicalized expressions indicate either concrete posture or more abstract meanings figuratively based on the posture meaning. They involve a body-part term and their PAR forms are lexicalized. In particular, the last two expressions, *äkkipäätä* and *oikopäätä*, seem formally similar to *vastapäätä* ‘opposite’, ending in *-pää-tä* [head-PAR]. Furthermore, their meanings clearly include (concrete or figurative) ‘head-first’ motion or orientation. This makes it likely that *vastapäätä* originally belonged to this category, and perhaps indicated posture ‘head to head’, from which it then grammaticalized into an adpositional function when combined with another PAR element, one indicating a viewpoint location or a viewpoint participant. Thus *minu-a vasta-pää-tä* [1SG-PAR opposite-head-PAR] would have originally meant ‘head to head with me (as seen from my point of view)’.

### 3. Possible origins of the PAR adpositions *kohti* and *päin*

In this section, I take a closer look at the puzzling PAR complement of two individual adpositions, *kohti* ‘towards’ (and its variants *kohden* and *kohdin*) and *päin* ‘towards; against’. The forms *kohti*, *kohden*, and *kohdin* express similar meanings but are mainly used in different dialects. According to the Dictionary of Finnish Dialects (Vilppula 2003: 731–732), *kohti* is (roughly) the easternmost of the three, *kohden* is (south-)western, and *kohdin* is in-between the two. Formally, *kohden*, with its ending *-n*, looks like a singular instructive (or genitive) form, while *kohdin* is in the plural instructive (*kohd-i-n* [PL-INSTR]).<sup>8</sup> *Kohden* is the more problematic of the two, since the regular singular instructive of the noun *kohta* ‘place’ is *kohda-n*. However, Vilppula (2003: 732) also mentions the rare variant *kohti* ‘place’ (NOM; stem *kohde-*), of which *kohden* would be the regular singular instructive form. It seems more likely, however, that the nominative *kohti* is a late analogical formation and that the *-e-* in *kohden* represents a second-syllable vowel reduction similar to that found in *ala-* ‘under, low’: *alene-* ‘lower [v]’ (instead of \**alane-*; cf. Itkonen 1983: 367; Kallio 2012).<sup>9</sup> The third variant, *kohti* (an adverb or adposition) has traditionally been analyzed as an *-i*-lative form (e.g., by Hakulinen 1979: 110), but Itkonen (1983: 363) has argued that it is an archaic plural instructive form. If this is true, then all three forms, *kohti*, *kohden* and *kohdin*, are instructive forms, as is also *päin*, which is morphologically transparent (*pä-i-n* [head/end-PL-INSTR]).

In semantic terms, *kohti* (~ *kohden* ~ *kohdin*) and *päin* all express directionality towards Ground, which is designated by their PAR complement. As most recently noted by Larjavaara (2019), such a use is puzzling: why is PAR used to mark Ground, when the meaning expressed is ‘towards’, not ‘away from’ Ground, as might be expected? In this section, I lay out and compare three hypotheses regarding the grammaticalization of these adpositional constructions. I should emphasize that even though *kohti* and *päin* (and their cognates) have a more widespread and presumably older use with Ground expressions in the ‘to’

8 The illative form *kohta-an* is likewise a PAR adposition. It indicates the more abstract meanings ‘regarding, with respect to’, which can be seen as a metaphorical extension of the spatial meaning ‘towards’.

9 I thank an anonymous reviewer for this comment.



and ‘from’ local cases (illative, elative) than with the partitive, my focus is on the latter construction and its origin.

### 3.1. Hypothesis #1: *päin* and *kohti* were body-part terms of posture, and the PAR Ground expressed a viewpoint person or location

As Hypothesis #1, we will consider the possibility that *kohti* ‘towards’ and *päin* ‘towards; against’ were originally body-part terms indicating Figure’s orientation, and that their present-day PAR Ground was originally an adverbial indicating a viewpoint person or location (from which Figure’s orientation was assessed). For example, the expression *talo-a pä-i-n* [house-PAR head-PL-INSTR] ‘towards [the] house’ would originally have meant ‘with Figure’s head (or front side) at the house’ (cf. Ojutkangas 2003 and the literature cited therein). Thus the future adpositions originally referred to the ‘front’ side or ‘head’ of an animate Figure that was oriented toward Ground. The PAR Ground expressed a viewpoint location from which Figure’s orientation was perceived.

According to Hypothesis #1, the instructive forms *päin*, *kohti*, *kohden* and *kohdin* were similar to other instructive expressions of posture, stance or position, such as *sel-i-n* [back-PL-INSTR] ‘with one’s back at X’, *kylj-i-n* [flank-PL-INSTR] ‘with one’s flank at X’, *käs-i-n* [hand-PL-INSTR] (historically) ‘hands first; with one’s hands at X’, *su-i-n* [mouth-PL-INSTR] ‘mouth first’, and so on (Ross 1988: 55–61; Leskinen 1990: 5; Ojutkangas 2003: 179). The relevant use of such expressions was either motion with the body part first or orientation with the body part pointing in a certain direction. This would mean that the adposition *päin* stems from the word’s body-part meaning ‘head’ and not from the meronymic meaning ‘end [of an elongated entity]’, which, according to Suutari (2006), was most likely the meaning that triggered the development of local-case adpositions based on the stem *pää-* ‘head; end’. The latter also differ from *päin* in that they are postpositions (not bipositions) and take a GEN Ground only, e.g., *laatiko-n pää-llä* [box-GEN top-ADE] ‘on top of the box’, *pöydä-n pää-ssä* [table-GEN end-INE] ‘at the end of the table’.

One problem with Hypothesis #1 is the SEPARATIVE ‘from’ meaning of the PAR that marks Ground. In present-day Finnish, *päin* (when used as an adverb) is neutral with respect to direction: it can be used as an

adverb or a quasi-adposition (a term from Ojutkangas and Huumo 2010), with a Ground in a directional (LATIVE or a SEPARATIVE) local case: *kylä-än pä-i-n* [village-ILL head-PL-INSTR] ‘towards the village’ vs. *kylä-stä pä-i-n* [village-ELA head-PL-INSTR] ‘from [the direction of] the village’. According to Itkonen (1983: 364) and Grünthal (2003: 124), the use with the LATIVE (mostly illative) cases is probably older than that with SEPARATIVE cases. Leskinen (1990: 82–85) gives a number of examples with (non-grammaticalized) instructive body-part terms used with both LATIVE and SEPARATIVE local cases. However, he also points out that the most common combination of such elements is with a LATIVE expression, mostly in the illative case. Considering the old SEPARATIVE function of the partitive, it is surprising that it now indicates the same directionality as the LATIVE local cases: *kylä-ä pä-i-n* [village-PAR head-PL-INSTR] and *kylä-än pä-i-n* [village-ILL head-PL-INSTR] both mean ‘towards the village’, as opposed to *kylä-stä pä-i-n* [village-ELA head-PL-INSTR] ‘from [the direction of] the village’, although the old SEPARATIVE meaning of the partitive would suggest otherwise.

Combinations of an instructive-case body-part term and a directional locative indicate either Figure’s direction of motion toward or away from Ground, or Figure’s orientation with respect to Ground. In the latter case, the directionality between Figure and Ground is based on a “targeting path” type of fictive motion (Talmy 2000: 109–110), where only a fictive signal moves between Figure and Ground. If the directionality goes from Figure to Ground, as is common and conventional in both Leskinen’s (1990) historical data and modern Finnish, then Figure, which assumes a certain posture, is conceptualized as emitting a fictive “probe” (cf. Talmy 2000: 110) towards Ground. Consider example (27).

- (27) *Seiso-i-n*                      *sel-i-n*                      *kirKKo-on.*  
 stand-PST-1SG                      back-PL-INSTR                      church-ILL  
 ‘I was standing with my back to the church.’

However, it is easy to find less conventional examples of the opposite directionality, in which instructive body-part expressions are used with a SEPARATIVE case (28–29)

- (28) *Päätoimittaja - minu-sta sel-i-n - katso-i*  
 editor 1SG-ELA back-PL-INSTR look-PST.3SG  
*ikkuna-sta ulos, kauas, kauas.*  
 window-ELA out far far  
 ‘The editor, with his back to me, looked out of the window, far, far.’  
[https://www.pellervo.fi/kodinpellervo/kp6\\_08/kp6\\_08.htm](https://www.pellervo.fi/kodinpellervo/kp6_08/kp6_08.htm)  
 (accessed 31.10.2020)
- (29) *Elinora istu-i hyti-ssä ja tuijott-i kylmästi*  
 Elinora sit-PST.3SG cabin-INE and stare-PST.3SG coldly  
*häne-stä sel-i-n seiso-va-a mies-tä.*  
 3SG-ELA back-PL-INSTR stand-PTCP-PAR man-PAR  
 ‘Elinora was sitting in the cabin and staring coldly at the man [who was] standing with his back at her.’  
<https://tarinoitsija.palstani.com/t6-merihelmi-nc-12>  
 (accessed 31.10.2020)
- Such examples, though rare, show that the directionality between Figure and Ground can alternatively be construed as Ground > Figure (‘from Ground’s point of view, Figure is oriented in a certain way’). Occasionally, Ground can also be marked with the partitive, resulting in an expression that looks like the PAR adposition construction without being one, since the form *selin* has not grammaticalized into an adposition (30–31).
- (30) *Minu-a sel-i-n istu-i joku, tuttu henkilö.*  
 1SG-PAR back-PL-INSTR sit-PST.3SG someone familiar person  
 ‘There was someone sitting with their back to me, someone I knew.’  
<http://valonkajossa.blogspot.com/2015/> (accessed 21.10.2020)
- (31) *Hän astu-i ohjaamo-n ove-sta sisä-än*  
 3SG step-PST-3SG cockpit-GEN door-ELA in-ILL  
*ja katso-i hän-tä sel-i-n istu-va-an*  
 and look-PST.3SG 3SG-PAR back-PL-INSTR sit-PTCP-ILL  
*kapteeni-in.*  
 captain-ILL  
 ‘She stepped through the door into the cockpit and looked at the captain, who was sitting with his back to her.’  
<http://vaskipilvet.foorumi.eu/viewtopic.php?f=10&t=5>  
 (accessed 21.10.2020)

Though rare, examples such as (30) and (31) are (intuitively) not ill-formed. They show that a PAR Ground can sometimes be used to indicate the person whose point of view is assumed in assessing Figure's orientation. According to Hypothesis #1, the origin of the PAR adpositions *kohti* 'toward' and *päin* 'toward; against' lies in expressions such as (30) and (31). The PAR Ground receives its motivation from the old SEPARATIVE function of the case: as examples (30) and (31) illustrate, it indicates the viewpoint person or location from which another person's orientation is observed.

Hypothesis #1 is based on the body-part meaning of the grammaticalizing adpositions. It applies most naturally to *päin*, if we assume that it is specifically the body-part meaning that underlies the development. The situation is more obscure with *kohti* (and its variants *kohden* and *kohdin*), since *kohta* as a noun nowadays means 'place'. However, Uotila (1985) has pointed out that the original meaning of *kohta* (a Baltic loanword) was 'place in front'. In addition, *kohta* had the meaning 'front side' (from which the 'place in front' meaning could be metonymically derived, as is common in grammaticalizing body-part terms; cf. Ojutkangas 2001). When used in the sense of 'front side', *kohta* could then be used of an animate entity to indicate the direction the entity was facing with its front side (cf. also the derived adverbs *kohda-kkain*, *kohda-tusten* 'face to face' or 'facing each other').

Although the use of instructive body-part terms with a PAR Ground is rare, there are relics that suggest it may be old. Ross (1988: 58, 60, 97) mentions examples from the folklore of different Finnic languages, e.g., Karelian *koht-i-n kokka nä-i-tä ma-i-ta* [front-PL-INSTR<sup>10</sup> [ship-]bow these-PL-PAR land-PL-PAR] 'With the head / front / [ship-] bow toward these lands', *per-i-n tuul-ta* rear-PL-INSTR wind-PAR '(One's) rear at the wind', in Estonian lexicalized into *pärituult* 'downwind' (i.e., with one's back (in)to the wind). Merimaa (2004: 71) mentions Eurén's (1849) Finnish example *Kulk-i-vat per-i-n talo-a* [go-PST-3PL rear-PL-INSTR house-PAR] 'They were walking with their back to the house (i.e. with the house behind them)'. The last examples, with *per-i-n* [rear-PL-INSTR] 'one's back at X' are particularly interesting from the present point of view, since they combine the meaning of orientation with that of

10 Note that the combination *-ht-* does not participate in consonant gradation in some Karelian dialects; cf. Itkonen (1971: 154–155)

motion, which in this case is away from Ground. Considering that an animate entity (a person or animal) canonically moves in the direction it is facing and away from the direction toward which its back is oriented, the meaning of motion toward Ground (i.e., the basic ‘towards’ meaning of the present-day *kohti* and *päin*) could thus be a secondary feature correlated with the meaning of orientation they originally expressed (‘with one’s head / front at X’). In any case, the existence of such relics suggests that the combination of an instructive body-part term, indicating orientation, and a PAR Ground may be old, and it is thus plausible to assume that it served as the basis for the development of such elements into adpositions with a PAR Ground.

Hypothesis #1, however, is not without its problems. First, it seems to suggest that the grammaticalization of *kohti* and *päin* into PAR adpositions is a relatively old development. The documented use of the combination of a PAR Ground and an instructive-case body-part expression consists of old linguistic relics, and seems to be very rare in modern Finnish, where the dominant way of marking Ground in such expressions is the illative, e.g., *sel-i-n minu-un* [back-PL-INSTR 1SG-ILL] ‘with X’s back at me’.

Furthermore, were this development an old one, we would expect it to occur throughout the Finnic languages, but this is not the case. While cognates of *kohti* (*kohden*, *kohdin*) and *päin* are widespread in Finnic as such, their use as PAR adpositions is productive in Finnish only (*kohti* also in Karelian). It is much more common to use such elements with directional local-case expressions. According to Stoeckle (1968: 72) and Ross (1988: 97), *päin* is a PAR adposition only in Finnish. As regards *kohti*, *kohden*, and *kohdin* (or their cognates), there are adpositional uses of *kohe* (~*kohden*) in Estonian island dialects, where *kohe* (~ Fi. *kohden*) is used both as a GEN postposition and as a PAR preposition, e.g. *minu kohe* [1SG.GEN towards] ‘towards me’ vs. *kohe us-t* [towards door-PAR] ‘towards the door’ (Stoeckle 1968: 174; Kendla, Kalvik et al. 1994–2024, *kohe*). The fact that it is restricted to island dialects suggests that it may also be a loan from Finnish. The Dictionary of Karelian (Virtaranta 1974: 273, s.v. *kohti*) gives a few examples of *kohti* as a PAR and GEN adposition (besides its more dominant use with directional local cases). In modern standard Finnish, *kohti*, *kohden* and *kohdin* seem ungrammatical with a GEN Ground. Likewise the Dictionary of Finnish dialects (Vilppula 2003: 692–694, 731–732,

s.v., *kohti*, *kohden*, *kohdin*) mentions their uses with a PAR, not a GEN, Ground. In sum, both *päin* and *kohti* ~ *kohden* ~ *kohdin* have only highly restricted use as PAR adpositions in Finnic. This suggests that their grammaticalization into full-fledged adpositions (i.e., adpositions take either a partitive or a genitive Ground) may be historically older (as has been assumed in the literature). The question that remains unanswered is whether combinations of a body-part instructive and a PAR Ground (as in 30 and 31) were ever sufficiently common to trigger the grammaticalization of such expressions into a productive adpositional construction.

### 3.2. Hypothesis #2: *päin* and *kohti* were meronymic expressions of a sub-location in Ground

Our Hypothesis #2 concerning the PAR Ground of *kohti* and *päin* is likewise based on meronymy, but in this case the meronymic elements *kohta* and *pää* refer to a subpart of Ground, not of Figure. Hypothesis #2 also differs from #1 in that the meaning of the polysemous elements that is relevant to the grammaticalization process is different. For *kohta*, this is the meaning of ‘place’, in the meronymic sense ‘subpart of a more extensive whole’; for *pää*, it is the meaning ‘end, endpoint’ (not a body part). Under Hypothesis #2, the instructive forms *kohti*, *kohden*, *kohdin* and *päin* do not instantiate posture but the LOCATION meaning of the instructive case (cf. Ross 1988). Their non-grammaticalized counterparts include *ma-i-n* [land-PL-INSTR], *paiko-i-n* [place-PL-INSTR] and *seudu-i-n* [terrain-PL-INSTR], all commonly used with a demonstrative pre-modifier and meaning, roughly, ‘hereabouts’, ‘thereabouts’ (depending on the demonstrative).

Hypothesis #2 is based on the observation that it is common for the meronymic nouns *kohta* ‘place’ and *pää* ‘end’ to co-occur with a partitive-marked holonym referring to a larger topographical entity, of which the meronym then designates a part; consider *tämä kohta tie-tä* [this place road-PAR] ‘this part/segment of the road’, *tuo pää pelto-a* [that end field-PAR] ‘that end of the field’. As these examples show, such expressions consist of an obligatory demonstrative<sup>11</sup> pre-modifier

11 Alternatively, the pre-modifier can be an adjective: *mäkinen kohta tietä* [hilly place road-PAR] ‘a hilly part of the road’, *ale-mpi pää pelto-a* [low-COMP end field-PAR] ‘the lower end of the (sloping) field’.

(‘this’, ‘that’), the meronymic element itself, and a partitive-marked postmodifier that indicates the holonym.

When the meronymic element is in the instructive case, the meaning is either uniplex (i.e., referring to one sub-location within the larger whole) or multiplex (referring to multiple sub-locations within the larger whole). The demonstrative element typically specifies the intended meaning (32–33).

- (32) *Tä-ssä kohd-i-n tie-tä on jää-tä.*  
 this-INE place-PL-INSTR road-PAR be.PRS.3SG ice-PAR  
 ‘There is ice at this part of the road.’

- (33) *Nii-ssä kohd-i-n tie-tä on jää-tä.*  
 those-INE place-PL-INSTR road-PAR be.PRS.3SG ice-PAR  
 ‘There is ice at those parts of the road.’

In (32), the demonstrative is in the singular, and the expression designates one part (segment) of the road only; in (33), the plural demonstrative causes a distributive reading, with multiple icy segments. The instructive form *kohdin*, in spite of being formally in the plural, is thus neutral with respect to number. (This is quite typical of the instructive, which is used productively only in the plural.)

Such instructive forms are also neutral in directionality, which is probably why the demonstrative or other specifying element has become practically obligatory in such expressions (cf. Ross 1988: 91–93). The three-way expression of directionality (LATIVE vs. LOCATIVE vs. SEPARATIVE) is a fundamental and pervasive feature in Finnic (and more broadly Finno-Ugric) local-case systems. Thus, the instructive forms are compatible with LATIVE (34), LOCATIVE (35), and SEPARATIVE (36) demonstratives.

- (34) *Jänis men-i tuonne pä-i-n metsä-ä.*  
 hare go-PST.3SG thither end-PL-INSTR forest-PAR  
 ‘The hare went to(towards) that part of the forest.’

- (35) *Jänis juoks-i tuo-lla pä-i-n metsä-ä.*  
 hare run-PST.3SG that-ADE end-PL-INSTR forest-PAR  
 ‘The hare was running in that part of the forest.’

- (36) *Jänis tul-i tuo-lta pä-i-n metsä-ä.*  
 hare come-PST.3SG that-ABL end-PL-INSTR forest-PAR  
 ‘The hare came from that part of the forest.’

Such expressions demonstrate that the instructive forms, even when expressing location, are neutral with regard to the system of directionality that is so fundamental to the Uralic local-case system. What is interesting from the present point of view is the combination of the instructive forms with a PAR Ground (the holonym); in particular, semantically LATIVE expressions such as (34) or (37) indicate a directional meaning similar to the ‘towards’ meaning of the adpositional (prepositional) expressions *kohti* and *päin*.

- (37) *Jänis men-i tuonne kohd-i-n metsä-ä.*  
 hare go-PST.3SG thither place-PL-INSTR forest-PAR  
 ‘The hare went to that part of the forest.’

Disregarding the demonstrative pre-modifier, expressions such as (34) and (37) include the combinations *pä-i-n metsä-ä* [end-PL-INSTR forest-PAR] and *kohti metsä-ä* [place-PL.INSTR forest-PAR] ‘toward the forest’. We may speculate that there was a stage when the meronymic element lost its lexical meaning of a sub-location within a larger whole, and started to express the directional (LATIVE) meaning itself, making the LATIVE demonstrative redundant. In modern Finnish, it is possible to find examples in which *kohti* and *päin* are ambiguous between a meronymic instructive vs. an adposition. Regarding *kohti*, consider (38–39).

- (38) *Melkoinen nousu tuo-ssa kohti rata-a!*  
 quite.an ascent that-INE place.PL.INSTR track-PAR  
 ‘Quite an ascent at that part of the track!’ (Meronymic)  
 ‘Quite an ascent there, toward the track!’ (Adpositional)  
[http://vileda.kapsi.fi/vaihto/gallery/04\\_07/img\\_2998.jpg](http://vileda.kapsi.fi/vaihto/gallery/04_07/img_2998.jpg)  
 (accessed 15.10.2020)

- (39) *Tä-ssä kohti kesä-ä men-nään*  
 this-INE place.PL.INSTR summer-PAR go-PRS.PASS  
*kuitenkin kova-a vauhti-a.*  
 anyway hard-PAR speed-PAR  
 ‘In this part of the summer, we are going fast.’ (Meronymic)  
 ‘Here we are going toward the summer, at high speed.’ (Adpositional)  
<https://www.varkaus.fi/blogit/rampilta-liikkeelle/tsemppi%C3%A4>  
 (accessed 15.10.2020)



In (38), the expression *tuossa kohti rataa* can be read either as a meronymic expression with a demonstrative pre-modifier ‘at that part of the track’, or as a combination of an independent demonstrative adverb (‘there’) and the adpositional construction *kohti rataa* ‘towards the track’. Likewise in (39), the initial demonstrative *tässä* ‘here’ can be part of the meronymic construction (‘at this part of the summer’) or an independent adverb (‘here’), followed by the adpositional construction (*kohti kesää* ‘toward the summer’).

With the expression *päin*, the situation is somewhat different, because of writing conventions: in the meronymic construction, the demonstrative element and *päin* are typically written as a single word, as in example (40), *täältäpäin*. (This is why the second English translation with an adpositional construction is marked with an asterisk; it is only theoretical, since it is excluded by the writing convention). Were the two elements written apart, as independent words (*täältä päin*), the adpositional reading would be possible – the viewpoint location talked about would then be outside Finland, offering a view toward Finland. In example (41), this is indeed the case, and both readings are possible.

- (40) *Näkövinkkeli* *tää-ltä.pä-i-n* *Suome-a* *on*  
 point.of.view here-ABL.end-PL-INSTR Finland-PAR be.PRS.3SG  
*ehkä vähän erilainen, Hämmäläinen vakuutta-a.*  
 maybe a.little different Hämmäläinen assure-PRS.3SG  
 ‘The point of view from this part of Finland is perhaps a bit different, Hämmäläinen declares.’ (Meronymic)  
 ‘\*The point of view from here toward Finland is perhaps a bit different, Hämmäläinen declares.’ (Adpositional)  
<https://paakallo.fi/2016/04/lappi-nousi-divarikartalle-lyhin-pelimatka-535-kilometria/>  
 (accessed 16.10.2020)
- (41) *Eli sinne pä-i-n kaupunki-a olla-an meno-ssa.*  
 so thither end-PL-INSTR TOWN-PAR be-PRS.PASS going-INE  
 ‘So (we are) going to that part of town.’ (Meronymic)  
 ‘So (we are) going there, towards the town.’ (Adpositional)  
<https://pinkkisfun.wordpress.com/2013/04/25/tapahtumarikas-paiva/>  
 (accessed 16.10.2020)

The reading of such examples, however, is disambiguated by contextual and pragmatic factors: in all four (38–41), the context reveals that the meronymic reading is the one intended, even though the adpositional one is likewise in principle possible.

In sum, Hypothesis #2 takes expressions such as (34) and (37) as the starting point for the (relatively recent) grammaticalization of *kohti* and *päin* into PAR adpositions. Even in modern Finnish, they are sometimes ambiguous between the meronymic reading, in which *kohti* and *päin* are still nouns and the demonstrative element is obligatory, and the adpositional reading, in which the demonstrative is an independent adverbial. Such locative instructive forms typically indicate a vague location ‘hereabouts’, ‘thereabouts’, depending on the demonstrative pre-modifier, e.g., (*nä-i-llä*) *paiko-i-n* [this-PL-ADE place-PL-INSTR] ~ *ma-i-n* [land-PL-INSTR], *seudu-i-n* [region-PL-INSTR], which all mean, roughly, ‘hereabouts’. When combined with a holonym in the partitive case, such meronyms refer to a more precise sub-location within the referent of the holonym. Since the demonstratives are obligatory and inflected in all local cases, including the semantically LATIVE allative and illative, the directional ‘toward’ meaning acquired by *kohti* and *päin* could have originated in constructions with the demonstrative in a semantically LATIVE form. As is typical of grammaticalizing elements, the meronymic nouns would then have lost their referential meaning and started to indicate the meaning ‘towards’ themselves. The PAR Ground would be a relic from the holonymic construction, an instantiation of the general SEPARATIVE meaning. As opposed to Hypothesis #1, Hypothesis #2 would mean that the use of *kohti* and *päin* as PAR adpositions is a relatively recent phenomenon. This seems to be in better harmony with the distribution of these adpositions in the Finnic languages.

However, Hypothesis #2 is not without its problems, either. First, the general development of demonstrative elements into pre-modifiers of nouns is commonly taken to be the opposite of that suggested by Hypothesis #2: they were originally independent adverbs but were later reanalyzed as pre-modifiers of nouns (e.g., *tä-ssä metsä-ssä* [this-INE forest-INE] ‘here, in the forest > ‘in this forest’; e.g., Hakulinen 1979: 546 and the literature cited therein). Hypothesis #2 suggests the opposite development, from a pre-modifier into an adverb, which may weaken its plausibility. In principle, however, the grammaticalization of *kohti* and *päin* into PAR adpositions may have been a much later development than

the original development of demonstratives into agreeing pre-modifiers, a reverse development that took place only in the meronymic construction of which the PAR Ground was already a part.

Another and perhaps more serious flaw in Hypothesis #2 is that while it neatly explains the grammaticalization of *kohti* and *päin* into prepositions, it fails to explain how they became bipositions (also used as postpositions). In the Old Finnish materials, however, the postpositional use of these adpositions in fact seems to be dominant, while prepositional uses are a rare exception.<sup>12</sup> Were Hypothesis #2 true, the opposite might be expected. This has to be regarded as a weakness of Hypothesis #2.

### 3.3 Hypothesis #3: *päin* and *kohti* were lexicalized adverbs of direction and the PAR Ground was an object

Lastly, let us consider Hypothesis #3 regarding the development of *kohti* and *päin* into PAR adpositions. Consider the Karelian example (42), from the Dictionary of Karelian (Virtaranta 1974: 273, s.v. *kohti*).

- (42) *piru-o ei pija ampu-o kohti*  
 devil-PAR NEG.3SG should.CNG shoot-INF toward  
 ‘One should not shoot (directly) at the devil.’

Example (42) begins with a PAR object and ends with *kohti* ‘towards’, used as a directional adverb meaning ‘towards’. The adverb emphasizes that one should not shoot directly at the devil. It is worth noting that the meaning ‘directly’ (along with ‘towards’) is prominent in the semantics of *kohti* and its cognates in the Finnic languages. Because of the non-canonical object-first word order, the two elements are separated by other clausal elements. With a canonical SVO order they would be adjacent, as in the Finnish examples (43) and (44).

- (43) *Metsästäjä ampu-i karhu-a kohti.*  
 hunter shoot-PST.3SG bear-PAR toward  
 ‘The hunter shot at the bear.’

12 See Länsimäki (1994: 561–562, 568, s.v., *kohden, kohti*) and the examples given. A search for *päin* in the Old Finnish materials of the Language Bank of Finland produces a similar result.

- (44) *Metsästäjä ampu-i kohti karhu-a.*  
 hunter shoot-PST.3SG toward bear-PAR  
 ‘The hunter shot at the bear.’

In (modern) Finnish, expressions such as (43) and (44) are instinctively understood as adpositional constructions (postpositional and prepositional, respectively), not as combinations of a PAR object and an adverb. Historically, however, it is conceivable that their grammatical structure was similar to (42). Similar pairs of examples can be constructed with *päin*.

- (45) *Karhu-a ei pidä ampu-a päin.*  
 bear-PAR NEG.3SG should.CNG shoot-INF toward.  
 ‘One should not shoot (aiming directly) at a bear.’

- (46) *Metsästäjä ampu-i karhu-a päin.*  
 hunter shoot-PST.3SG bear-PAR toward  
 ‘The hunter shot at the bear.’

Again, the initial PAR *karhua* ‘bear’ in (45) is an object and the clause-final *päin* ‘toward’ an adverb of direction, whereas in (46) the two are adjacent and constitute an adpositional phrase. This grammatical difference is corroborated by the fact that adding another object (for example, one designating a PROJECTILE being shot) in the clause results in ungrammaticality if the clause already has a PAR object (47), but not if the PAR form is adjacent to *kohti* and understood as the complement of an adposition (48).

- (47) \**Karhu-a ammu-i-n nuole-n kohti.*  
 bear-PAR shoot-PST-1SG arrow-ACC toward  
 ‘\*I shot the bear an arrow towards.’

- (48) *Ammu-i-n nuole-n karhu-a kohti.*  
 shoot-PST.1SG arrow-ACC bear-PAR toward  
 ‘I shot an arrow at the bear.’

The ungrammaticality of (47) follows because *karhua* and *kohti* are not adjacent and hence cannot be conceived of as an adpositional phrase. Thus *karhua* is a PAR object, and two (non-coordinated) objects cannot occur in the same clause. In (48), on the other hand, *karhu-a*

[bear-PAR] and *kohti* are adjacent and constitute an adpositional phrase, and thus the ACC object indicating the PROJECTILE ('arrow') is fine.

In short, Hypothesis #3 says that the PAR complement of *kohti* and *päin* was originally an object, while *kohti* and *päin* themselves were lexicalized adverbs of direction, meaning 'towards; (directly) at'. This history is masked by the fact that such combinations, as exemplified in (43), (44), and (46) are nowadays understood as adpositional phrases, but it can still be seen in expressions such as (42), where the two elements are separated. Hypothesis #3 also explains why *kohti* and *päin* are bipositions: the mutual order of object and adverb was free to vary (as it still is), and both word orders were acceptable. Note that the development suggested by Hypothesis #3 for *kohti* and *päin* is similar to the classic explanation for the PAR adposition *pitkin* 'along', discussed in section 2.1 ('to walk a road, lengthwise' > 'to walk along a road').

The PAR objects in examples (42) and (45) share a semantic role that I will call TARGET. A TARGET it is an entity at which an AGENT aims or launches a (real or fictive) PROJECTILE. Such expressions also allow adverbs such as *kohti* and *päin* 'towards' to specify the direction of the aiming. The class of verbs that accept a TARGET object seems relatively narrow: it comprises verbs of actual or merely planned onset motion (of a PROJECTILE), including 'shoot', 'throw', and 'aim'. Such verbs allow alternation in the choice of their object, which can be either the TARGET (as in 42) or the PROJECTILE (48). The class of TARGET-object verbs broadens if we include metaphorical 'aiming' events expressed by verbs of perception, especially agentive visual perception, such as *katsoa* 'look (at)', *tuijottaa* 'stare', *vilkuilla* 'glance', and some others. These verbs indicate fictive motion of a perceptual signal (Talmy 2000; Huumo 2010), and they allow a PAR object to indicate a TARGET (49), or, alternatively, a directional adpositional construction with *kohti* or *päin* (50). The pattern is thus the same as with verbs of 'shooting'.

- (49) *Karhu-a ei pidä tuijotta-a kohti.*  
 bear-PAR NEG.3SG ought.CNG stare-INF toward.  
 'One should not stare (directly) at a bear.'

- (50) *Metsästäjä tuijott-i karhu-a kohti.*  
 hunter stare-PST.3SG bear-PAR toward  
 'The hunter stared at the bear.'



such as (51) has been explained (by Denison 1957; Larjavaara 2019, and others) as a relic of the SEPARATIVE function of the case, where it indicates a CAUSE. It is thus a borderline case between an (aspectually irregular) PAR object and a *partitivus respectus* adverbial. On the other hand, there are uses of so-called *partitivus respectus* adverbials in formally intransitive clauses that come semantically close to PAR objects. Consider examples (52) and (53), from Penttilä (2002[1963]: 593).

(52) *Tartu-i-n hän-tä käte-en*  
 grab-PST-1SG 3SG-PAR arm-ILL  
 'I grabbed her/him by the hand.'

(53) *Kuula osu-i pakenija-a sydäme-en.*  
 bullet hit-PST.3SG fugitive-PAR heart-ILL  
 'The bullet hit the fugitive in the heart.'

Semantically, the PAR elements of these examples resemble objects: they indicate animate entities that undergo an effect expressed by the verb. Moreover, there is a meronymic relationship between the PAR adverbial (the holonym) and the illative form (the meronym): the illative adverbials meaning 'hand' and 'heart', which are case-governed complements of the verbs, specify the body part at which the effect is directed. Such uses of the partitive may have derived historically from the SEPARATIVE function of the case.<sup>14</sup> There are formally identical examples with a transitive verb and (thus) an actual partitive object (54).

(54) *Ampiainen pist-i minu-a kaula-an.*  
 wasp sting-PST.3SG 1SG-PAR neck-ILL  
 'A wasp stung me in the neck.'

However, the difference is that only the object in (54) can alternatively occur without the illative adverbial specifying the body part (55).

(55) *Ampiainen pist-i minu-a.*  
 wasp sting-PST.3SG 1SG-PAR  
 'A wasp stung me.'

14 This strategy is still alive in expressions where the holonym is indicated by the modern SEPARATIVE case elative: *Ammu-i-n lentokonee-sta vasemma-n moottori-n* [shoot-PST-1SG airplane-ELA left-ACC engine-ACC] 'I shot (and destroyed) the left-hand engine of the airplane'.

In contrast, the omission of the illative adverbial results in ungrammaticality in (53); see (56). To express the intended meaning ‘The bullet hit the fugitive’, one has to code ‘the fugitive’ with the illative, which is the case-governed complement of the verb *osua* ‘hit’; see (57).

(56) \**Kuula osu-i pakenija-a.*  
 bullet hit-PST.3SG fugitive-PAR  
 ‘The bullet hit the fugitive.’

(57) *Kuula osu-i pakenija-an.*  
 bullet hit-PST.3SG fugitive-ILL  
 ‘The bullet hit the fugitive.’

Such expressions are relevant to Hypothesis #3, since they indicate the transmission of a force (52) or motion of a PROJECTILE (53) towards the entity designated by the partitive (*partitivus respectus*). Such PAR expressions thus share the role of TARGET with the PAR objects of our earlier examples (43), (44), and (46). Grammatically, however, they are not objects but adverbials and members of the vague *partitivus respectus* category. The borderline between the two is indeed fuzzy. In Denison’s (1957: 198) words:

These [adverbial uses of the partitive] all combined to form the single loose category which we now think of as the partitive object. As we have had occasion repeatedly to observe, the border-line between such adverbial specifications and [...] partitive objects is even now impossible to fix rigidly.

In sum, it is conceivable that the PAR Ground of *kohti* and *päin* was originally a grammatical PAR object, but one of an idiosyncratic kind, expressing a TARGET, and closely related to object-like *partitivus respectus* adverbials. Originally, such partitive forms could have developed from the meronymic meaning of expressions such as (52) and (53). In any case, it is the semantic role of TARGET of the partitive form that is crucial to Hypothesis #3: it explains why the PAR adpositions *kohti* and *päin* express a directionality that is in conflict with the old SEPARATIVE meaning of the partitive.



#### 4. Conclusions

In this work, I have searched for motivations for the partitive complement (semantically, Ground) of some Finnic adpositions. In the literature, a strong consensus prevails that the first PAR adpositions developed from a comparative meaning, in which Ground was a STANDARD of comparison and Figure a COMPAREE, whose position was assessed with respect to the STANDARD. In contrast, the origin of many other semantic classes of PAR adpositions has not been addressed in much detail, and the existing accounts (summed up by Sadeniemi 1970) have been brief outlines.

I have argued that semantically comparative PAR adpositions are an idiosyncratic subtype, with their (relative) Ground serving the function of a STANDARD (of comparison), rather than that of a typical main Ground. I have argued that the prototypical environment for relative Grounds is the formally comparative adpositional construction (e.g. ‘nearer’), which allows the simultaneous expression of both types of Grounds (‘X is nearer Y than Z is’).

Other central classes of PAR adpositions discussed above include expressions of DIRECTION and DISTANCE (in relation to Ground or a targeting point). Expressions of DISTANCE include the adpositions *lähe-llä* [near-ADE] ‘near’ and *keske-llä* [middle-ADE] ‘in the middle of’. The former indicates Figure’s distance from Ground itself, the latter Figure’s distance from a targeting point (the exact middle point of Ground). Both display a gradable meaning, which can be specified by open-scale degree modifiers, such as *melko* ‘quite’, or *hyvin* ‘very’. These adpositions also allow their Ground to be in the genitive as an alternative to the partitive. Following Haukioja (1998), I have argued that the genitive-Ground construction presents a distal perspective on the locational configuration in its entirety, while the partitive-Ground construction presents a proximal perspective to Figure and its immediate surroundings, allowing for the search domain and Ground to be conceptualized as unbounded.

A gradable meaning is also relevant to the meaning of the PAR adposition *vastapäätä* ‘opposite’, which together with other adpositions based on the stem *vasta-* ‘opposite’ form the class of DIAMETRIC adpositions. They share the general meaning of “opposition” between Figure and Ground, which are either facing each other, moving towards

each other, or exerting opposed forces upon each other. The partitive Ground of DIAMETRIC adpositions is most probably motivated by the SEPARATIVE meaning, where it indicates a viewpoint entity or location ('F is opposite, from Ground's point of view').

Finally, I examined three alternative hypotheses regarding the origin of the DIRECTIONAL adpositions *kohti* (including the variants *kohden* and *kohdin*) 'towards' and *päin* 'towards; against'. These adpositions are puzzling, in that they take a PAR Ground but indicate direction towards, not away from Ground, contrary to the old SEPARATIVE meaning of the partitive. The three hypotheses evaluated in section 3 concern the grammaticalization of these adpositions. Though the matter can probably not be ultimately resolved, I am inclined to believe that the most credible scenario is offered by hypotheses #1 and #3 together, #1 regarding the lexicalization of *kohti* and *päin* from body-part expressions of posture into directional adverbs ('with one's head/front oriented in a direction' > 'toward [that direction]; directly'), and #3 for the development of the PAR Ground itself, from grammatical objects expressing a TARGET of (concrete or figurative) 'shooting', 'throwing', or 'aiming'. In any case, it seems likely that the lexicalization of *kohti* and *päin* into directional adverbs and into quasi-adpositions (used with Grounds in the directional local cases) took place much earlier than their grammaticalization into PAR adpositions.

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## Abbreviations

ACC – accusative, ADE – adessive, ALL – allative, ADP – adposition, ADV – adverb, CPR – comparative, CNG – connegative, ELA – elative, ESS – essive, GEN – genitive, ILL – illative, INE – inessive, INF – infinitive,

INSTR – instructive, NEG – negation verb, NMLZ – nominalizer, OBJ – object, PAR – partitive, PL – plural, PRS – present tense, PST – past tense, PTCP – participle, Q – question marker, SG – singular, SUP – superlative, 1 – 1st person, 2 – 2nd person, 3 – 3rd person

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**Kokkuvõte. Tuomas Huumo: Milleks partitiiv? Kaassõnade laiendit markeeriva partitiivikäände motiividest läänemeresoome keeltes.** Kaassõnad suhestavad trajektori orientiiriga, mida väljendab kaassõna laiend. Enamik läänemeresoome keelte kaassõnadest on tagasõnad, mille laiend on genitiivis, eessõnade laiend aga on tavaliselt partitiivis. Käesoleva töö eesmärgiks on selgitada partitiivis laiendiga kaassõnade sünkroonilist ja diakroonilist semantikat kognitiivse lingvistika vaatenurgast. Autor väidab, et partitiivlaiendiga kaassõnad valivad asukohasuhte proksimaalse perspektiivi, erinevalt genitiivlaiendiga kaassõnadest, mis valivad distaalse ja holistilise perspektiivi. Autor pakub välja kolm alternatiivset hüpoteesi, mis puudutavad kahe soome keele partitiivlaiendiga kaassõna, *kohti* ja *päin* (mõlemad tähendusega 'suunas, poole'), päritolu: 1) kaassõnad grammatiseerusid instruktiivis kehaosaväljenditest (vrd. *selin* 'seljaga millegi poole') ja nende partitiivlaiend väljendas esialgselt vaatleja asukohta; 2) vormid olid lokatiivsed instruktiivid, mis väljendasid meronüümiliselt täpsemat sihtala orientiiri sees; 3) partitiivlaiend oli esialgselt objekt ning väljendas suunatud tegevuse (nt. 'sihtima', 'laskma') sihtkohta, tulevased kaassõnad aga olid suunda täpsustavad adverbid.

**Märksõnad:** kaassõna, eessõna, partitiiv, kognitiivne semantika, läänemeresoome keeled