

Free relatives in Moksha

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1. Types of relative clause

- Headed relative clauses *The man who sold the Moon*
 - Light-headed / false free relatives *Someone who sold the Moon*
 - Headless / free relatives *I'll buy [what you are selling].* [Bresnan & Grimshaw 1978]
- Free relatives are relatives without an overt nominal head [de Vries 2002]**

2. Moksha-Mordvinian language¹

- Mordvinic branch of the Uralic languages
- Moksha and Erzya
- Located in the European part of Russia, The Republic of Mordovia

Basic relativization strategies:

postposed RC with external head and internal-headed correlatives

3. Free relatives

Matching requirements:

Case Matching: [FR wh-CASEi ...]-CASEi
Categorial Matching: [FR wh-XPi...]-XPi

- DAT in dependent clause *vs.* NOM in main clause

(1) *Sas'edn'ej kud-t' esə er'e-j*
next house-DEF.SG.GEN in.IN live-NPST.3SG
*ki-nd'i /*kija kat'e maks-əz'ə kniga-nza-n*
who-DAT who Katja give-PST 3SG.S-3SG.O book-3SG.POSS.PL-GEN

'Next door lives (the one), whom Katja gave her books'.

- NOM in dependent clause *vs.* DAT in main clause

(2) *kat'e maks-əz'ə kn'iga-nc,*
Katja gave-PST.3SG.S.3SG.O book-3SG.POSS.SG.GEN
kija er'e-j sas'edn'ej kud-t' esə.
who live-NPST.3SG next house-DEF.SG.GEN in.IN

'Katja gave her book (to the person), who lives next door'.

4. Matching requirements in Moksha

MainC \ RC	NOM	GEN	DAT	ABL	Loc. cases	Postpos
NOM	ok	ok	ok	-	-	-
GEN	ok	ok	ok	-	-	-
DAT	ok	ok	ok	-	-	-
GEN.POSS	ok	ok	ok	-	-	-
ABL	ok	ok	-	ok	-	-
Loc. cases	ok	ok	-	-	ok	-
Postpos	ok	ok	-	-	-	ok

5. Questions of FR syntax

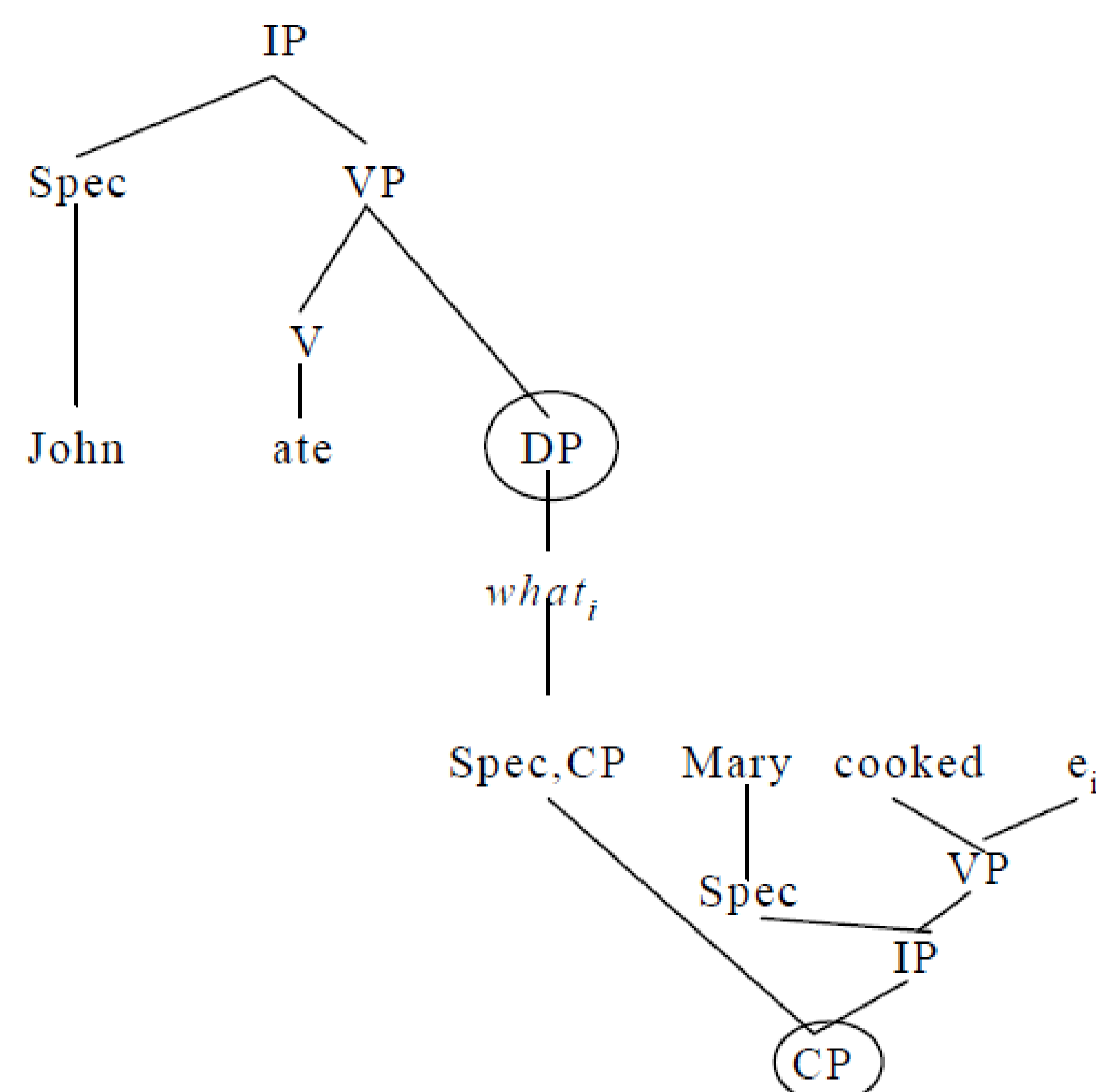
Two basic problems of free relative clauses:

- 1) What is the structure that allows to check requirements of both matrix and relative clauses?
- 2) Which mechanism resolves case conflict?

Problem I

- Head account *vs.* COMP account

Possible solution: Shared Structure Hypothesis [van Riemsdijk 2006]



Matching in free relatives seems to be closely related to another feature of RC found in Moksha

6. Inverse Case Attraction

Inverse Attraction: external head of the relative clause shows case assigned by an element not in the main, but in the relative clause.

(3) *jalga-z'ə-n'd'i, /kona-n'd'i v'əš-n'ə-n'*
friend-1SG.POSS.SG-DAT that-DAT write-IPFV-PST.1SG
kizə-n' per'f s'orma-t], vāndi sa-j
year-GEN around letter-PL tomorrow arrive-NPST.3SG

'My friend, to whom I wrote letters every day, will arrive tomorrow'.

lit.: 'To my friend, to whom I wrote letters every day, will arrive tomorrow'.

7. What do FR and IA have in common?

- Interaction between elements in relative and main clauses
- Upwards direction: from the dependent to the main clause
- Requirements of the main clause are ignored in both cases

Problem II

Case hierarchy [Grosu 1994]:

NOM<ACC<DAT<GEN<...<P-Kase

Possible solution [Grosu 1994]:

- Some cases are more marked than other
- Case mismatches in FR are allowed when a less marked case is replaced by a more marked one
- Case Hierarchy is language-specific; it governs matching requirements violations in (nearly) all languages

8. Moksha as a non-matching language

1) Moksha case system

- Cases do not build a homogeneous system
 - Nouns are marked by definiteness only in NOM, GEN and DAT
- Hypothesis:** Nominative, genitive and dative differ from other cases; these cases are structural

MainC \ RC	NOM	GEN	DAT	ABL	Loc. cases	Postpos
NOM	ok	ok	ok	-	-	-
GEN	ok	ok	ok	-	-	-
DAT	ok	ok	ok	-	-	-
GEN.POSS	ok	ok	ok	-	-	-
ABL	ok	ok	-	ok	-	-
Loc. cases	ok	ok	-	-	ok	-
Postpos	ok	ok	-	-	-	ok

2) Structural cases

- Structural cases may remain unassigned
- The idea of minimally marked cases

Hypothesis: All structural cases in Moksha (i. e. NOM, GEN, DAT) are equally marked

Structural cases (NOM/GEN/DAT) < Semantic (locative) cases

3) Pro-drop

- Pro-drop in the subject position is widespread in Moksha
- Object agreement marker on the verb seems to trigger pro-drop in the object position

MainC \ RC	NOM	GEN	DAT	ABL	Loc. cases	Postpos
NOM	ok	ok	ok	-	-	-
GEN	ok	ok	ok	-	-	-
DAT	ok	ok	ok	-	-	-
GEN.POSS	ok	ok	ok	-	-	-
ABL	ok	ok	-	ok	-	-
Loc. cases	ok	ok	-	-	ok	-
Postpos	ok	ok	-	-	-	ok

(4) soda-sa

know-NPST-3.O.SG.O.1SG.S

'I know him/her/it'.

(5) kov-də ingal'ə mon' mird'ε-z'ə

month-ABL befor.IN I.OBL husband-1SG.POSS.SG

rama-z'ə kona-n' min' tu-mə oš-sə
buy-PST.3SG.S.3SG.O that-GEN we go-PST.1PL city.IN

'One month ago my husband bought [the car], by which we went to the city'.

Pro-drop cases (NOM / GEN) < others (DAT / locative cases)

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Abbreviations

ABL – ablative; ACC – accusative; DAT – dative; DEF – definiteness; IA – inverse attraction, IN – inessive; IPFV – imperfective; FR – free relatives; GEN – genitive, NOM – nominative; NPST – non-past; O – object; Obl – oblique; RC – relative clause; PL – plural; POSS – possessive; P – preposition, PST – past; S – subject; SG – singular.

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