Locative phrases

Section 10

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10.1. Distribution

1   A locative phrase consists of either a locative noun, which may or may not have syntactic dependents on the left, or a noun phrase with a locative postposition. On top of that, locative phrases also usually have a deictic marker on the right edge, see 10.3. Locative phrases occur in a variety of contexts: as postverbal modifiers, as predicates in clauses of adverbial type (see 12.4), as prenominal modifiers, or referentially in all NP positions.

10.2. Semantics

2   Locative phrases refer to a localization only. The semantic role of the localization, also known as its orientation (e.g. as the goal or the source of motion), is not marked in the locative phrase and has to be inferred from the verb modified by the locative phrase. With the verb *jɛ̌* 'to pass' locative phrases refer to a location which the trajectory of motion crosses. With the verbs *bɔ̄* 'to come from, to leave', and *wlō* 'to move out', locative phrases refer to the source of motion. When combining with *nṵ̄* 'to come', *tá* 'to go', *srǒ* 'to arrive', *drǎ* 'to fall', locative phrases define the goal, or the final point, of motion. With all other verbs, including manner of motion verbs like *bɛ̌* 'to run', *dōŋ̀* 'to swim', locative phrases describe the location of the event ('swim near the village'). Compare:

(93)	*ó*	*nṵ́*	*lɔ̌ɔ̌*	*wó*	*wē.*
	3SG:PST+	come	marker	IN	there

	'He came to the market'.			

(94)	ó	bɔ̰́	lɔ̰́ɔ̰́	wó	wē.
	3SG:PST+	come.from	market	IN	there
	'He came from the market'.				

(95)	ó	jɛ̰́	lɔ̰́ɔ̰́	wó	wē.
	3SG:PST+	pass	market	IN	there
	'He passed through the market'.				

(96)	ó	dɔ̰́	lɔ̰́ɔ̰́	wó	wē.
	3SG:PST+	stop	market	IN	there
	'He stopped at the market'.				

3 So each Beng verb has exactly one semantic slot for a location (contrasting with verbs of European languages that can have multiple locative modifiers that correspond e.g. to the source and the goal of motion, as in the English *The Liszt family left Vienna for Paris*). In Beng, if a verb is modified with more than one locative phrase, they always describe the same location:

(97)	ó	nṵ́	Àbìjâ	wlá	wē.
	3SG:PST+	come	Abidjan	house	there
	'He came home to Abidjan'.				

4 The semantic rigidity of the combinations of verbs with locative phrases obviously places limitations on what can be expressed in a single verbal clause. For example, it is not possible to specify in one clause both the source and the goal of motion (*Antonio Canova came from Rome to Paris*), or the goal and the manner of motion (*The child ran to the village*). If it is necessary to express such complex meanings, one has to revert to complex syntactic structures, and juxtapose two or more clauses ('The child ran, it came to the village'). In this respect Beng represents a pattern typical for languages of Sub-Saharan Africa, cf. Cresseils (2006), especially his examples 8 and 9 from Tswana and Baule.

5 Locative phrases used as predicates or when modifying nouns, again, only denote location ('a field in the forest', 'the sheep are near the river'). Secondary uses of adpositions primarily used to describe movement events, as in the English *the man **from** Amsterdam*, are absent in Beng and the corresponding meanings have to be expressed

by other means (e.g. with the attributive marker *nạ*, see 6.1). Interestingly, I managed to find one case in which the distinction encoded by source of motion vs. location oriented preposition in English (and similar European languages) can be expressed by different Beng postpositions: *ạ̄ŋ gbɛ̌ lɛ̀ wó zrɛ̈* (with an IN postposution) translates as "road **in** our village", while *ạ̄ŋ gbɛ̌ lɛ̀ mạ̀ zrɛ̈* (with a CONT postposition) translates as "road **to** our village". It is obvious, however, that the distinction between the adpositions has distinct semantic grounding in Beng as opposed to English: Beng postpositions encode the actual physical location of the road ('inside the village' vs. 'in physical contact with the village'), while the English usage is based on the common PATH – MOTION metonymy.

6　The meanings of locative postpositions, and glosses for them, are as follows. Postposition *wó* IN can be translated as 'in, inside', *mạ̀* CONT means 'on', in the sense of contact with a surface of the reference object, *ló* SUPER means 'over, above' or 'on TOP of', *dị́* APUD is 'near, around', *lù* SUB is 'under', *klɛ̄* POST means 'behind', but also 'with (someone)' as in 'the knife is with me', and *wɔ̄lì* POSS means 'in (someone's) possession'. Finally, the locative postposition *yé*, which is identical to the noun 'mouth', when combining with a container type of object, indicates a location of the edge of the object, e.g. 'on the edge of (a bowl)', 'on the bank of (the river)', 'at the entrance to (a tree hollow)'. Besides the productive 'edge' sense, *yé* is also idiosyncratically required by several nouns of locative meaning (*zrɛ̈ yé* 'on the road', *gbɛ̌ yé* 'in the village', etc.).

10.3. The grammatical category of deixis

7　In Beng, the category of deixis characterizes only locative phrases. Regular NPs don't mark proximity, unless they contain a relative clause with a locative statement 'which is here'. The most common demonstrative element *bì* 'this, that' is unmarked for proximity.

8　Locative phrases (except for toponyms and deictic locative nouns themselves) are often accompanied by deictic locative nouns *wē* 'there', *nɔ̱̄* 'here' и *blɔ̄* 'right here, right there'.[1] The deictic element is usually not obligatory, but speakers tend to judge examples with a deictic as more natural than ones without it. For example, (98) is judged superior to (99), and (100) considerably superior to (101):

(98)	Ó	tá	klɛ́ŋ́	nị̀	wó	wē.
	3SG:PST+	go:L	forest	DEF	IN	there
	'He went to the forest'.					

(99)	Ó	tá	klɛ́ŋ́	nị̀	wó.
	3SG:PST+	go:L	forest	DEF	IN
	'He went to the forest'.				

(100)	Nṵ̄	wlá	nɔ̰́!
	come	house	here
	'Come home!'		

(101)	Nṵ̄	wlá!
	come	house
	'Come home!'	

9   The degree to which the deictic element is obligatory varies depending on the locative noun involved. The factors behind the usage of the deictics are yet to be explored; one of them could be the frequency of the locative noun: the more frequent the locative noun, the more freely it can occur without a deictic element. For example, a very frequent locative postposition *wó* 'in' freely occurs without a deictic, while with relatively rare locative postpositions like *ɗṵ́* 'near', deictics are more preferable. In a similar vein, deictic *wē* 'there', *nɔ̰̄* 'here', and *blɔ̄* 'right here, right there' are just preferable with the frequent locative noun *wlá* 'house', but obligatory with the rare *tùwâ* 'quarter'.

NOTES

1. As an anonymous reviewer suggests, deictic doubling of locative phrases is probably induced by contact with Baule.

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