

**Complexity of the Russian prepositional phrase:  
thinking-for-speaking tendencies in Russian learner data**

Ekaterina Vlasova  
PhD student, University of Helsinki  
[ekaterina.vlasova@helsinki.fi](mailto:ekaterina.vlasova@helsinki.fi)

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The Russian prepositional phrase establishes a complex cognitive phenomenon due to its structural diversity, as each preposition requires a certain oblique case. A learner of Russian should master and control more than 65 preposition-and-case combinations, often incorporated in deeper syntactic subordination. My corpus-based study examines how advanced Russian learners and heritage speakers simplify and restructure prepositional case government in their written production. The dataset contains 580 erroneous samples from essays collected at the University of Helsinki. Four regular patterns of simplification have been identified:

1. Overuse of Genitive, induced by cross-linguistic influence of Finnish postpositions and their grammatical qualities (Leisiö, 2004).
2. Overuse of Nominative, seen as the loss or fossilization of prepositional government (Rubinstein, 1995).
3. Priming effects, leading to a repetition of case forms or similar endings in a syntactic line (Gries & Wulff, 2005).
4. Overmarking and morphosemantic transparency, whereby both the preposition and the case express the same category, such as SPATIAL PREPOSITION + SPATIAL CASE (Slobin, 2004).

By employing mixed-effect and nested models of regression analysis (Gries & Deshors, 2020), I demonstrate that such categories, as a learner's background (L2 or heritage) and the simplification pattern, contribute significantly to variability of case errors. The findings suggest that students with different background process morphosyntactic complexity and typological distinctions in a different way while writing in second language. The heritage speakers demonstrate predominance of Genitive and a contact-induced change, typical for grammatical convergence in bilingual language use (Muysken, 2020). Meanwhile, L2 learners employ multiple patterns of syntactic and cognitive online adaptations in accordance with the thinking-for-speaking frameworks (Han & Cadierno, 2010; Slobin, 2003).

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