AN ACCOUNT OF LETEH ADPOSITIONS

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Abstract

This paper describes the morphological and syntactic properties of adposition elements of Leteh. It further examines their origin from the viewpoint of grammaticalization (Heine, Claudi and Hünnemeyer 1991: 2). Studies of this nature have been documented in the literature of Kwa languages, and noted that whereas prepositions evolve from verbs in the context of serial verb constructions, postpositions are reported to originate from body-part nouns and landmark terms (Lord 1993; Osam 1994; Ameka 2007). The paper reveals that Leteh adpositions are morphologically similar to the respective content words, but their syntactic properties differ. It further demonstrates that certain body-part nouns in Leteh are used in the extended context of location, and eventually acquire locative function. In the case of prepositions, the function of certain verbs in serial verb constructions extends, lose their semantic content and move from the verbal category to function as prepositions. Data were sourced from a large corpus of Leteh, spanning a variety of semantic fields. The study corroborates earlier findings on adposition grammaticalization in African languages.

KEYWORDS: Leteh, Kwa, morphosyntax, grammaticalization, adpositions, decategorialization.

Abstrait

Le présent document est une description des propriétés morphologiques et syntaxiques des éléments d'adposition du dialecte Leteh. Cette communication étudie en détail la genèse de ces derniers, du point de vue de la grammaticalisation (Heine, Claudi and Hünnemeyer 1991: 2). Des études de ce genre ont été documentées dans les œuvres littéraires en langues Kwa et soulignent qu'alors que les propositions évoluent à partir des verbes, en ce qui concerne les constructions verbales en série, les postpositions quant à elles, proviendraient de noms de parties du corps humain et de termes marquants (Lord 1993; Osam 1994; Ameka 2007). La communication indique que les adpositions en dialecte Leteh sont morphologiquement similaires aux mots des contenus respectifs, mais que leurs propriétés syntaxiques diffèrent. Elle démontre en outre que certains noms de parties du corps en dialecte Leteh sont utilisés dans le contexte étendu de la localisation et acquièrent éventuellement une fonction locative. En ce qui concerne les prépositions, la fonction de certains verbes dans les constructions verbales sérielles s'étend, perd leur contenu sémantique et passe de la catégorie verbale à la fonction de préposition. Les données proviennent d'un vaste recueil du dialecte Leteh, couvrant une variété de champs sémantiques. L'étude confirme les résultats antérieurs sur la grammaticalisation de l'adposition en langues africaines.

MOTS CLES: Leteh, Kwa, morphosyntaxe, grammaticalisation, adposition, décatégorialisation

1. Preliminaries

The paper describes the morphological and syntactic properties of Leteh[1] adpositions. Furthermore, it seeks to account for the origin of the adpositions, drawing on the tenets of grammaticalization "… where a lexical unit or structure assumes a grammatical function or where a grammatical unit assumes a more grammatical function …" (Heine et al 1991: 2). From the viewpoint of grammaticalization, the paper seeks to explain how certain Leteh content words, verbs and nouns, become function words,

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[1] Leteh is a less-studied Kwa language; elsewhere in the literature, the language is called Larteh or Lɛtɛ, the name used by its speakers. The language is spoken in Larteh.

acquiring grammatical meaning and role in other contexts. In the literature, 'adposition' is used as a cover term for prepositions and postpositions; these are free morphemes which express spatial, locational and temporal relationship among sentential elements. A number of researchers of African languages have observed the nominal origin of postpositions in these languages, where relational nouns, body-part nouns or landmark terms have been found to be the source. These are groups of nominals which behave as nouns, (notably in possessive constructions) in one way, and like postpositions elsewhere (Ameka 2003; Osam 1994; Ameka and Essegbey 2006). In the same way, serial verb constructions have been observed to be the origin of prepositions (Ansre 1966; Fabb 1992; Lord 1993; Osam 1994; Ameka 2003; Aboh 2005; Ameka and Essegbey 2006; Ameka 2007; Osam, Duah and Blay 2011). Heine (1984) describes the behaviour as an instance of "functional split"; a phenomenon which could be explained from the perspective of grammaticalization.

Literature on Kwa languages are replete of studies undertaken on the morphosyntax of adpositions and their diachrony; the preceding cited works bear witness to that. Leteh being a language which is understudied, there has not been a detailed description of adpositions of the language. This paper therefore seeks to add to the knowledge base of adpositions and their sources in African languages. Studies report that Kwa languages operate both prepositions and postpositions (Ameka 2003; Osam 1994; Aboh 2010). In the case of Akan for instance, it is reported that the language has postpositions and a lone preposition *wɔ̀* 'be at' which has evolved from a lexical verb, 'have' (Osam 1994: 255). This paper will describe the form and function of Leteh adpositions and attempt to describe their source within the context of grammaticalization.

The paper is generally descriptive. A fieldwork-based approach was utilized to collect data in Larteh, the speech community. Folktales were audio recorded from five Leteh speakers who reside in the speech community. We also had three Leteh speakers who did picture reading of a [2]book which illustrated spatial and locative relationship among objects. Furthermore, elicitation sessions on the types and uses of Leteh adpositions were held with 16 other speakers. The audio recordings were transcribed with help from two speakers, after which the transcripts were analysed. Data collection took place from February to May, 2017.

The rest of the paper is organized into four parts: section two is devoted to relevant information on Leteh grammar; section three showcases Leteh adpositions and describes their morphosyntactic properties; the fourth section is devoted to a discussion of the diachrony of Leteh adpositions and in the final part, the issues raised are summarised and conclusions drawn.

2. **Brief notes on Leteh grammar**

Guan (Kwa, Niger-Congo) is sub-classified into two language clusters: North Guan and South Guan (Eberhard, Simons and Fennig 2019). Leteh, the language under discussion, belongs to the South Guan group. The language is spoken in only one town, Larteh, located in the South-eastern part of Ghana, West Africa. The language does not possess an official orthography; in the few studies that have been conducted on the

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[2] The picture book was designed by the researcher

language, an orthography which is based on seven[3] vowels has been applied. Leteh is a tone[4] language with two level tones: high and low. A sequence of a high and low tone on a syllable is perceived as a falling pitch whereas a combination of a low and high tone on a syllable is distinguished as a rising pitch. The lexical tone helps to distinguish meanings of words which otherwise are the same in terms of their segments. The grammatical tone[5], coupled with verbal prefixes, is employed in marking tense and aspectual distinctions. The morphology of Leteh is largely agglutinative. Akin to many Kwa languages, an unmarked Leteh clause has SVO syntax. The constituents of a simple Leteh Noun phrase could be a bare noun or a noun followed by a determiner, definite or indefinite: NP →N (ADJ) (QT/NUM) (DET) (Akrofi Ansah 2014). Major word classes in the language include nouns, verbs, adjectives and adverbs, whereas the classes comprising quantifiers, intensifiers, determiners, demonstratives, utterance particles, interjections, adpositions and conjunctions are considered as minor. In Leteh, it is possible to have a co-occurrence of prepositions and postpositions in a clause. Although the noun class system in Leteh is not as robust as found in the Bantu languages, it is possible to categorise nouns based on similar singular and plural prefixes, and also concordial relationship with modifiers, particularly, adjectives (Akrofi Ansah 2009). Functional types of serial verb constructions in the language include motion serialization; instrumental serialization, benefactive/goal serialization; causative serialization and posture serialization. For the purpose of this paper, it is important to state that within Leteh serial verb constructions, verbal categories like tense/aspect, negation and mood are marked only once on the initial verb (Akrofi Ansah 2009).

3. **Form and function of Leteh adpositions.**

    'Adpositions' is a cover term for prepositions and postpositions. In Leteh, they are free morphemes which express spatial, locational and temporal relationship among elements in a sentence.

3.1 **Leteh prepositions**

Table 1 Leteh prepositions and source verbs

Preposition		Source verb	
twú	'from'	**twú**	'to take'
bò	'in/at'	**bò**	'to have'
nɛ́	'to/for'	**nɛ́**	'to give'

Table 1 displays prepositions which operate in Leteh discourse and their lexical sources. All the prepositions are identical in form to their verb sources, however it must be noted that the source verbs with their tone patterns are in the uninflected form as

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[3] An orthography based on seven vowels is employed in this paper. These are /i, e, o, u, ɛ, ɔ, a/.

presented in table 1. The tone patterns may change based on the tense/aspect they express in different syntactic contexts. Consequently, a preposition and its corresponding source verb may not be entirely homophonous. The following examples (1-3), which are extracted from a dialogue in a folktale illustrate syntactic properties of Leteh prepositions.

1a. **Ananse bétè tégyí twú àkùrá.**
   Spider   PST.take   food   from   village
  'Ananse took food from (the) village'.
 b. **Ámó bɛ̀-ná twú Nkra.**
   3PL   FUT-walk   from   Accra city
   'They will walk from Accra'.

In sentences (1a) and (1b), the morpheme **twú** 'from' functions as preposition, occurring with NP arguments, **àkùrá** 'village' and **Nkra** 'Accra city', and indicating the direction of the action expressed by the main verbs.
 Furthermore, in sentences (2-3), we illustrate the syntax of **bò** 'in/at' and **nɛ́** 'for/to' as prepositions, and their function as heads of prepositional phrases. It is noted in (3a, b and c) that **nɛ́** marks the recipient argument in an indirect ditransitive construction, a construction which is closely related to the Leteh benefactive serial verb construction (SVC) where **nɛ̀** 'give' functions as a serial verb (Akrofi Ansah 2009). This is in line with the observation that serial verbs are one source of prepositions in Kwa languages (Lord 1993). This will be fully discussed later in the paper.

2a.   **Ananse yí bò àkùrá.**
    Spider   STAT.live   at/in   village
    'Ananse lives at/in (the) village'.
 b.   **Ama dé-dànkɛ̀ tégyí bò àwù.**
    PN   PROG-cook   food   at/in   home
    'Ama is cooking (food) at home'.
 c. **Ò-wúré ká bò ḿfá.**
    SG-book   STAT.lie   at/in   ADV
    '(A) book is lying there'.
3a.   **Nkɔnɔre dànkɛ̀ tégyí nɛ́ Ntikuma**
    Nkɔnɔre   PRES.cook   food   for   Ntikuma
    'Nkɔnɔre cooks (food) for Ntikuma'.
 b. **Àkpòtròbì búè èsúmì nɛ́ Ananse.**
    Frog   PST.do   work   for   spider
    'Frog worked for Ananse'.
 c. **Kofi fúrì sìká nɛ́ Ama.**
    PN   PST.collect   money   for   PN
    'Kofi collected money for Ama'.

With the exception of **bò**, the two morphemes, **twú** and **nɛ́** occur in other syntactic slots as full verbs where they inflect for all existing verbal categories in Leteh (4-6). In many respects, the verb, **bò,** 'have' behaves as an irregular verb. In negation for instance, **bò** 'have' is replaced by the suppletive form, **m̀bɛ̀** (5b); of the three morphemes, **bò** does not inflect for tense/aspect. This is similar to what is reported about Akan, a related language; in Akan, **wɔ̀** 'to have' is replaced by the suppletive

form, **nni '**does not have' in negation, and it does not inflect for tense/aspect (Osam 1994).

4a. **Kofi bè-twú ɔ̀dò.**
   PN   FUT-take car
   'Kofi will take (pick) a car'.
 b. **Kofi dé-twù ɔ̀dò.**
   PN   PROG-take car
   'Kofi is picking a car'.
5a. **Ananse bò é-bí-ɛ̀nɛ̀ sá.**
   Spider   have PL-child-PL three
   'Ananse has three children'.
 b. **Ananse m̀-bɛ̀ é-bí-ɛ̀nɛ̀ sá.**
   Spider   NEG-have PL-child-PL three
   'Ananse has not/does not have three children'.
6a. **Ananse nɛ̀ Nkɔnɔre sìká.**
   Spider   PRES.give Nkɔnɔre money.
   'Ananse gives Nkɔnɔre money'.
 b. **Ananse bɛ̀-nɛ́ Nkɔnɔre sìká.**
   Spider   FUT-give Nkɔnɔre money
   'Ananse will give Nkɔnɔre money'.
 c. **Ananse bɛ́-ɛ̀-nɛ́ Nkɔnɔre sìká.**
   Spider   NEG-FUT-give Nkɔnɔre money
   'Ananse will not give Nkɔnɔre money'.

In (6), **nɛ̀** 'give' occurs as the main verb in double object ditransitive constructions. It is reported that cross-linguistically, 'give' is by far the most typical verb occurring in double object constructions (Malchukov, Haspelmath, Comrie 2011).

3.2 **Leteh postpositions**

Leteh postpositions are locative, designating where entities are in relation to others. As table 2 indicates, apart from the term for 'in' **tè**, whose form differs from that of its source noun, **àmétè,** 'stomach', the rest of the postpositions share the same form with their source nouns. The source noun for the postposition, '**àsé***' is the euphemism for the human genital region.

Table 2 Leteh postpositions and their lexical sources

Postposition	Source noun (body-part, landmark)
ánò 'front'	**ánò** 'mouth'
àsé 'under'	**àsé** 'genitals'
té 'in'	**àmétè** 'stomach'
yó 'beside'	**yó** 'skin, body'
ànsí 'behind'	**ànsí** 'back'
àsíbìté 'in front of'	**àsíbìté** 'face'
ɔ́sóńsò 'top of'	**ɔ́sóńsò** 'heaven'

The forms of the postpositions are largely invariant as they do not possess inflectional properties. Generally, in Leteh, body-part nouns do not inflect for number; the inflectional affix is therefore absent. What distinguishes a postposition from a body-part noun is that the body-part noun can be modified by an adjective and numerals whereas postpositions cannot. Body-part nouns also occur as heads of inalienable possessive constructions. Postpositions are the final elements of a postpositional phrase, occurring after a noun phrase. In examples (7-13) we contrast the differing syntactic properties of the morphemes outlined in table 2.

7a. **Ata   yíré   bò   ɔ̀kpó   á   ánò.**
     PN   STAT.stand   at/in   door   DEF   in-front-of
     'Ata is standing in-front-of the door'.
 b. **Mò   ánò   yé-búé   ló.**
     3SG.POSS   mouth   PERF-make   sore.
     'His/her mouth has become sore'.
 c. **Mò   ánò   gyí   kpòtìì.**
     3SG.POSS   mouth   COP.be   big
     'His mouth is big'.
8a. **ò-wúré   ká   bò   m̀kpá   á   ásé.**
     SG-book   STAT.lie   at/in   bed   DEF   under
     'A book is lying under the bed'.
 b. **À–yìrèbí   á   mò   ásé   búé   mò   ɔ̀sɔ́.**
     SG-child   DEF   3SG.POSS   genitals   make   him/her   pain
     'The child's genitals ache'.
 c. **À–yìrèbí á   mò   ásé   gyí   átímí.**
     SG-child DEF   3SG.POSS   genitals   COP.be   short
     'The child's genitals are short'.
9a. **m̀twú   bò   bókìtì   á   tè.**
     water   at/in   bucket   DEF   in
     'Water is in the bucket'.
 b. **Mò   ámétè   dé-kyèkèrɛ̀.**
     3SG.POSS   stomach   PROG-pour
     'His/her stomach is pouring' (He/she has diarrhoea).
 c. **Kofi   mò   ámɛ́tè   dè.**
     PN   3SG.POSS   stomach   big.
     'Kofi's stomach is big'.
10a. **À-búè   ká   bò   tsá   á   yó.**
     SG-goat   STAT.lie   at/in   house   DEF   beside
     'A goat is lying beside the house'.
 b. **Ama   mò   yó   dé-búé   mò   ɔ̀sɔ́.**
     PN   3SG.POSS   body   PROG-make   him/her   painful
     'Ama's body is aching'.
 c. **Kofi   mò   yó   gyí   óbíbì.**
     PN   3SG.POSS   body   COP.be   black
     'Kofi's body/skin is black'.

11a. **Ò-nyínɛ́   á   yí   bò   tsà   mɔ́   àǹsí.**
SG-Man   DEF   STAT.live   at/in   house   DEM.PROX   behind
'The man lives behind this house'.

b. **Afi   mò   àǹsí   dé-búé   mò   ɔsɔ́.**
PN   3SG.POSS   back/buttocks   PROG-make   3SG   painful
'Afi's back/buttocks is aching'.

c. **Afi   mò   àǹsí   dè.**
PN   3SG.POSS   back/buttocks   big
'Afi's back buttocks is/are big'.

12a. **Àbúè   ká   bò   tsá   á   àsíbìté.**
Goat   STAT.lie   at/in   house   DEF   in-front-of
'A goat is lying in front of the house'.

b. **Kofi   mò   àsíbìté   bé-hù   étè.**
PN   3SG.POSS   eye(s)   NEG-see   thing
'Kofi's eyes cannot see/Kofi is blind'.

c. **Kofi   mò   àsíbìté   gyí   ǹ-kìtìbí.**
PN   3SG.POSS   eye(s)   COP.be   PL-small
'Kofi's eyes are small'.

13a. **À-yí   bò   tsá   á   ɔ́sóńsò.**
3SG-STAT.live   at/in   building   DEF   top
'He/She lives on top of the house/. He/She lives upstairs'.

b. **Ɔ̀tsé   á   mò   ɔ́sóńsò   bé-dé.**
woman   DEF   3SG.POSS   torso   NEG-big
'The woman's torso is not big'.

c. **À   bò   ɔ́sóńsò   kpòtìì.**
3SG   have   torso   big
'He/She has a big torso'.

Sentences (7-13) illustrate the use of the propositions (see 7a-13a) and their source nouns which are names of body parts (see 7b, c-13b, c). A Leteh postposition connotes a spatial relation between its immediate antecedent, which is typically a noun phrase, and also the subject of the clause. Their source nouns, body-part names, function as heads of inalienable possessive constructions and may be modified by adjectives (see (c) examples), a property which is not shared with postpositions.

It is noteworthy that the verb, **bò**, 'have' functioning as a preposition, co-occurs with postpositions, usually after a stative verb (see all the (a) examples with the exception of (9a)). The postpositional phrase which follows the preposition **bò** 'in/at' has a structure similar to that of an alienable possessive construction. Furthermore, it is observed that the postpositional phrases may be replaced with an adverbial as in (14).

14a. **Ò-wúré   ká   bò   [ɔ̀kpònó   á   ase].**
SG-book   STAT.lie   at/in   table   DEF   under
'(A) book is lying under the table'.

b. **Ò-wúré   ká   bò   ḿfé/ḿfá.**
SG-book   STAT.lie   at/in   here/there
'(A) book is lying here/there'.

It has been demonstrated that Leteh prepositions and postpositions constitute two separate function classes under the cover term, 'adpositions'. However, akin to related languages like Akan (Osam 1994), Ewe (Ameka 2003) and Nawuri (Casali 1995) although Leteh operates both prepositions and postpositions, it is predominantly postpositional. As variously demonstrated, their different distributional properties distinguish the two classes from their sources, verbs and nouns.

4. **A note on the diachrony of Leteh adpositions**

For a number of Kwa languages, it is documented that adposition elements emerge out of two sources: verbs and nouns (Ameka 2003; Bohoussou and Skopeteas 2008; Osam 1994; Osam et al 2011). With regard to prepositions, examples (1-3) have evidenced their function as spatial elements. It has further been demonstrated that the same elements, in the same form, function as full verbs in other syntactic environments (4-6).

The view that prepositions are derived from serial verb constructions (SVC) is posited in the literature (Lord 1993; Ameka 2003). The following examples (15 and 16) will demonstrate the extent to which this is applicable to Leteh. The verb **bò,** 'have' does not function as a serial verb in a Leteh SVC; an explanation may be that it is more grammatical than lexical. As already mentioned, it does not inflect for tense/aspectual distinction; its suppletive form, **m̀bɛ́** (5b)**,** is used to express negation which somewhat indicates a gradual depletion of its verbal properties. Similar to what pertains in related languages like Akan and Ewe (Ameka 2007; Osam 1994) **bò**, translated as 'at/in' functions as a locative preposition, and also as a verb meaning 'have'. In contrast, **twù** 'take' and **nɛ̀** 'give' function as serial verbs in Leteh SVCs. When they occur as initial verbs in the series, they are marked for tense/aspect, polarity and mood (15 and 16).

15. **À   dé-twú   àkyì   ɛ́-mɔ́   ò-kìrénì   á.**
    3SG   PROG-take   knife   APPL-kill   SG-chicken   DEF
    'He/ She is taking/using a knife to kill the chicken'.
16. **Ananse   bɛ́-ɛ̀-nɛ́   ǹ-yìrèbí   á   dɔ̀.**
    Spider   NEG-FUT-give   PL-child   DEF   weed
   'Ananse will not cause/let the children weed'.

In (15), the verb **twù** 'take' functions as the initial verb in an instrumental SVC (Akrofi Ansah 2009: 220) where it is marked for progressive aspect, and in (16), **nɛ̀** 'give' functions as the initial verb in a causative SVC, and marked for future tense and negation (Akrofi Ansah 2009: 222). It has also been observed that when **twù** 'take' and **nɛ̀** 'give' occur as the final verb in an apparent SVC, they occur as prepositions (17 and 18). It must be noted that **twù** 'take' and **nɛ̀** 'give' cannot function as the final verb in the SVC where they are marked for verbal categories; the outcome is unacceptable and ungrammatical in Leteh (see (19) and (20)).

17. **À   wúrì   sìká   twú   bááǹkè.**
    3SG   PST.steal   money   PREP   bank
    'He/she stole money from (the) bank'.
18. **Ama   dé-búé   èsúmì   nɛ́   Kofi.**
    PN   PROG-do   work   give/PREP   PN
    'Ama is working for Kofi'.

19. * **À   wúrì   sìká   twú   bááǹkè.**
     3SG   PST.steal   money   PST. take   bank
     'He/she stole money took (the) bank'.
20. * **Ama   dé-búé   èsúmì   dé-nɛ́   Kofi.**
     PN   PROG-do   work   PROG-give   PN
     'Ama is working giving Kofi'.

In (17 and 18) where **twú** 'take' and **nɛ́** 'give' function as prepositions, they are no longer the head or part of the predicate. Secondly, the loss of verbal inflection when verbs function as prepositions has also been used as evidence for the change in their categorical status. It must, however be noted that non-initial verbs in Leteh SVCs are unmarked for verbal categories anyway. It may therefore be difficult to argue for their grammatical status based on the loss of their conjugation capabilities. Consequently, we could argue that in the case of Leteh, the absence of verbal inflection for **twù** and **nɛ̀** is not enough evidence that the verbs grammaticalize into prepositions in the context of SVCs. We posit that in the case of Leteh, the elements may still be at early stages of grammaticalization; on a grammaticalization cline, **twù** may be ahead of **nɛ̀** in terms of grammaticalization. This is because from a semantic point of view, when **nɛ̀** occurs as a non-initial verb in a SVC, it carries a lexical meaning, 'give' and a grammatical meaning, 'to/for' (see 18). On a grammaticalization path, the three elements may be ordered as **nɛ̀, twù, bò** with **nɛ̀** as the least grammaticalzed, and **bò** as the most grammaticalized (see a diagrammatic representation in Figure 1).

Figure 1 Grammaticalization cline


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     nɛ̀       twù       bò
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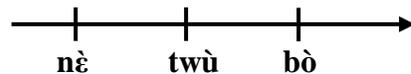
The functional split of elements as postpositions and body-part nouns on one hand, and prepositions and verbs on the other hand may be accounted for using the four parameters of grammaticalization proposed by Heine and Song (2011). In the first place, the extension of their function as nouns and verbs to grammatical elements triggers desemanticization, a loss in meaning (compare the use of **àsé** 'under' in (8a) and **àsé** 'genitals' in (8b) and also the use of **yó** 'beside' in (10a) and **yó** 'body' in (10b)). Furthermore, the elements, nouns and verbs, undergo decategorialization to belong to the categories of postpositions and prepositions respectively. Finally, there is erosion of phonetic substance. According to Heine and Song (2011: 593), the eventual erosion of phonetic substance "…is usually the last to apply and not a requirement for grammaticalization to happen". It is observed that with the exception of **tè** 'in' and **àmétè** 'stomach' in (9a) and (9b) respectively, Leteh postposition elements are to a large extent, not any different from their noun sources. In the case of prepositions, one notices a change in tonal pattern between the latter and their lexical source which is due to tense/aspectual distinctions.

5. **Conclusion**

The paper set out to account for adpositions in Leteh. It described the morphosyntactic properties of Leteh adpositions and demonstrated their diachrony from lexical sources, prepositions from serial verbs and postpositions from body-part terms. The paper has demonstrated that Leteh prepositions and postpositions possess different distributional properties which allow us to allocate them to two separate function classes. Evidence advanced in the literature to support the evolvement of prepositions from SVCs could not be used to adequately account for the diachrony of Leteh prepositions. However, the paper concludes that the three morphemes, **nὲ, twù** and **bò** have dual roles: verbs and prepositions. As prepositions, they are at different stages of grammaticalization; **nὲ** 'to/for' as the least grammaticalized and **bò** 'at/in' as the most grammaticalized. In the case of postpositions, the paper has accounted for their evolvement from body-part nouns in the context of inalienable possessive constructions. The paper contributes to literature on grammaticalization in an understudied African language.

Symbols and abbreviations

1SG	1st person singular	LOC	locative
2SG	2nd person singular	MOTN	motion
3SG	3rd person singular	NEG	negation
ADV	adverbial	NP	noun phrase
COMP	complementizer	POSS	possessive
DEF	definite	POST	postposition
DAT	dative	PRES	present
FUT	future	PROG	progressive
IMP	imperative	PST	past
INDEF	indefinite	PL	plural
		V	verb

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