

Borrowed adpositions and word order in Kwarandzyey

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An important generalisation in language contact, due to Moravcsik (1973), suggests that "a lexical item that is of the 'grammatical' type (which type includes at least conjunctions and adpositions) cannot be included in the set of properties borrowed from a language unless the rule that determines its linear order with respect to its head is also so included."

*Kwarandzyey, an endangered Songhay language of Algeria, has both prepositions and postpositions; it is in heavy contact with Arabic and previously with Berber, both exclusively prepositional languages. Its inventory of prepositions is dominated by Arabic borrowings, whereas only a single Proto -Songhay preposition has left reflexes in the language; by contrast, its postpositional inventory is very much dominated by Songhay. Yet four of its spatial postpositions are borrowings from Arabic or Berber, and another postposition – the genitive particle *n* – has sometimes been claimed as a borrowing from Berber. These apparent contradictions of Moravcsik's generalisation turns out to be amenable to an explanation that leaves the rule intact. Syntactic evidence within both Kwarandzyey and the source languages suggests that the spatial postpositions were borrowed as nouns, and alternative explanations for the genitive particle appear more plausible than borrowing. All data discussed derives from the author's fieldwork*