Prepositionless *Home* in some Northern Italian dialects: from N to Particle (to P)

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1. It is well-known that Modern English *home* obligatorily appears without the directional P *to*, while stative *at* is usually—though not obligatorily—present, becoming mandatory only in adjunct PPs (*I’m eating *(at) home*). A comparable phenomenon is found also in some Northern Italian dialects (NIDs) (Venetan, Penello 2003; Bellinzonese, Cattaneo 2009), in which *casa* “home/house” is not introduced by a P in locative adpositions (examples from the ASIt database [http://asit.maldura.unipd.it/]):

   (1) a.   *I’ve* ***vagho*** ***cà***   (Borgomanero, NO)
   I go home

   b.   *Go* **da** ***portarlo*** ***casa***   (Treviso)
   I have to take it home “I have to take it home”

   Similarly, Modern Greek allows null directional Ps with both *home* and some other few nominals, but only *home* is acceptable with a null stative P (cf. Terzi to appear).

2. The major syntactic accounts of these facts attribute the exceptional behaviour of *home* in locative adpositions to a silent directional P which incorporates into V and takes *home* as its complement in a fully-fledged DP. Alternatively, *home* is viewed as a “light noun” moving out of its DP to SpecPP thus making the edge of PP overt and allowing P to be null (see Terzi to appear for references and discussion).

   As for Romance *casa*, Longobardi (1997, 2001) analyses it as a “construct state” noun, which moves from N° to D°, and in NIDs, where null Ps are allowed, *casa* can further incorporate into a null P°, yielding the cases in (1). More recently, Terzi (to appear) accounts for the Modern Greek null spatial Ps in a Split-PP framework, proposing that *spiti* “home” is in fact an instantiation of the otherwise silent PLACE head, which moves for lexicalization requirements to the Specs of PPLoc/PPGoal (the projections encoding stativity and directionality in the fine-grained PP):

   (2) a.   *I go* *(se.the-neut/fem)* ***home/gym/school/office/church***
   *I* go into a specific DP/NP

   b.   [**VP** **[PPGoal spiti/graffio Pgoal 0 [PPP PLoc 0 [DPNP spiti/graffio ]]]]**

3. However, some NIDs exhibit clear evidence that prepositionless *home* does not always behave like any other proper spatial PP. Rather, in many dialects, *home* has the same distributional properties of *particules* (Prt), such as *in/out* and *up/down*. This is the case, for instance, in Borgomanrese, a Gallo-Italic variety of north-eastern Piedmont, which, as argued in Tortora (2002), has vP-oriented clitics surfacing as enclitics to finite verbs, past participles and to some “higher” adverbs of the functional hierarchy (Cinque 1999), like *anymore* and *already*. Enclisis however does not occur on lower adverbs like *always* and *well*. Interestingly, Borgomanrese exhibits verbal enclitics on directional Ps which look like Prts, suggesting that these are hosted in a specific and rather high projection in the functional domain of the clause (Tortora 2002: 746).

   (3) a.   *i* ***porti denta-la***   vs.   *i* ***porti-la denti***
   I take in=her (“I take her in”) I take=her in

   b.   *Al pensa da pudi purtè viggu*   (ASIt; Borgomanero, NO)
   He thinks of can take away=him=it “He thinks he can take it away from him”

   Crucially, verbal enclitics are found also on *ca* “home” (Tortora 2002: 746), clearly suggesting that *home* in Borgomanese is hosted in the same structural projection of Prts:

   (4) a.   *i* ***porti ca-tti***   vs.   *i* ***porta-ti ca***.
   I take home=you I take=you home

   Further evidence of the particle-like behaviour of *home* in NIDs comes from the fact that in some Venetan varieties *home*—just like the Prts *in/out* and *up/down*—can be modified by another PP (5a), but this PP has to follow the Prt otherwise the sentence becomes ungrammatical (examples from Gazzolo, VR):

   (5) a.   *Vo/Sto* caso in leto/sul divan (cf. *Vo/Sto* fora in giardin)
   I go/I stay home in bed/on the sofa (cf. I go/I stay out in garden)
b. *Vo/Sto in leto/sul divan casa (cf. *Vo/Sto in giardin fora)

4. In the light of the split-PP hypothesis, I propose an alternative analysis of prepositionless *home* in NIDs, suggesting that it should be considered a modifier within the DPPlace hosting the Ground object of P, and not an instantiation of the null PLACE head. Specifically, adopting Cinque’s (2010) PP structure, I claim that *home* is hosted in AbsViewP, a projection introducing modifiers of the Ground which indicate how the Ground is to be located w.r.t. an absolute (geographical) viewpoint, i.e., *home* may provide a prototypical viewpoint for the speaker/linguistic community much like *north* or *inland.*

(6) \[
[PPdir \hspace{1em} PPstat \hspace{1em} AT \hspace{1em} DPPlace \hspace{1em} \ldots \hspace{1em} [AbsViewP \hspace{1em} home \hspace{1em} \ldots \hspace{1em} [AxPartP \hspace{1em} \boxed{\text{NPlace}} \hspace{1em} \boxed{\text{Ground DP PLACE}}] \ldots \]
\]

Following Cinque (2010:9), Prts like *up/down* and *in/out* are hosted in RelViewP, a projection right under AbsViewP, forming together with it a field for viewpoint modifiers. Under the proposal in (6), P-less *home* in NIDs is structurally similar to, i.e. is in the same position of, locative adverbs like *out/in* and *up/down.* This claim is further supported by cross-linguistic evidence—一起 with the fact that P-less *home* is in complementary distribution with the typical RelViewP adverbs. As viewpoint modifiers in the higher portion of DPPlace, *home* and *up/down/in/out* can remain inside their PP, thus forming fully-fledged adverb(ial)s or, in the case of (1), (3-5) they can move as weak adverbs, i.e., Prts, out of their PPs into a dedicated projection in the functional domain of the clause (cf. Koopman 2000 on Dutch Prts moving out of their PP).

5. As to why *home* can be hosted in AbsViewP, I suggest that this is a direct consequence of its being a “construct state” noun (Longobardi 1997, 2001): *home*—clearly originated as the Ground/DP object of P—can move as a bare element from N° to D°, thus entailing the presence of an overt/understood genitive argument. By virtue of this genitive argument, *home* becomes a perfect candidate for AxPartP, the lowest modifier projection of DPPlace directly above the Ground, which hosts lexcal Ps indicating how the Ground is to be put in relation to the Theme (=the subject/object to be located). Once entered the modifier layer of the DPPlace, *home* can move further up to AbsViewP becoming an adverb/Prt, and in some cases, grammaticalises even more by moving up into the PP functional field (PPStat/PPGoal) to become a proper P, cf. French *chez.*