

An applicative account of Russian external possession

Introduction Much of the work on external, or *raised*, possessors in Russian Paykin and van Peteghem (2003), Grashchenkov and Markman (2009), as well as in other languages with the similar phenomenon Landau (1999), Deal (2016), has recognized the dual nature of such arguments: on one hand, they are interpreted as possessors, on the other hand, they show many similarities with other types of arguments, most frequently, applicatives and topics. I consider two external possession constructions in Russian and propose that they are merged in a DP-external functional projection (AppIP) and either are licensed in situ or move to a topic position for licensing. I propose that goals of ditransitives (low applicatives), external possessors and a subset of DP-internal possessors (added possessors) are introduced by the same functional head.

Two external possessor constructions In Russian, there are two constructions where a DP-external argument is interpreted as a possessor of a DP (Markman (2007)). In the first construction, the possessor is realized as a dative argument, in the second construction the possessor is realized as a prepositional phrase in the left periphery. Such patterns of external possession have been found in other languages as well, within and outside Slavic ((Haspelmath (1999)) for possessor datives and Vermeulen (2005) for Japanese topical possessors). Similarly to possessors, these arguments can saturate the theta-role of the adjectives like *favorite* (see Harves (2013) for discussion):

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| <p>(1) <i>Ona porvala *(mne) l'ubimoe pal'to</i>
 she tore me favorite overcoat
 ‘She tore my favorite overcoat.’</p> | <p>(2) <i>U nee porvalos' l'ubimoe pal'to</i>
 U her tore.ANTIC favorite overcoat
 ‘Her favorite overcoat tore.’</p> |
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The two types possessors are in complementary distribution and are subject to the following generalization:

- (3) **Dative external possessors occur with accusative (direct object) possessums, topical external possessors occur with nominative (subject) possessums.**

Indirect objects are unable to have an external possessor of either type.

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| <p>(4) <i>*Nachalnik nedovolen mne rabotoj</i>
 boss unsatisfied me work
 int. ‘The boss is unhappy with my work.’</p> | <p>(5) <i>U menya nachalnik nedovolen rabotoj</i>
 U me boss unsatisfied work
 OK: ‘My boss is unhappy with the work.’
 unav.: ‘The boss is unh. with my work.’</p> |
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Thematic constraints on external possessors Many accounts of external possession Harves (2013), Grashchenkov and Markman (2009) have proposed that the possessor is base-generated inside the DP. Such accounts overgenerate in one important aspect: external possessors can only be interpreted as added arguments, not as core ones. Based on Harley (2008), Wood and Marantz (2017) I define the core/added distinction in external arguments as follows.

- (6) Arguments whose semantic interpretation is predictable from the semantics of root of the predicate are **core** (agents, figures, core possessives), other arguments are **added** (applied arguments, added possessives).

This point can be illustrated with arguments of *picture*-nouns. The canonical DP-internal possessors, such as *moj* ‘my’ in *moj portret* ‘my portrait’, can be interpreted both as a core or as an added argument, i.e. both as [*portrait*] *depicting me* and as a [*portrait*] *belonging/related to me*. In external possession constructions, only the added argument interpretation is possible.

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| <p>(7) <i>U men'a porvalsja portret</i>
 U me tore portrait
 ‘I tore a portrait (belonging to me).’
 unav: ‘I tore a portrait of me’</p> | <p>(8) <i>Sobaka porvala mne portret</i>
 dog tore me portrait
 ‘The dog tore the portrait belonging to me.’
 unav. ‘The dog tore the portrait of me.’</p> |
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Further evidence against DP-internal generation. There are several further pieces of evidence suggesting that the possessor in constructions (1)-(2) is not generated DP-internally. First, external possessors can cooccur with DP-internal possessors, while the corresponding cooccurrence of two DP-internal possessors (**moj moj portret* int. ‘a picture of me belonging to me’) is disallowed:

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| <p>(9) <i>U men'a poterjalsja moj portret</i>
 U me lost my portrait
 ‘I have lost a portrait of me.’</p> | <p>(10) <i>Sobaka porvala mne moj portret</i>
 dog tore me my portrait
 ‘The dog tore my portrait of me.’</p> |
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The next piece of evidence involves idioms which contain topical external possessor. If the possessor is realized as a DP-internal modifier, the idiomatic reading is lost. Assuming that the domain of the idiom is at least a DP, this data shows that DPs do not contain the possessor.

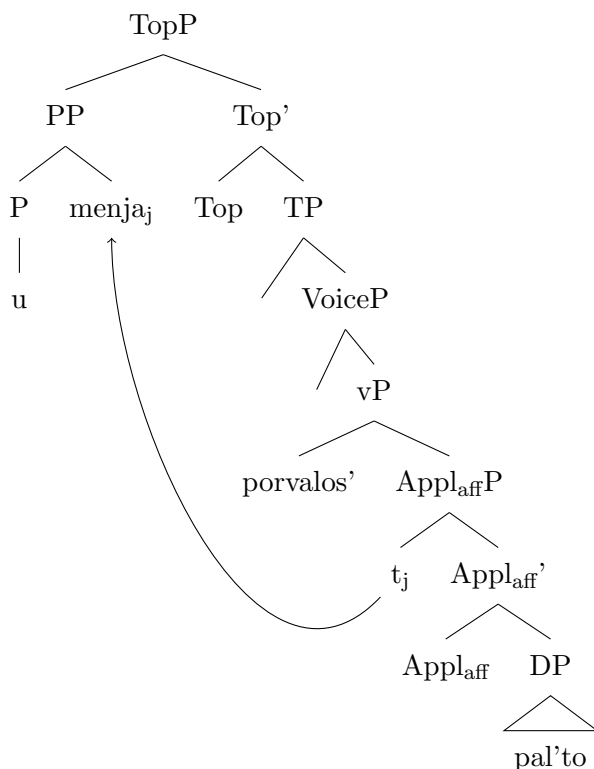
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| <p>(11) <i>U nego ruki v krovi</i>
 U him hands in blood
 ‘He is guilty of someone’s death.’
 lit. ‘He has hands in blood.’</p> | <p>(12) <i>ego ruki v krovi</i>
 his hands in blood
 only literal, i.e. ‘his hands in blood’
 unav.: ‘his guilt’</p> |
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Proposal I propose that external possessors are introduced by an Applicative head, which can be merged both DP-internally and DP-externally to introduce added arguments. When merged DP-internally, an applicative is realized as a genitive DP or as a modifier. When merged DP-externally, external possessors can be licensed in situ, if there is a case assigned to them. Otherwise, they

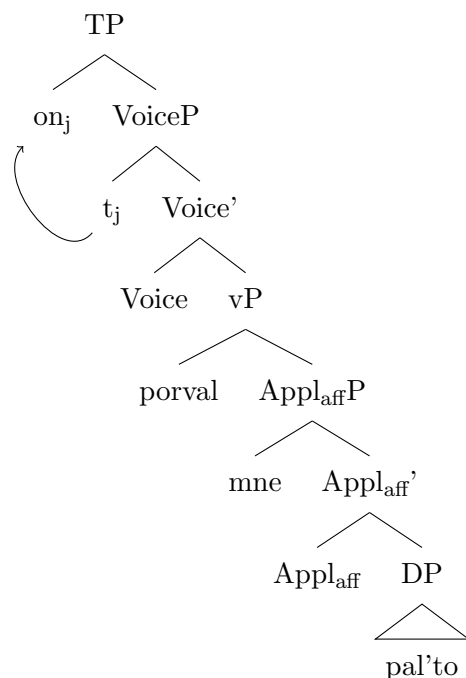
can move to a position where they can be case-licensed. I suggest that one of such positions is a (Aboutness)-topic position. The same applicative head can be merged inside the DP to introduce the added possessors, in which case they surface as canonical possessors. (See Lyutikova (2016) for the discussion of the difference between added and core arguments inside the DP). I assume that external possessors in (1), (8) bear structural dative case and, following Baker (2015) adopt a competition-based model of structural case assignment: dative is a dependent case within the vP phase and is assigned only when there is a c-commanded (accusative) DP. This means that dative can be assigned to any DP regardless of its theta-role. Following Wood and Marantz (2017) I assume that selectional requirements of this kind of Appl are maximally rigid: it can merge with any nominal. Once merged with a DP in the direct object position, the external possessor gets dative case and can be licensed in situ. When merged with an internal argument of an unaccusative verb or with an external argument, it cannot get dative, or any other case, and moves to a topic position in order to be licensed. In this way, the pair in (1)-(2) represents a dative/PP alternation for possessors, discussed in Myler (2016). The topic position contains a preposition which assigns genitive to the DP and gets it licensed. Furthermore, I assume that this kind of applicative introduces the following presupposition: The internal argument of Appl affects the external argument mentally or emotionally. I formalize this as follows:

(13) $\text{Appl}_{\text{aff}} = \lambda x. \lambda y. xRy$ and x in its current state affects y mentally or emotionally; (where R is a contextually determined relation).

(14) **Topical possessors.**



(15) **Dative possessors:**



The incompatibility of external possessors with indirect objects can be of two sources. If an applicative is merged above another (transfer-of-possession) applicative, the source of ungrammaticality is the inability of the higher applicative to merge with a phrase denoting a relation rather than an individual. If an applicative is merged with an argument that is later merged with a preposition, it cannot get case (by assumption, a preposition can assign case only to one argument, concord is only available within a DP), and movement to a topic position is unavailable because of a more general constraint on preposition stranding: no movement from the complement of a preposition is possible Abels (2003).

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