The syntax of NP-internal lexical possessors in Tundra Nenets A. Bárány & I. Nikolaeva, SOAS

Tundra Nenets (TN; Samoyedic, Uralic; Russia; Nikolaeva 2014) has two types of DP-internal lexical possessors, which cannot be separated from the possessed noun by clausal material. Both are in the genitive, but only one type triggers agreement on the possessum, see (1a,b), both meaning 'M.'s husband'.

(1) a. *Maša-h* *wǣsako*
Masha-GEN husband

b. *Maša-h* *wǣsako**-da***
Masha-GEN husband-3SG

The distribution of demonstrative pronouns in the DP shows that the agreeing possessor is in a higher position preceding the demonstrative, see (2a,b), both meaning 'this reindeer of Wera's'.

(2) a. ***t´uku°*** *Wera-h* *ti* / **te-da*
this Wera-GEN reindeer

b. *Wera-h* ***t´uku°*** *te-da* / **ti*
Wera-GEN this reindeer-3SG

We call agreeing possessors in (1b) and (2b) **prominent internal possessors (PIPs)** and argue that their position in the DP allows them to show certain clause-level properties, even though they are DP-internal.

1 PIPs in the clause The distribution of PIPs is restricted by the presence of other 3rd person DPs in the clause. PIPs cannot co-occur in a clause with, (i), 3rd person subjects (unless hosted by them), (3a), but are grammatical with 1st (or 2nd) person subjects, (3b); (ii), 3rd person agreeing objects, (4a,b), unless the agreeing object itself hosts the PIP, (4c); (iii), free-standing, disjoint 3rd person pronouns, (5a,b).

(3) a. ***Maša*** [*Wera-h* *ti-m* / ****te-m-ta***] *ladə°*
Masha Wera-GEN reindeer-ACC reindeer-ACC-3SG hit.3SG
'Masha hit Wera's reindeer.'

b. *mən´°* [*Wera-h* *ti-m* / ***te-m-ta***] *ladə°-d°m*
I Wera-GEN reindeer-ACC reindeer-ACC-3SG hit-1SG
'I hit Wera's reindeer.'

(4) a. **Wera-h* *ńe°ka-da* *lad°ə-da*
Wera-GEN brother-3SG hit-3SG>SG.OBJ
intended: 'Wera$_i$'s brother$_j$ hit him/her$_k$.'

b. *Wera-h* *ńe°ka* *lad°ə-da*
Wera-GEN brother hit-3SG>SG.OBJ
'Wera$_i$'s brother hit him/her$_{*i/*j/k}$.'

c. *Wera-h* *ŋəno-mta* *sulor-p´iwə-ś*
Wera-GEN boat-ACC.3SG fix-DUR.1SG>SG.OBJ-PST
'I fixed Wera's boat.'

(5) a. [*Pet´a-h* *ńe°ka-m* / ****ńe°ka-m-ta***] ***ńanta*** *ŋedaraə-d°m*
Petya-GEN brother-ACC brother-ACC-3SG 3SG.DAT send-PST.1SG
'I sent Peter's brother to him/her.'

b. [*Pet´a-h* *ńe°ka-m* / ***ńe°ka-m-ta***] *ŋedaraə-d°m*
Petya-GEN brother-ACC brother-ACC-3SG send-PST.1SG
'I sent Peter's brother (to someone).'

These data cannot be explained by binding theory since there is no coreference between the PIP and the 3rd person DP blocking its presence, e.g. the disjoint *Maša* and *te-m-ta* 'reindeer-ACC-3SG' in (3a). Rather, the fact that the restrictions all involve 3rd person DPs suggests an analysis in terms of **obviation**.

2 Analysis Obviation governs the cooccurrence of 3rd person DPs in a given syntactic domain (Dahlstrom 1986, Aissen 1997, Jeanne & Hale 1987, Bruening 2001, Brittain 2001). Crucially, in obviation systems only a single DP per clause can be proximate ('Proximate Uniqueness'). We propose that the distribution of PIP in Tundra Nenets is the consequence of a syntactic obviation system in the language subject to Proximate Uniqueness. To capture the distribution of PIPs w.r.t. other 3rd person DPs in the clause, we suggest that there are two ways of being getting a proximate feature [*u*Prox] in TN. First, the verb can assign unvalued [*u*Prox] to one of its arguments. Second, PIPs are inherently [*u*Prox] (cf. Bruening 2001 who suggests that 1st/2nd person is inherently [Prox] in Passamaquoddy, but 3rd is not).

2.1 Assigning [*u*Prox] Which argument receives [*u*Prox] from *v* is determined by pronominal status and syntactic position. If present, a 3rd person pronoun is assigned [*u*Prox], arguably based on its inherent animacy even if there are higher 3rd person lexical DPs (3rd person pronouns in TN always have animate referents). If there are several 3rd person pronouns, the highest is [*u*Prox]; for lexical DPs, either a subject or an agreeing (ACC) object is assigned [*u*Prox], in that order. This matches observations by *i.a.* Dryer (1992), Aissen (1997) that animacy and grammatical function determine proximate status.

However, TN differs from other obviation languages in that not all possessors are more proximate than the possessed noun. We propose that only PIPs are proximate and inherently have [*u*Prox] (assigned in the DP without competition), while regular possessor are obviative. When a PIP is present, the possessed noun must be obviative, like in other obviation systems (Dahlstrom 1986, Dryer 1992, Aissen 1997).

2.2 Deriving the data A functional head H below the CP domain carries a [*i*Prox] feature (Bruening 2001). DPs with an unvalued [*u*Prox] feature must enter a (Reverse) Agree relation with this head in order to value [*u*Prox], resulting in [*u*Prox: Prox] (Zeijlstra 2012, Wurmbrand 2014). We assume that the [*i*Prox] head can discharge its value exactly once. Following Kalin (to appear), uninterpretable unvalued features crash the derivation, while uninterpretable valued features and interpretable features do not. Proximate Uniqueness then follows. If there are two [*u*Prox] DPs, the single [*i*Prox] head will only be able value of one of the DPs' [*u*Prox] feature. The other one remains uninterpretable and unvalued, leading to ungrammaticality. (6) and (7) illustrate the derivation of a grammatical and an ungrammatical structure, respectively. In (6), H enters an Agree relation with the PIP and values its [*u*Prox] feature.

(6) [H[*i*Prox: Prox] … [$_{vP}$ … [$_{DP}$ **PIP**[*u*Prox: Prox] …] …]] (cf. (3b), (4c), (5b))

✔ Agree+valuation

The same Agree relation is established in (7), but the second [*u*Prox: ____] on DP cannot be valued assuming that H can only agree once. The uninterpretable and unvalued feature crashes the derivation. Note that an Agree relation across *v*P does not violate the PIC if H is below C (Chomsky 2001: 14).

✖ No Agree relation or valuation

(7) *[H[*i*Prox: Prox] … [$_{vP}$ … [$_{DP}$ **PIP**[*u*Prox: Prox] …] [… **DP**[*u*Prox: ____]]]] (cf. (3a), (4a), (5a))

✔ Agree+valuation

3 PIPs in the DP The position of PIPs in the DP is crucial for obviation, as lower possessors are not subject to the same restrictions. PIPs show other syntactic properties that distinguish them from lower possessors. There is evidence that PIPs but not regular possessors c-command out of SpecDP as PIPs can bind pronominal possessors in other DPs, while lower possessors cannot. In addition, PIPs can control the subjects of adverbial converbial clauses which otherwise require strict coreference between their PRO subject and the subject of the main clause. In (8), a PIP can control PRO. With a low possessor, (8) only has an odd reading with *kniga* controlling PRO. Thus (8) cannot involve logophoric or non-obligatory control (NOC), since *kniga* cannot be a logophor and NOC requires human antecedents (Landau 2013).

(8) [PRO *tol°-h* *t´ax°na* *ŋamt´o-°*] *ŋəćeki°-h* *kniga#(-da)* *mən°tey°-q*
table-GEN at sit-SS.CVB child-GEN book-3SG fall-REFL.3SG

'When the child$_i$ was sitting at the table, its$_i$ book fell.' (Nikolaeva 2014: 380)

In sum, we argue that TN shows effects of **syntactic obviation** with little morphological obviation (only PIPs are morphologically coded as proximate via possessive agreement). SpecDP is associated with a [*u*Prox] feature assigned to PIPs inside DP. Cooccurrence of PIPs with other proximate 3rd person DPs in the clause is ruled out by the failure of the functional head H to value more than one [*u*Prox] feature.

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