Prominent Internal Possessors as proximate possessors

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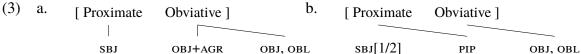
Tundra Nenets (TN) has pronominal and lexical possessors in NPs. Pronominal possessors always trigger possessive agreement. Agreement is not always present with lexical possessors, however, cf. *Maša-h wāsako* and *Maša-h wāsako-da* 'Masha-GEN husband(-3sg)'. We call agreeing lexical possessors **Prominent Internal Possessors** (**PIPs**). This paper discusses the distribution of PIPs in TN (data from Nikolaeva 2014 and field notes).

- **1 Data** The distribution of PIPs differs from that of non-agreeing and pronominal (3rd person) possessors. **PIPs cannot co-occur** with (i) a 3rd person sbj, (1a), (ii) a 3rd person agreeing object, (2a), or (iii) any disjoint 3rd person pronoun in the clause, (2c). These restrictions only hold for PIPs, not for non-agreeing lexical, or pronominal possessors, cf. (2b,c).
- (1) 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. m
 otin n' [Wera-h ti-m / te-m-ta] lad
 otin n' Mera-GEN reindeer-ACC reindeer-ACC-3sG hit.1sG 'I hit Masha's reindeer.'
- (2) a. pidər° [Wera-h ńabako-m-ta] ńu°ćaə-n° / *ńu°ćaə-r°. you.sg Wera-gen sister-ACC-3sg kiss-2sg kiss-2sg>sg.obj 'You kissed Wera's sister.'
 - b. *pidər*° [*Wera-h ńabako-m*] ńu°ćaə-n° / ńu°ćaə-r°. you.sg Wera-gen sister-ACC kiss-2sg kiss-2sg>sg.овј 'You kissed Wera's sister.'
- **2 Analysis** Since only lexical possessors can be PIPs, they are by definition 3rd person. As (1)–(2) show, clause-level elements that block PIPs also have to be 3rd person. This suggests an analysis based on **obviation** (Aissen 1997), a grammatical phenomenon that regulates the co-occurrence of 3rd person elements in a given syntactic domain, the "obviation span" (usually a clause). In obviation systems, each 3rd person element has the relative status of *proximate* or *obviative*. Only one proximate is allowed per obviation span; if two (or more) 3rd person elements are proximate, they must be co-referent (Aissen 1997).

We propose that the 3rd.poss suffix shows a lexical split: with pronominal possessors, it marks agreement, but with PIPs, it is anaphoric and indicates the PIP's proximate status. Since PIPs are specified as proximate, they cannot co-occur with a disjoint proximate element in the clause. (3) shows possible mappings of grammatical functions onto proximate/obviative in TN. In (3a), sbj is [prox], and all other elements are [obv], cf. grammatical versions of (1a)/(2c). In (3b), sbj is irrelevant, since obviation only targets 3rd person. The PIP is [prox], while obj/obl are [obv], cf. (1b)/the grammatical version of (2a). (4) shows ungrammatical mappings, cf. (1a)/(2c).



These patterns indicate that different grammatical elements have different default values w.r.t. obviation. Aissen (1997) analyses similar patterns in Algonquian and Mayan using participant and relational hierarchies. On the former, [prox] outranks (>) [obv], and on the latter, sbj > obj, obj > obl etc. When two hierarchies are not aligned harmonically, i.e. [prox] obj — [obv] sbj, ungrammaticality arises unless certain repair strategies are used (inverse in Algonquian, passive in Mayan). For TN, we propose that **PIPs participate in the relational hierarchy**, shown in (5).

(5)
$$SBJ > \begin{cases} OBJ + AGR \text{ (agreeing object),} \\ 3rd \text{ non-sbj pronoun} \end{cases} > PIP > OBJ, OBL...$$

The distribution of PIPs is as follows. PIPs are lexically specified as [prox]. This implies that to be licensed, PIPs must not be outranked by elements that are higher in (5), such as 3rd person sbj, obj+AGR or pronominal. In case of a conflict, the non-agreeing possessor must be used. But PIPs are compatible with lower-ranked elements, i.e. non-agreeing obj and non-pronominal obl.

Supporting evidence for this status of PIPs comes from their behaviour in the clause. First, TN has syntactic strategies that repair ungrammatical mappings. For example, (6a), with a PIP co-referential to the object pronoun, entails that obj is proximate, while sbj must be obviative, violating (5). This can be repaired by extraposing the lexical NP corresponding to the PIP, i.e. removing it from the obviation span (the clause), as in (6b).

- (6) a. *[Wera-h ńe°ka-da] śita ladə°
 Wera-GEN brother-3sg s/he.Acc hit
 - b. Wera-m ńe°ka-da śita ladə°
 Wera-ACC brother3sg s/he.ACC hit
 'Wera_i's brother hit him_i.', lit. 'As for Wera, his brother hit him.'

Second, PIPS behave like **clause-level** elements w.r.t. certain anaphoric processes. For example, they can serve as antecedents for possessive anaphors. In (7a), the possessive pronoun *pida* must be free. With the PIP in (7b), the possessive pronoun *can* be co-referent with the possessor *Mašah*. Similar behaviour is typical of clause-level non-subject arguments.

- (7) a. [*Maša-h wǣsako*] (*pida*) xər°-m-ta xana°.

 Masha-gen husband s/he knife-Acc-3sg take.3sg
 'Masha_i's husband_i took his/her*_{i/*i/k} knife.'
 - b. [Maša-h $w\bar{e}sako-da$] (pida) $x \ni r^\circ -m ta$ $xana^\circ$. Masha-GEN husband-3sG s/he knife-ACC-3sG take.3sG 'Masha's husband took his/her $i \not = i \not= i$

PIPs also pattern with clause-level elements w.r.t. anaphoric relations across a clause boundary, but they are nevertheless NP-internal. We propose that this follows from their prominent position in the NP: PIPs are adjoined to DP, i.e. contained in but not dominated by DP (Chomsky 1995):

(8)
$$\begin{bmatrix} DP & Wera-h \end{bmatrix} \begin{bmatrix} DP & fuku^{\circ} \end{bmatrix} \begin{bmatrix} PossP & te-da \end{bmatrix}$$
 'this reindeer of Wera's' Wera-GEN this reindeer-3sg

3 Conclusions The distribution of 3rd person NPs in TN follows from the same principles that explain obviation in Algonquian and Mayan (Aissen 1997). What makes TN special is that it grammaticalises the proximative/obviative distinction in possessive NPs: PIPs are lexically

specified as proximate and thus compete with other 3rd person clause-level constituents. The clause-level syntactic properties of PIPs follow from their adjunction structure.

References Aissen, J. 1997. On the syntax of obviation. *Lg* 73. 705–750. **Chomsky**, N. 1995. *The minimalist program*. MIT Press. **Nikolaeva**, I. 2014. *A grammar of Tundra Nenets*. De Gruyter.