

Movement within vP: the case of possessor raising in Kipsigis

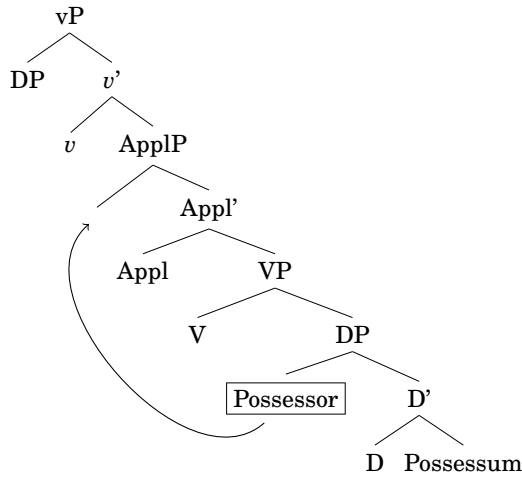
Maria Kouneli
Universität Leipzig

In external possession, a noun phrase behaves semantically as a possessor (of another noun), but syntactically as an argument of the verb. In this talk, I provide a description and analysis of the phenomenon in Kipsigis (Nilotic; Kenya), based on fieldwork with four native speakers. This is, to my knowledge, the first analysis of external possession in a Nilotic language, and it is added to a growing body of literature on the typology of external possession in Africa (e.g., Van de Velde 2020) and beyond (e.g., Deal 2017).

Possession in Kipsigis is usually expressed DP-internally, with the possessum being marked with the clitic *-a:p* (1-a). In external possession (1-b), the possessum is unmarked, and the possessor is a verbal argument. The verb is marked with the applicative suffix *-tʃi*, which can assign a variety of thematic roles in the language. Thus, in (1-b), *Cheebeet* can be interpreted either as a possessor or as a benefactive.

- (1) a. *Kò:ú-mwét íngòráik-à:p Tʃè:bê:t.*
PST-1SG-wash clothes-POSS Cheebeet
'I washed Cheebeet's clothes.'
- b. *Kò:ú-mwé(t)-tʃi Tʃè:bê:t íngòráik.*
PST-1SG-wash-APPL Cheebeet clothes
'I washed Cheebeet's clothes.' / 'I washed clothes for Cheebeet.'

As is also the case in other languages, the external possessor must be affected. For example, there is an animacy requirement, and speakers reject the possession reading in (1-b) if *Cheebeet* is dead. There are no such constraints in DP-internal possession. Furthermore, only internal arguments can launch an external possessor. These facts indicate that the external possessor occupies the specifier position of an applicative head, where it is assigned the affectee thematic role. However, I argue that it ends up there via movement: it is base-generated (and assigned its possessor role) inside the DP (2).



(2)

A movement analysis can account for a peculiar asymmetry between the possessum and the possessor in relativization. In Kipsigis double object constructions, either argument can be relativized. Under the benefactive reading of the applied argument, either the beneficiary (3-a) or the theme (3-b) can move. This is different in external possession: while the possessor DP can move (3-a), the possession reading is lost if the possessum moves instead (3-b). The same pattern is observed in topicalization.

- (3) a. ...là:kwé:t né kò:-ú-mwé(t)-tʃi íŋgòráik.
 child REL.SG PST-1SG-wash-APPL clothes
 ‘the child whose clothes I washed/ that I washed clothes for’
- b. ...íŋgòráik tʃé kò:-ú-mwé(t)-tʃi là:kwé:t.
 clothes REL.PL PST-wash-APPL child
 ‘the clothes that I washed for the child’
 # ‘the child’s clothes that I washed’

Even though relativization and topicalization are long-distance, they are restricted to nominals and pattern with A movement for binding diagnostics in Kipsigis (Driemel & Kouneli 2022). Thus, whatever feature is responsible for A movement is shared between possessor raising (= a clear instance of A movement) and topicalization/relativization. Given (2), this means that relativization/topicalization of the possessum would involve a step of A movement of a remnant DP (=the possessum) following the A movement step of possessor raising. This configuration is banned by the well-established *Müller-Takano generalization*: remnant movement of type α cannot take place if the movement step that created the remnant is also of type α (Takano 1994, Müller 1996).

If on the right track, this analysis also illustrates a novel diagnostic for movement in external possession constructions: if the possessor undergoes movement of type α , the possessum should not be able to undergo the same type of movement.

References

Deal, Amy Rose. 2017. External Possession and Possessor Raising. In Martin Everaert & Henk van Riemsdijk (eds.), *The Wiley Blackwell Companion to Syntax, Second Edition*, 1509–1540. Hoboken, NJ: Wiley-Blackwell.

Driemel, Imke & Maria Kouneli. 2022. A dedicated topic position in Kipsigis. In Hen-

risson Hsieh (ed.), *Proceedings of TripleA 8: Fieldwork Perspectives on the Semantics of Understudied Languages of Africa, Asia, Australia, and Oceania*, 1–20. Singapore: NUS ScholarBank.

Müller, Gereon. 1996. A Constraint on Remnant Movement. *Natural Language & Linguistic Theory* 14(2). 355–407.

Takano, Yuji. 1994. Unbound Traces and Indeterminacy of Derivation. In Masaru Nakamura (ed.), *Current Topics in English and Japanese*, 229–253. Tokyo: Hituzi Syobo.

Van de Velde, Mark. 2020. Concernee-Concern constructions: A comparative study of external possession in the Bantu languages. *Studies in Language. International Journal sponsored by the Foundation “Foundations of Language”* 44(1). 70–94.