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Abstract

In this paper, we give an overview of the main properties of some novel data from Flemish, which involve a possessor DP that appears separated from the possessee with which it is associated. We refer to this phenomenon as the 'external possessor': we show that both the high possessor and the lower possessee have a number of properties that are usually associated with subjects: this will lead us to the claim that both are hosted in separate subject positions. The external possessor pattern described here sheds new light on the structure of the (high) middle field of Flemish embedded clauses.

## 1. Presentation of the data

1.1 The External Possessor

The basic data we will be concerned with is a marked word order pattern available in a number of Flemish dialects, which involves a possessor DP which is separated from the *possessum* by an intervening temporal adjunct. The basic data are exemplified in (1-2):

(1)  a  dat     [Jehan [**zenen** kleenen]]   toen juste     in de klinieke    was.
            that    Jehan  his    little      then just      in the hospital   was
            '... that just then John's little one was in hospital.'
      b  % dat   [Jehan]        toen juste   [**zenen** kleenen] in de klinieke    was.
            that    Jehan         then just    his   little      in the hospital   was
            '… that just then John had his little one in hospital.'

(2)  a  dat     [men moeder [**euren** pols]]  toen juste    in de ploaster   zat.
            that    my mother her wrist       then just      in the plastercast sat
            '... that just then my mother's wrist was in a plaster cast.'
      b  % dat   [men moeder] toen juste      [**euren** pols]  in de ploaster   zat.
            that    my mother   then just       her wrist    in the plaster      sat
            '… that my mother just then had her wrist in a plastercast.'

In the a-sentences in (1-2), the subject is a complex DP (bracketed) consisting of a possessor (leftmost) and a possessee, which is introduced by a possessive pronoun (in boldface). The pattern is referred to as possessor doubling (Haegeman 2004a). The entire DP containing possessor and *possessum* sits to the left of the temporal adjunct *toen juste* 'just then' (underscored), right adjacent to the complementizer, which is the canonical subject position in Flemish. As will be shown in section 2, the complex possessor-possessee forms a constituent: for this reason, we could call the possessor in (1a-2a) an 'internal' possessor (cf. Vergnaud & Zubizaretta 1992).

The b-sentences on the other hand show a pattern in which the possessor and the possessee are separated by the adjunct. The possessee appears, somewhat surprisingly, in a position below the adjunct. We will call this pattern the external possessor (cf. Vergnaud & Zubizaretta 1992). Schematically, the structure of the internal and external possessor pattern could be represented as in (3):

(3)   a   Internal possessor:
              C [$_{TP}$ [$_{DP}$ possessor *possessum*]     <u>adjunct</u>          …
        b   External possessor:
              % C [$_{TP}$ [$_{DP}$ possessor]     <u>adjunct</u>       [$_{DP}$ *possessum*]    …

As suggested by the bracketing while the internal possessor forms a constituent with the *possessum* (see also section 2.1.1.), the external possessor and the *possessum* do not form a constituent. For instance, while the the possessor and the possessum in (1a) can be right dislocated (1c), this is not possible in (1b):

(1)   c   dat je$_i$    toen juste   in de klinieke     was,     [Jehan zenen kleenen]$_i$.
            that-he   then just    in the hospital     was,     Jehan his little one
        '... that he just then was in hospital, John's little one.
        d   *dat je   in de klinieke     was, Jehan    toen juste    zenen kleenen.
            that-he   in the hospital    was, Jehan    then just    his little one

Crosslinguistically, the phenomenon of external possession (in a very broad sense) is very common (see for instance Szabolcsi 1983, 1994 (on Hungarian), Chinese (Xu 2004-'5; Hsu 2009) and the contributions in Payne & Barshi 1999), but the Flemish data have thus far received very little attention[1].

Our contribution is organized as follows. In the remainder of section 1, we will highlight some important features that characterize the Flemish external possessor. Section 2 provides some background about the syntax of possession in Flemish DPs. Section 3 is devoted to the syntactic analysis of the split possessor pattern. We show that both the external possessor and the lower *possessum* DP have subject properties. We will propose that both the higher and the lower DP are hosted in a TP-internal dedicated subject position.

**1.2 Some salient properties of the external possessor**

First of all, some remarks about the regional distribution and acceptability of the EP are in order. The pattern is accepted both in some regional dialects and in the so called *tussentaal*, the informal regiolect that is used across Flanders. Asked whether utterances like the b-examples in (1-2) would be acceptable in their dialect or in an informal regiolect, 14 out of 24 Flemish informants accepted the pattern in sharp contrast to Dutch speakers from the Netherlands who uniformly reject the pattern.

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[1] For a first discussion, see Haegeman & Van Koppen (2011).

However, there is much variation in acceptance among Flemish speakers and at this stage this variation is not clearly linked to a specific regional dialect. The external possessor pattern was accepted by 6 out of 9 West Flemish informants, by 6 out of 10 East Flemish informants, by 1 out of 4 Brabant informant, and by one bilingual (Flemish-French) speaker with West Flemish background; an informant from Antwerp rejected the pattern. Some speakers who reject the pattern do admit that it sounds like something that is possible in other dialects, and associate it with West Flemish. Speakers who do not accept the pattern do share (some of) the judgements discussed below.

Second, unlike comparable phenomena in French (Vergnaud & Zubizaretta 1992; Guéron 2006) and German (Burridge 1990; Hole 2006; Lee-Schoenfeld 2006), the Flemish external possessor requires the presence of a possessive pronoun in the DP that expresses the *possessum*. This is illustrated in the examples (4), where the determiner of the *possessum*-DP is an indefinite article rather than a possessive pronoun[2].

(4) a *dat    [Jehan]         <u>toen juste</u>  [**nen** zeune]   in de klinieke was.
      that     Jehan           then just   **a** son        in the hospital was
    b *dat    [men moeder]   <u>toen juste</u>  [**nen** pols]    in de ploaster zat.
      that     my mother       then just   **a** wrist       in the plaster sat

Because the external possessor pattern seems to depend on the possessor doubling pattern, we will elaborate briefly on the syntactic encoding of possession in Flemish DPs in section 2 below.

Third, the external possessor exhibits a number of properties which are usually attributed to subjects: the most conspicuous of these properties are (i) the ability of the external possessor to establish an agreement relation with a complementizer and (ii) the fact that (weak) indefinite possessor DPs can trigger insertion of the expletive *er*.

Fourth, there are significant restrictions of an interpretive nature on the external possessor, which do not (or in any case less strongly) apply to the internal possessor pattern. In general, external possessors are subject to a strong animacy requirement and they are always in some sense 'affected' by the event expressed by the TP. The subject-like behaviour and the interpretive nuances of the external possessors will be the subject of section 3. Finally, the external possessor is only available in subordinate clauses, finite and non-finite alike: in root clauses, the pattern is strongly degraded. For reasons of space, this point will not be addressed in this paper: the reader is referred to Haegeman & Van Koppen (2011) for an analysis.

We now turn to some background on the structure of Flemish DPs, concentrating on two different ways in which possessor-possessee relations can be expressed.

## 2. Background: possessor relations in the Flemish DP

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[2] At this point, it remains unclear to us why the external possessor phenomenon is only available when the possessum DP contains a doubling pronoun. We hope to return to this question in future research.

In the previous section, we saw that the split possessor pattern is only acceptable if the a possessive determiner is present in the *possessum*-DP (cf. the * examples in (4)). However, as shown in the data in (5), not any possessive element can license the external possessor:

(5) a dat    [DP men moeder **sen** pols]    <u>toen juste</u>      in de ploaster zat.
       that     my mother *sen* wrist        then just        in the plastercast sat
       'that just then my mother's wrist was in a plaster cast.'
   b *dat      [DP men moeder] <u>toen juste</u>   [DP **sen** pols]     in de ploaster zat.
       that     my mother     then just     *sen* wrist       in the plaster sat

In the example in (5a), the subject is a complex DP containing the prenominal 'genitive' marker *se(n)*, which resembles the Saxonian genitive in English. (5b) shows that the *sen*-element does not allow allow the split possessor pattern.

## 2.1 Prenominal possessors in (West) Flemish: a brief survey

The two basic ways in which a relation between a possessor and a possessee can be expressed in (West) Flemish are exemplified in (6):

(6)    a   Valère sen hoed         DP + *sen* + NP          = 'prenominal genitive'
        Valère *sen* hat
     b   (Valère) zenen hoed     (DP) + poss.pronoun + NP     = 'prenominal doubling'
        (Valère) his    hat

### 2.1.1 Some similiraties

Before we look at the differences between (6a) and (6b), it should be pointed out that the genitival and the doubling pattern have two important characteristics in common. First of all, the complex 'possessor-possessee' form a single constituent. For instance, both can fill the preverbal slot in a verb second clause:

(7)    a   [DP Lieven sen computer] is weeral   kapot.
        Lieven *sen* computer   is again     broken.
     b   [DP Lieven zijnen computer] is weeral    kapot.
        Lieven his    computer   is again      broken.
     'Lieven's computer is broken again.'

Second, both the *sen*-genitive and the doubling pattern are subject to a generalized animacy restriction: the prenominal possessor DP cannot refer to an inanimate object[3]:

(8)    a   *[die deure]   eur    klinke         c   *[die deure]   se      klinke
        that door     her    latch          that    door    *sen*     latch

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[3] In Flemish, relations of possession in which the possessor is inanimate can be expressed by means of a PP headed by *van* 'of':

(i)      de klink    [van    [de deur]]
        the latch    of      the door

b  *[dienen rok]  zenen zuom          d  *[dienen rok]  sen    zuom
   that    skirt  his   hemline              that skirt    *sen*   hemline

2.1.2 Differences between the two patterns

However, the two patterns also differ along a number of dimensions. A first difference is that the *sen*-element is invariant, irrespective of the gender and number of the *possessum* DP it precedes (9b). On the other hand, the doubling possessive determiner displays agreement with the DP it modifies (9a):

(9)

|  | MASC SG | FEM SG | NEUT SG |
|---|---|---|---|
| a | Marie eur<u>en</u>-hoed | Marie eur veste | Marie eur kleed |
|   | Marie her.M.SG hat | Marie her jacket | Marie her dress |
| b | Marie sen hoed | Marie sen veste | Marie se kleed |
|   | Marie *sen* hat | Marie *sen* jacket | Marie *sen* dress |

Second, the *se(n)*-genitive cannot appear with ellipsis of the head noun (10b-c). NP-ellipsis is possible after a doubling possessive determiner, be it only if a definite article is inserted between the possessor and its doubling pronominal (11b).

(10)  a  Marie se boeken                (11)  a  Marie eur boeken
         Marie *se* books                         Marie her books
      b  *(de) Marie sen ∅                      b  Marie d'eure ∅
      c  *Marie de sen ∅                           Marie de her+*e*
                                                 c  *Marie eur ∅
                                                 d  *de Marie eure
                                                 e  * Marie eure

Third, the *sen*-genitive has a more restricted syntactic distribution: it cannot be used if the possessee is a plural. Such a restriction does not hold for the doubling pattern (12b):

(12) a  *djungers      sen   hus          b  djungers      under   hus
         the.children  *sen*  house           the.children  their   house
         'the children's house'

Fourth, the possessor and *sen* need to be linearly adjacent, whereas a possessor can be separated from the *possessum* by a universal quantifier (14b). The fact that the examples in (13-14) involve topicalized direct objects occupying the first slot of a declarative verb second clause shows again that the possessor and the possessee are contained in a single constituent.

(13) a  [**Al** [Marie  sen   boeken]]  een-k   gezien.     Q Poss *sen*  NP
         all    Marie  *sen*  books     have-I  seen
      b  *[Marie **al** sen boeken]      een-k   gezien.     *Poss Q *sen*  NP
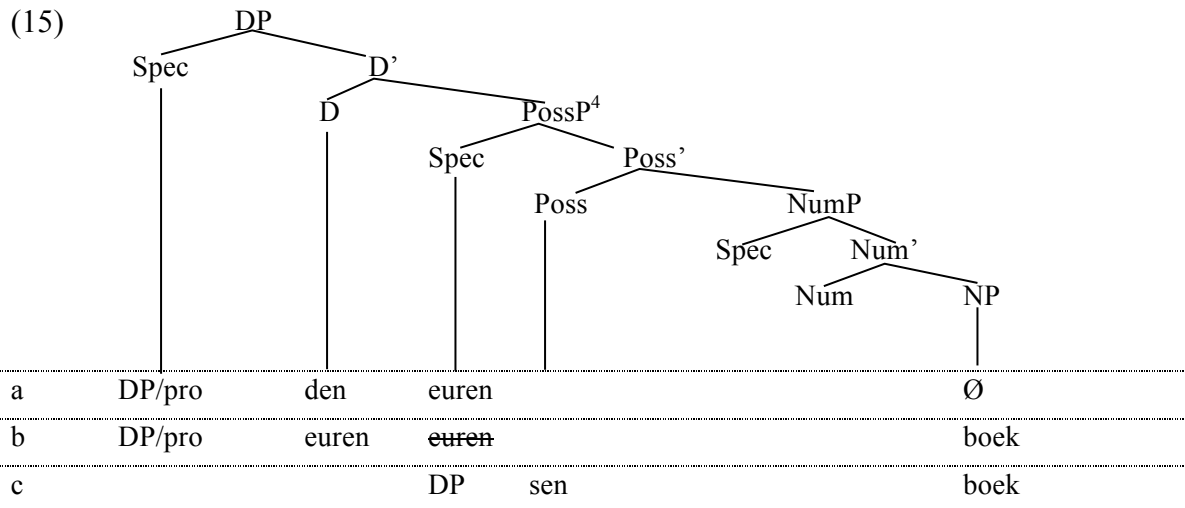         'All Marie's books I have seen.'

(14) a  [**Al** [Marie   eur   boeken]]  een-k  gezien       Q Poss *eur*  NP

all   Marie   her   books        have-I   seen
      b [Marie **al** eur        boeken]     een-k gezien        Poss Q *eur*  NP
          'All Marie's books I have seen.'

Other differences between the two patterns include the possibility of the possessor to be modified by deictic markers and appositive relative clauses: modification of this kind is only possible with possessors that come with a doubling pronoun. With the *sen* pattern the possessor can be reciprocal, this is not an option with the doubling pattern (cf. Haegeman 2004b). For reasons of space, these phenomena are not illustrated here.

2.2 Summary

The representation in (15), based on Haegeman (2004a), tries to capture the syntactic differences between the two possessor constructions. In line with much work on the syntax of possessors, a specialized functional projection 'PossP' is postulated in the extended projection of the NP which heads the containing DP:

(15)

| | Spec | D | Spec | Poss | Spec | Num | NP |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| a | DP/pro | den | euren | | | | Ø |
| b | DP/pro | euren | ~~euren~~ | | | | boek |
| c | | | DP | sen | | | boek |

According to Haegeman (2004a), the main syntactic difference between the two possible ways of expressing possession relations in Flemish DPs is the position the possessor DP occupies in the functional structure of the complex DP. In the *sen*-pattern, the possessor sits in Spec,PossP, fairly deeply embedded in the entire structure. On the other hand, the possessor occurs in a higher position in the doubling pattern, say in Spec,DP[5].

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[4] Possibly the possessor in Spec,PossP originates in a lower position, for instance as a predicate of a small clause (cf. den Dikken 1998). PossP can perhaps be compared to the clausal SubjP (Rizzi 2004, Rizzi & Shlonsky 2005, Tortora & den Dikken 2010).
[5] However, it is probably not the case that the doubling possessor sits in a DP-internal TopP or FocP (on TopP and FocP in DP, see Giusti 1996 and Aboh 2004). The possessor is in no sense emphatic or contrastive, which makes FocP an unlikely option. Moreover, bare quantifiers, which are known to be 'unlikely' topics (see Rizzi 1997), can occur as possessor in the doubling pattern:

(i)    Dat   zijn   [niemand zen    zaken].
       that   are    no.one   his    businesses
       'Those are no one's affairs.'

## 3. The syntax of the Flemish external possessor

We now return to the external possessor, and we start our discussion by showing that both the *possessum* and the external possessor behave in various ways as subjects.

### 3.1 Subject properties of the possessum

First of all, and most prominently, the possessum DP invariably show agreement with the finite verb, which by assumption is encoded in the T-node in the clausal spine:

(16) a dat     [Valère]   <u>toen juste</u>    [**zen** ouders]    niet  in Gent woaren/\*was.
     that.SG  Valère    then  just    his parents      not  in Gent were.PL/\*was.SG.
     'that just then Valère's parents weren't in Ghent.'
   b dat     [Valère]   <u>tegenwoordig</u> [**zen** twee GSM's]   atent an stoan/\*stoat.
     that.SG  Valère    these days    his two mobiles     always on stand.PL/\*stand.SG.
     'that nowadays Valère's two mobile phones are always switched on.'

Furthermore, while a direct object containing a possessor doubling pattern can be A'-extracted (17a) across a subject, the *possessum* cannot be extracted across the external possessor (17b-c). Though we cannot go into the details of extraction here, it is tempting to interpret the contrast between (17a) and (17c) in terms of an object/subject asymmetry.

(17) a t'Is  [Valère zenen sloapkoamer]ᵢ dan   ze    <u>toen juste</u>  tᵢ  gingen  schilderen
     It is  Valère his     bedroom    that  they  then just      went redecorate
     'It's Valère's bedroom that they were going to redecorate.'
   b da   Valère  <u>toen juste</u>  [**zenen** sloapkoamer]   geschilderd was
     that  Valère  then just   his bedroom        redecorated was
     '... that just then Valère's bedroom was being redecorated'
   c \*t'Is  [zenen sloapkoamer]ᵢ   da    Valère  <u>toen juste</u>  tᵢ  geschilderd was.
     It is   his bedroom         that  Valère  then just      redecorated was

### 3.2 Subject properties of the possessor

As hinted at above, the external possessor also behaves in some ways like a subject. First, some speakers allow a nominative pronoun as the external possessors:

(18) a %? dat      [zie ier]      <u>toen juste</u>     [**eur** scheerapparaat]    kapot was.
        that        she.NOM here  then just      her razor            broken was
   b %?? da-n   [zunder doar]  <u>toen juste</u>     [**underen** computer]   kapot was.
         that.PL  they.NOM there  then just      their computer      broken was

Although pronominal external possessors bearing nominative case are always marginal at best (they are most acceptable if modified by a deictic marker like *ier* 'here' and *doar* 'there'), they are definitely better than prounouns bearing dative case, which are completely unacceptable both as an internal (not illustrated) and as external (cf. (19)) possessor:

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The nature of the position occupied by the doubling possessor remains to be clarified. Haegeman (2004a) suggests it is similar to the initial position in a subject initial V2 clause.

(19) a *dat        [eur ier]        <u>toen juste</u>      [**eur** scheerapparaat]   kapot was.
       that.SG      her.DAT here      then just         her razor                 broken was
     b *dat/da-n     [under ier]      <u>toen juste</u>      [**underen** computer]   kapot   was.
       that.SG/that.PL them.DAT here   then just         their   computer         broken  was

This is not because realization of dative case is no longer available and/or problematic in West Flemish[6] (cf. (20b)):

(20) a da    [dienen GSM]     Marie    nie anstond
       that   that mobile      Marie    not on.stood
       'that that mobile did not please Marie'
     b da    [dienen GSM]     eur      niet anstond
       that   that mobile      her.DAT  not on.stood
     c *??da[dienen GSM]     ze       niet anstond
       that   that mobile      her.ACC  not on.stood
       'that that mobile did not please her'

Finally, in West Flemish as well as in many other Flemish varieties, indefinite external possessors give rise to insertion of the expletive element *er* (which is roughly equivalent to the English *there*-expletive) (21a). *Er*-insertions is typically triggered by indefinite subjects (cf. Haegeman 2004a for more discussion). The indefinite subject in (21b) triggers *der*-insertion, the indefinite object in (21c) does not. A subject containing an indefinite possessor also triggers *er*-insertion (cf. Haegeman 2004a) (21d). Observe that it is not possible that *(d)er*-insertion in (21a) is triggered by the lower DP *underen GSM* 'their mobile phone', since DPs containing a possessive determiner without an indefinite doubling possessor qualify as definite and thus not able to give rise to *er*-insertion (cf. (21e)).

(21) a dan      *(der)    [veel studenten] <u>atent</u> [**underen** GSM]      af stoat
       that.PL   there     many studenten   always their.MSG mobile off stands
     b dan      *(der)    veel studenten    underen GSM              atent     afzetten
       that      *(there)  many students     their.M.SG mobile        always    off.switch
     c dat      (*er)     Lieven            veel studenten           eet
       that      (*er)     Lieven            many students            has
     d dat      *(er)     [veel studenten underen GSM]               atent     af stoat
       that.SG   there     many studenten their.M.SG mobile           always    off.stands
     e dat      (*der)    underen GSM                                atent     af stoat
       that      (*there)  theire mobile                             always    off.stands

Third, further evidence for the subject-like quality of the external possessor comes from dialects which display the phenomenon of Complementizer Agreement (CA), like West Flemish (see also Haegeman & Van Koppen 2011). In the canonical case, West Flemish complementizer agreement *qua* number targets the subject, i.e. the external argument that also controls agreement on the finite verb:

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[6] This is contrary to much of the literature in which it is proposed that Flemish dialects no longer have the dative case.

(22) a ’k peinzen da-n/*da       die venten  Marie kenn-en.
      I  think   that.**PL**/that-SGthose men  Marie know.**PL**
      ‘I think that those men know Marie.’
  b ’k peinzen da/  *da-n     dienen vent   Marie kenn-t.
      I  think   that.**SG**/that-PL   that man    Marie know.**SG**
      ‘I think that that man knows Marie.’

Note that CA is not simply dependent on an adjacency requirement (contra Ackema & Neeleman 2004; Miyagawa 2009). To the extent that a (scrambled/focused) object DP can (very marginally, cf. ?? (23b)) intervene between C and the subject DP, CA targets the non-adjacent subject DP (23b) and, crucially, it cannot target the intervening object DP (23c).

(23) a ’k    peinzen     da      **zelfs Valère** <u>zukken boeken</u>   niet  leest.
      I     think      that.SG  even Valère   such books      not   reads
  b ?? ’k peinzen     da      <u>zukken boeken</u>  **zelfs Valère** niet  leest.
       I   think      that.SG  such books      even Valère  not   reads
  c * ’k  peinzen     da-n    <u>zukken boeken</u>  **zelfs Valère** niet  leest.
       I   think      that.PL  such books     even Valère     not   reads

Interestingly, CA is controlled by external possessors. Such is the case in (24a), in which the complementizer agrees with the plural external possessor rather than with the singular possessum, which itself induces number agreement on the finite verb:

(24) a omda-n/*omdat       [André en Valère]  toen juste   gebeld  oan/*oat.
      because.PL/because.SG André and Valère   then just    phoned  had.PL/*SG
      ‘…because André and Valère called just then.’
  b omda-n/*omdat       [André en Valère]   <u>toen juste</u> [**underen** computer] kapot
      because.PL/*because.SG André and Valère   then just their computer        broken
      was/*woaren.
      was.SG/were.PL
      ‘…because André and Valère’s computer broke down just then.’

However, it should be pointed out that the external possessor is not dependent on (= licensed by) CA (*pace* Haegeman & Van Koppen 2011). This can be seen in non-finite (infinitival) clauses, in which CA can never occur but which are nevertheless compatible with the external possessor pattern:

(25) a Mee  Valère      toen juste      nen nieuwen oto gekocht te een…
      With  Valère      then just      a new car bought to have
  b Mee  [Valère]   <u>toen juste</u>    [**zenen** computer] kapot te zyn…
      With  Valère      then just      his computer broken to be

3.3 Interpretive features of the external possessor

The external possessor is always in some sense affected by the event (or more precisely the state resulting from the event) expressed in the proposition. Moreover, there is a very strong

requirement for the split possessor to be alive at the time the event or state expressed in the clause takes/took place. Consider for instance the examples in (26), with an internal possessor in (26a) and an external one in (26b):

(26) a omdat   [men grootvader zijnen fiets]     dan juist     kapot was
       because my grandfather his.M.SG bicycle    then just     broken was
       '... because my grandfather's bike was broken just then.'
    b omdat   [men grootvader]     <u>dan juist</u>     [**zijnen** fiets] kapot was
       because my grandfather      then just       [his bicycle]  broken was
       '... because my grandfather had just then his bike broken.'

For all speakers that we consulted, (26b) can only be uttered felicitously if grandfather was alive at the moment his bike was broken. In addition, the sentence also implies that the broken bike is not just any bike owned by grandfather, it is his 'personal' bike, the one he uses daily[7]. (26a) on the other hand could, at least for some speakers, also be used to refer to a bike inherited by one of grandfather's grandchildren after the grandfather himself has died.

Observe that the ban on the dead external possessor is much stronger than the animacy constraint on possessor doubling and possessive pronouns that we discussed above (section 2.1, cf. the examples in (8)). There is no general ban on a dead possessor in the internal possessor pattern with pronominal doubling, as witnessed by the (attested) example in (27b):

(27) a [Zijn auto] werd gevonden aan de kaai.
      'His car was found on the quay.'
    b Voorbijgangers hebben woensdagmiddag in Hemiksem het lichaam van L.B. aangetroffen in de Schelde. De man verdween in de nacht van 1 op 2 april. De doodsoorzaak ligt nog niet vast. [L.B. zijn auto] was eerder al gevonden aan de Scheldekaaien in Antwerpen.
      (http://www.nieuwsblad.be/article/detail.aspx?articleid=DMF20110413_153)
      'Wednesday afternoon, passers-by found the dead body of L.B. in the river Scheldt. The man had disappeared in the night of 1 and 2 April. The cause of his death is yet to be determined. [L.B. his car] had been found earlier at the Scheldekaaien in Antwerp.'
    c omdat   [L.B. zijnen auto]    gisteren     al gevonden is
      because L.B. his.M.SG car     yesterday    already found is

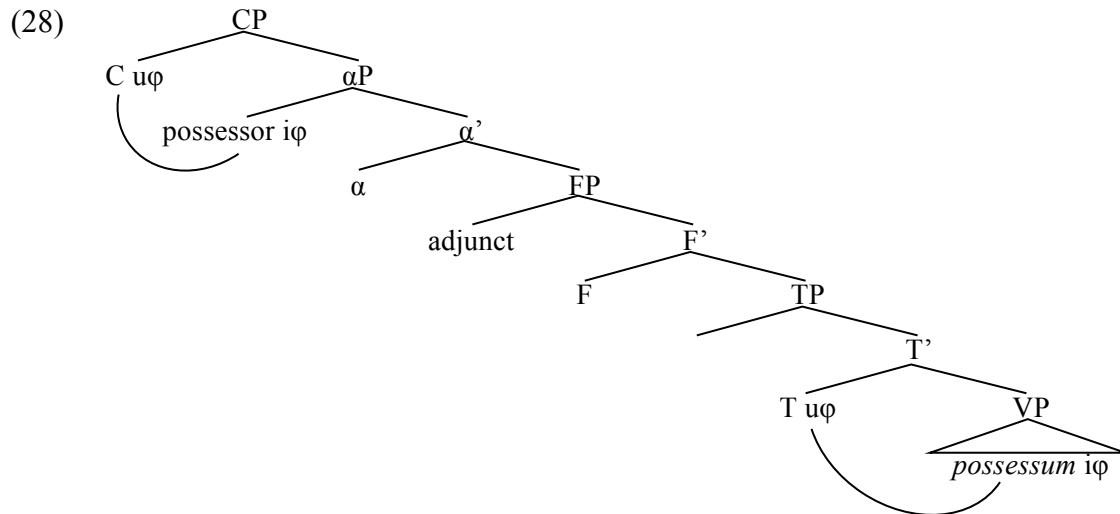However, the external possessor would be completely unacceptable in this context:

    d *omdat [L.B.]    <u>gisteren</u>     [**zijnen** auto] gevonden is
      because L.B.     yesterday    his.M.SG     car found is

We now turn to the closing section of the paper, in which we will argue that the external possessor is located in a high TP-internal argument position with subject properties. Our conclusion supports a line of research that distinguishes more than one subject position in the clausal spine (see Henry 1995 on Hiberno English; É. Kiss 1996; Cardinaletti 1997, 2004; McCloskey 1997 and den Dikken & Tortora 2010).

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[7] Cf. the extended use of the term 'inalienable possession' in Vergnaud & Zubizarreta (1992).

## 3.4 A high subject position

In a first analysis of the Flemish external possessor data, Haegeman & Van Koppen (2011) proposed the following structure, in which the high possessor is located in a projection labelled αP (inspired by Miyagawa 2009).

(28)



One central question that remains is to identifythe exact nature of αP? Recall that we would like to capture both the syntactic (subject-like) properties of the external possessor and its interpretive characteristics.

### 3.4.1 αP is not part of the clausal left periphery

First of all, it is important to observe that the external possessor pattern is available in a wide range of embedded clauses (29), including those that are not normally compatible with root phenomena (Emonds 1976) or Main Clause Phenomena (Hooper & Thompson 1973), such as conditional clauses (29b), subject clauses (29c), relative clauses (29d,e) and infinitival *mee*-clauses (29b). Indeed, as shown by Haegeman & Van Koppen (2011) it is not available in root clauses.

(29) a Het moest lukken    dat    [Valère]    toen juist    [**zijnen** GSM]    afstond.
       It   must happen        that    Valère      then just    his.M.SG mobile   off.stood
       'It so happened that just then Valère had his mobile switched off.'
   b Als    [Valère] dan juist    [**zijnen** GSM]    afstaat      kunnen we hem niet bereiken.
       if      Valère   then just    his.M.SG mobile   of.stands    can we not him reach
       'If at that time Valère has his mobile switched of, we won't be able to get in touch.'
   c Da    [Valère] toen juist    [**zijnen** GSM]    afstond      was toeval.
       that   Valère   then just    his.M.SG mobile   of.stood     was coincidence
       'It was a coincidence that just then Valère had his mobile switched off.'
   d Dat was in de tijd    dat    [mijn broer]    toen juist    [**zijnen** computer]    kapot was.
       that was in the time that   my brother     then just    his.M.SG computer   broken was.
       'That was in the time that my brother's computer was broken.'

    e  Dat is die kliniek    [waar da    [mijn zus]  <u>verleden jaar</u>  [**haren** kleinen]
        that is that hospital  where that  my sister   last year      her.M.SG little.M.SG
        opgenomen    was].
        up.taken       was
        'that's the hospital where my sister had her little one last year.'
    f.  *Valère stond toen juist zijnen GSM af.
        Valère stood then just his mobile off.

Since argument fronting typically qualifies as a Main Clause Phenomenon (see Haegeman 2006), the data in (29) strongly suggest that the external possessor is TP-internal rather than in a left peripheral/dislocated position. In the next section, we will work out the hypothesis that αP is an A-position.

3.4.2 αP as an A-position

Evidence for A-status of Spec,αP comes first of all from the fact that the external possessor shows complementizer agreement, under the assumption that agreement relations are established in A-positions. Furthermore, there is a locality restriction on the relation between the external possessor and the possessum in that an external possessor DP cannot be associated with (extracted from?) a direct object across a subject. In (30a) the object DP contains a doubling possessor, but this possessor cannot be externalized and located above the subject DP

(30)  a  omdat  Valère  toen juste  [Marie euren computer]  gerepareerd oat
        because Valère  then just    Marie her computer      repaired had
        'because Valère just then had repaired Marie's computer'
    b  *omdat [Marie]ᵢ Valère  <u>toen juste</u>  [**euren**ᵢ computer]  repaired oat
        because Marie   Valère  then just    her computer      repaired had

Whether the pattern in (30b) is derived through movement or not, one could reasonably think that the anaphoric dependency between the leftward possessor and the possessive determiner *euren* 'her' is blocked by the intervening subject DP *Valère*.

(31)   a     C      POSS        subject    object     predicate

       b    *C     POSS        subject    object     predicate

Assuming that the external possessor is an A-position then the ungrammaticality of (31b) is ascribed to A- intervention.

(32)          *  A    A    A

We could hypothesize that the split possessor DP is located in a dedicated SubjP, which is a canonical subject position in the high middle field, specialized to host 'categorical' subjects, typically full DPs (cf. Cardinaletti (2004) and Rizzi & Shlonsky (2005, 2006); see also Alexopoulou, Doron & Heycock (2004) on 'broad subjects'). However, this analysis has the

drawback that it does not explain the 'affectedness' reading that is characteristic of the external possessor.

3.4.3 Accounting for the affectedness effect: a high ApplP?

An alternative line of reasoning would be to assume that the affectedness reading associated with the external possessor is the result of it being located in an applicative phrase: this would not only account for the idiosyncratic interpretive properties of the external possessor (we could consider those to be a lexical property of the applicative head), it also would explain why an additional argument can be present in the structure, without it being part of the selectional frame of the predicate of the clause.

A problem that immediately arises for such an analysis is the fact that the Flemish external possessor sits much higher than the ApplPs proposed in much recent work on the syntax of applicatives (see esp. Pylkkänen 2008): a low ApplP is usually taken to be located inside the verb phrase, whereas a high ApplP immediately dominates it. However, with Rivero (2009) and Rivero, Arregui & Frąckowiak (2010) we could assume an ApplP which takes the entire TP as its complement, yielding a reading in which the applied argument is effected, which is exactly what we find in the case of the Flemish external possessor. The structure would be as in (33):

(33)     [$_{CP}$ [$_{ApplP}$ DP$_{POSS.OR}$ [$_{FP}$ Adj [$_{TP}$ [$_{vP}$ DP$_{POSS.EE}$   ]]]]]


**3.5 Remaining issues**

There remain a number of issues that we have not dealt with in this paper. First, it remains to be determined whether the external possessor is merged directly in the high position (SubjP or ApplP) or whether it is extracted from the lower position containing the possessum DP. Moreover, it is not clear why the external possessor pattern should only be available in embedded clauses (as briefly mentioned in section 1.2, see Haegeman & Van Koppen 2011 for an analysis). For reasons of space we cannot develop these points here.


**4. Conclusion**

In this paper, we discussed the syntax of the Flemish external possessor construction. We showed that such an external possessor always occurs with a clausemate *possessum* DP, and that both of these constituents have subject properties. We concluded that the external possessor occupies a high argument position in the middle field, possibly an ApplP that takes the entire TP as its complement. Our analysis lends support to the idea that the notion of 'subject' is not a syntactic primitive, but that multiple positions for subjects are present in the clause, which under certain circumstances can be filled simultaneously.

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