Minority Languages, Microvariation, Minimalism and Meaning
Minority Languages, Microvariation, Minimalism and Meaning: Proceedings of the Irish Network in Formal Linguistics

Edited by

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PREFACE

THE IRISH NETWORK IN FORMAL LINGUISTICS

We are delighted to welcome the publication of papers presented at the Irish Network in Formal Linguistics conferences.

The Irish Network in Formal Linguistics was founded in 2009 with the support of a research networking grant from the Arts and Humanities Research Council (UK) to Prof. Alison Henry of the University of Ulster, and to Prof. Eithne Guilfoyle of Dublin City University from the Irish Research Council for Humanities and Social Sciences. They were joined on the organizing committee by Dr Aidan Doyle (University College Cork) and Prof. Jamal Ouhalla (University College Dublin).

The aim of the network is to support researchers working on theoretical linguistics (broadly construed) on the island of Ireland; to offer opportunities for them to meet and share their research; and to bring other researchers in theoretical linguistics to Ireland. Prior to the network being established, there was much good research being undertaken, but often by researchers who were the only theoretical linguists in their departments.

The network has so far organized three workshops and a major international conference whose products appear in this volume. We hope this will be the first of a series of such conferences in the future.

EITHNE GUILFOYLE
ALISON HENRY
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This volume would not exist were it not for the inspired work of Prof. Alison Henry of the University of Ulster and Prof. Eithne Guilfoyle of Dublin City University in establishing the Irish Network in Formal Linguistics.

We would like to thank the Arts and Humanities Research Council and the Irish Research Council for Humanities and Social Sciences for their support for the Irish Network in Formal Linguistics.

Finally, many thanks are due to Carol Koulikourdi and colleagues from Cambridge Scholars Publishing, for accepting our proposal to publish this volume and for the help and guidance they have provided all along the process.
INTRODUCTION

CATRIN S. RHYS, PAVEL IOSAD
AND ALISON HENRY

Part 1: Microvariation

Microvariation approaches the analysis of dialect variation with a specific focus on how it can contribute to the understanding of linguistic theory. The synchronic and diachronic variation examined in this volume includes Irish English (Henry, chapter 2 and Rossi and Berizzi, chapter 4), dialects of Italian with a focus on Eastern Abruzzese (La Morgia, chapter 3) and dialects of Flemish (Haegeman and Danckaert, chapter 1).

Haegeman and Danckaert (chapter 1) discuss a previously undocumented structure in West Flemish where a possessor can, under certain conditions, be realized as a subject. The external possessor pattern described in this chapter sheds new light on the structure of the (high) middle field of Flemish embedded clauses.

Henry’s study of object shift in Belfast English (chapter 2) shows that the phenomenon of object shift, generally considered characteristic of the Scandinavian languages and the subject of much debate in the generative literature, occurs in imperatives in Belfast English, and shows how this can contribute to the understanding of object shift in general. Henry’s chapter also highlights the importance of individual-level variation in work on non-standard language varieties and the theoretical insights that such variation can provide.

La Morgia (chapter 3) considers diachronic and synchronic patterns of variation in auxiliary selection in Eastern Abruzzese, which displays a person-driven type of auxiliary selection, with the third person singular and plural selecting *avé* (have) and the other persons *esse* (be). The analysis considers language-internal as well as language-external influences on patterns of lexical variability in resistance to contact-driven change.

Rossi and Berizzi (chapter 4) provide a cartographic account of the “after perfect” in Hiberno-English, a well-known feature of the dialect which has been little studied from a theoretical perspective. The chapter
applies the fine structure proposed for spatial PPs to the P appearing in this aspectual construction but differs from other analyses of aspectual construction involving P in that it analyses the preposition not as the head of an aspectual projection but as a PP hosted in the Spec position.

**Part 2: Celtic Languages**

The linguistic study of Celtic languages provides a natural focus for INFL. This volume includes four papers on the topic; all of them are broadly set in the tradition of generative syntax, but they also exemplify a variety of approaches to important architectural questions, such as the interaction between morphosyntax and semantics (Acquaviva, chapter 5 and Kane, chapter 8), phonology (Carnie, chapter 6) and language use (Frenda, chapter 7). The papers collected in this section also challenge some notions with a long history in traditional descriptions of the Celtic languages, for instance by providing critical examination of variation often said to be “free” (Carnie) and of the monolithic notion of “gender agreement” (Frenda). The chapters by Acquaviva and Kane both reveal important insights into the morphological structure of Irish verbs and demonstratives respectively and into the interaction between syntax and semantics.

Acquaviva examines the morphological structure of Irish verbs, showing how the structure of verbal paradigms illuminates the finely grained structure of the left periphery of the clause. He shows that his approach can be used to understand both the morphological make-up of the “irregular” paradigms and the semantics of the Irish tense and aspect distinctions, thus underscoring the importance of the connection between syntax and semantics.

Carnie’s chapter sheds new light on the well-known and recently much-researched pattern of pronoun postposing in the Goidelic languages. He argues that, unlike Irish, the rightward dislocation of phonologically “light” object pronouns in Scottish Gaelic cannot be motivated either syntactically or with reference to information structure: instead, prosodic factors, more specifically foot structure, play a decisive role. These data are an important challenge to the well-established principle of Phonology-Free Syntax, and more generally to any strictly modular approach to grammatical architecture.

The topic of the chapter by Frenda is the nature of agreement in Irish and Welsh and of its interaction with discourse and with morphophonology. Frenda argues that the patterns of consonant mutation and of gender agreement within the DP can only be understood in a highly
formalized, representationally rich theory of grammar which is able to take
into account a variety of morphosyntactic and discourse-related factors.
Along the way, he argues for a more nuanced understanding of the
phenomena covered by the traditional blanket notion of “agreement”,
incorporating more than one grammatical mechanism. Finally, Frenda’s
study underscores how corpus-based methods and the analysis of
spontaneous speech provide insights into the grammar of the Celtic
languages that are unavailable in more traditional descriptive frameworks.

Kane argues for a novel analysis of the internal structure of the Irish
demonstrative DP. She suggests that, in certain contexts, the Irish element
*an*, traditionally described as a determiner, demonstrates the syntactic and
semantic properties of a demonstrative (from which it derives
diachronically). In particular, she argues that the Irish demonstrative is
phrasal, involving two separate components; an adjectival/deictic element
and a second component encoding definiteness, the definite article. Kane’s
chapter, along with Acquaviva’s, therefore highlights the importance of
detailed examination of finely grained syntactic and semantic structure.

**Part 3: Formal approaches to syntax, semantics and discourse**

This general section brings together papers on topics of current
theoretical interest in the formal analysis of syntax, semantics and
discourse. Several of the papers adopt a phase theoretic approach to
address different topics including nominal root compounding (Bauke,
chapter 9), Feature Inheritance and derivation (Kuno, chapter 13) and
interface conditions on the entailment properties of Adjective Noun
modification (Reichard, chapter 13). Hladnik give a minimalist account of
Case marking issues in the analysis of relative clauses in Slovene (chapter
10). Bauke, Krzek and Reichard (chapters 9, 11 and 13) all address
phenomena involving syntactic conditions on semantic interpretation. The
final two papers of this section focus at the level of discourse and
demonstrate the advantages of a formal micro-level sequential analysis of
talk-in-interaction.

Bauke provides an analysis of compounding that is in line with recent
minimalist approaches to Phases. In particular, she argues against the
claim that nominal root compounding is parameterized across languages
and proposes an account of compounding in narrow syntax that relies on a
distinction between uncategorized roots, specified only for edge features,
and categorizing $x$-heads that are Phase heads and the standard
assumptions for the operation of Merge and Spell-Out. Bauke thus ties
cross-linguistic differences in the patterns of compounding to a microparameter that is sensitive to the properties of number-checking.

Hladnik also relies on the operation of Spell-Out in his analysis of resumption in Slovene restrictive relative clauses in chapter twelve. His investigation of Slovene shows that a relative clause is introduced either by the pronoun *kateri*, or by *ki*, a complementizer. Moreover, when the relative clause is introduced by the complementizer, the head noun is obligatorily resumed by a clitic pronoun. This pattern of resumption is argued to operate as a “case-recoverability mechanism” driven by spell-out restrictions in the CP domain.

In chapter thirteen, Krzek examines the morphosyntactic properties of two Polish impersonal constructions and provides syntactic evidence for the projection of a *pro* with a generic interpretation in Polish. Krzek also claims that the –NO/–TO impersonal suffix is a base generated head of VoiceP and hence blocks passivization whereas the SIE impersonal can be passivized. These Polish impersonals thus present a significant challenge to both Holmberg’s (2005) generalization that generic null subjects are not found in consistent null subject languages and Fassi-Fehri’s (2009) supplementary generalization that generic interpretation of third person singular null subjects is available in consistent null subject language, but only with a specific Voice, namely Passive.

Kuno, in chapter 13, focuses on Chomsky’s (2008) account of Feature Inheritance in which T inherits uninterpretable agreeing φ-features and the EPP property from C. The paper contrasts the morphosyntactic properties of cases where Feature Inheritance is motivated and cases where Feature Inheritance is blocked and argues that where Feature Inheritance is motivated, the derivation inherently proceeds counter-cyclically. Kuno also provides independent evidence for counter-cyclicity and so argues that given that counter-cyclicity is a logical consequence of Feature Inheritance and is also independently motivated, it is preferable to Chomsky’s (2008) proposals for derivational simultaneity.

Reichard examines the entailment properties of different categories of adjective and provides an alternative to the formal semantic lexicalist approach, in which he argues that the difference between intersective and subsective interpretations of adjectives follows from interface conditions. Given a phasal architecture of grammar and recent claims that intersective modifiers are clausal whereas non-intersective modifiers are not, Reichard’s overall proposal is that, due to the asymmetric structure of grammar, modifiers are interpreted relative to their hosts. Subsectivity is thus the ‘normal case’. However, if the modifier is clausal, it is also a phase. Since phases are taken to be units of semantic interpretation, the
interpretation of the modifier is fixed at the time of modification and the modifier can therefore not be relativized to its modifiee. An intersective interpretation is therefore the only remaining possibility.

The final two papers in this section adopt a formal perspective not to aspects of linguistic structure but to actual stretches of language use in context. Both papers examine conversational data within the conversation analytic approach in which the sequential, formal properties of the talk are examined to draw conclusions at a more macro-level about ambiguities in the emergence of disaffiliation (Rhys, chapter 14) and about the hegemonic character of gender categories in interaction (Rhys and Burke, chapter 15). Chapter 14 draws on formal micro analysis to examine the interaction between discursive practices that are oriented to alignment to/disalignment from the actional content of the talk and the emergence of disaffiliation between the participants. Chapter 15 combines the formal analytical practices of CA with Membership Categorization Analysis in examining mundane conversations of women who smoke and shows the formal interactional practices through which participants resist incumbency of a negatively appraised category of woman smoker.
CHAPTER ONE

MULTIPLE SUBJECTS IN FLEMISH: THE EXTERNAL POSSESSOR

LILIANE HAEGEMAN
AND LIEVEN DANCKAERT

1.1 Introduction

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.

1.2 Presentation of the data

1.2.1 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, 2013). 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 1.3, the complex possessor–possessee forms a constituent: for this reason, we could call the possessor in (1a–2a) an “internal” possessor (cf. Vergnaud and 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 and 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] adjunct …

b  External possessor:
%C[TP [DP possessor] adjunct [DP possessum]] …

As suggested by the bracketing while the internal possessor forms a constituent with the possessum (see also section 1.3.1.1.), 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, toen juste in de klinieke was, [Jehan zenen kleenen],
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; Hsu 2009) and the contributions in Payne
and 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
1.2, we will highlight some important features that characterize the
Flemish external possessor. Section 1.3 provides some background about
the syntax of possession in Flemish DPs. Section 1.4 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.

1.2.2 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.

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

1 For a first discussion, see Haegeman and Van Koppen (2012).
Flemish. Speakers who do not accept the pattern do share (some of) the judgements discussed below.

Second, unlike comparable phenomena in French (Vergnaud and 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.

4  a  *dat [Jehan] toen juste [nen zeune] in de klinieke was.
    that Jehan then just a son in the hospital was

    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 1.3 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 1.4. 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 and Van Koppen (2012) for an analysis.

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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.
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.

1.3 Background: possessor relations in the Flemish DP

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] toen juste 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.”

    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 se(n)-element does not allow the split possessor pattern.

1.3.1 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  DP + sen + NP = “prenominal genitive”
    Valère sen hoed
    Valère sen hat

   b  (DP) + poss.pronoun + NP= “prenominal doubling”
    (Valère) zenen hoed
    (Valère) his     hat
1.3.1.1 Some similarities

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 weer al kapot.
    Lieven sen computer is again broken.

b  [DP Lieven zijnen computer] is weer al kapot.
    Lieven his computer is again broken.
    “Lieven’s computer is broken again.”

Second, both the se(n)-genitive and the doubling pattern are subject to a generalized animacy restriction: the prenominal possessor DP cannot refer to an inanimate object:

8  a  *[die deure] eur klinke
    that door her latch

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

c  *[die deure] se klinke
    that door sen latch

d  *[dienen rok] sen zuom
    that skirt sen hemline

1.3.1.2 Differences between the two patterns

However, the two patterns also differ along a number of dimensions. A first difference is that the se(n)-element does not vary with respect to the gender and number of the possessum DP it precedes (9b)\(^4\). On the other

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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 \(\text{van} \) “of”:

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

4 This is not to say that the element is strictly speaking “invariant”. However, the alternation between the forms \(\text{sen} \) and \(\text{se} \) is phonologically determined: \(\text{sen} \) is used before a word starting with a vowel, and \(\text{se} \) before a word starting with a consonant (Taeldeman 1995; Haegeman 2013: 224-226).
hand, the doubling possessive determiner displays agreement with the DP it modifies (9a):

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>MASC SG</th>
<th>FEM SG</th>
<th>NEUT SG</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>a</td>
<td>Marie eur-hoed</td>
<td>Marie eur veste</td>
<td>Marie eur kleed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Marie her.M.SG hat</td>
<td>Marie her jacket</td>
<td>Marie her dress</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b</td>
<td>Marie sen hoed</td>
<td>Marie sen veste</td>
<td>Marie se kleed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Marie sen hat</td>
<td>Marie sen jacket</td>
<td>Marie sen dress</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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

10 a Marie se boeken
    Marie se book
b *(de) Marie sen

c *Marie de sen Ø

d *de Marie eure

e * Marie eure

11 a Marie eur boeken
    Marie her books
b Marie d’eure Ø

c *Marie eur Ø

d *de Marie eure

e * Marie eure

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

12 a *djungers sen hus
    the children sen house
b djungers under hus
    the children their house

"the children’s house"

Fourth, the possessor and *se(n)* need to be linearly adjacent, whereas a possessor can be separated from the *possessum* by a universal quantifier as in (14b). The fact 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 se(n) 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.

1.3.2 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:

According to Haegeman (2004a), the main syntactic difference between the two possible ways of expressing possession relations in Flemish DPs is the position of the possessor DP in the functional structure of the complex DP. In the se(n)-pattern, the possessor sits in Spec,PossP, fairly deeply embedded in the entire structure. On the other hand, the possessor is in a higher position in the doubling pattern, say in Spec,DP5.

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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.”
1.4 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.

1.4.1 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] toen juste [zen ouders] niet in Gent woaren/*was. [that.SG Valère then just his parents not in Gent be.PL/*SG. “that just then Valère’s parents weren’t in Ghent.”]

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.

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], dan ze toen juste t; gingen
It is Valère his bedroom that they then just went
schilderen
redecorate
“It’s Valère’s bedroom that they were going to redecorate.”

b  da Valère toen juste [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], da Valère toen juste t; geschilderd was.
It is his bedroom that Valère then just redecorated was

1.4.2 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] toen juste [eur scheerapparaat] kapot was.
that she.NOM here then just her razor broken was

b  %??da-n [zunder doar] toen juste [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
pronouns bearing dative case, which are completely unacceptable both as an internal (not illustrated) and as external (cf. (19)) possessor:

19 a  *dat [eur ier] toen juste [eur scheerapparaat] kapot was.
      that.SG her.DAT here then just her razor broken was

     b  *dat/da-n [under ier] toen juste [underen computer]
      that.SG/that.PL them.DAT here then just their computer
      kapot was.
      broken was

This is not because realization of dative case is no longer available and/or problematic in West Flemish\(^7\) (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 \((d)er\) (which is roughly equivalent to the English there-expletive) (21a). \((D)er\)-insertions is typically triggered by indefinite subjects (cf. Haegeman 2004a for more discussion). The indefinite subject in (21b) triggers \((d)er\)-insertion, the indefinite object in (21c) does not. A subject containing an indefinite possessor also triggers \((d)er\)-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 \((d)er\)-insertion (cf. (21e)).

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\(^7\) This is contrary to much of the literature in which it is proposed that Flemish dialects no longer have the dative case.
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 and Van Koppen 2012). 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:

Note that CA is not simply dependent on an adjacency requirement (contra Ackema and 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).
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
because.PL/because.SG  ANDRÉ and Valère  then just
gebeld oan/*oat  phoned had.PL/*SG
“…because André and Valère called just then.”

b  omda-n/*omdat  [André en Valère]  toen juste  [underen
because.PL/*because.SG  André and Valère  then just  their
computer] kapot  was/*woaren.
computer broken  was.SG/were.PL
“…because André and Valère’s computer broke down just then.”

However, note that the external possessor is not dependent on (= licensed by) CA (pace Haegeman and Van Koppen 2012). 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] toen juste  [zenen computer] kapot te zyn…
With Valère then just  his computer broken to be
1.4.3 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.”

26 b  omdat [men grootvader] dan juist [zijnen fiets] kapot was
because my grandfather then just [his bicycle] broken was
“... because my grandfather had just then his bike broken.”

For all the speakers that we consulted, (26b) can only be uttered felicitously if the 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. (26a), on the other hand, could, at least for some speakers, also refer to a bike inherited by one of the 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 discussed above (section 1.3.1, 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.”

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“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.] gisteren [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 Tortora and den Dikken 2010).

1.4.4 A high subject position

In a first analysis of the Flemish external possessor data, Haegeman and Van Koppen (2012) proposed the following structure, in which the high possessor is located in a projection labelled αP (inspired by Miyagawa 2009).