Prominent Internal Possessors Eastern Uralic style
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A Uralic language Hungarian is known to make two structurally different positions available for internal possessors: (i) the nominative possessor typically follows a determiner, (ii) the dative possessor precedes the determiner and is located at the very left periphery of the possessive phrase while remaining phrase-internal. In the existing literature the latter is usually analysed either as SpecDP (Szabolcsi 1994 and other work) or as SpecTopP, i.e. a DP-internal topic (É. Kiss 2000, 2002).

The Hungarian peripheral possessor is not known to exhibit syntactic effects outside of its phrase; however, this is exactly the situation in a number of Eastern Uralic languages, in particular, some languages of the Ob-Ugric and Samoyedic groups distantly related to Hungarian. These languages do not have dative possessors (the dative possessor appears to be an Hungarian innovation, see Nikolaeva 2002), but the two types of internal possessors differ with respect to possessive agreement: the possessor that follows a determiner does not trigger agreement on the possessed head noun, whereas the possessor that precedes the determiner is cross-referenced by 3rd person agreement on the head.

Crucially, the agreeing possessor demonstrates some argument-like properties. First, similar to clause-level elements, it can antecedent non-reflexive pronouns outside of its phrase. Second, it controls zero subject in dependent clauses headed by action nominals. Third, the agreeing possessor of the subject can control same-subject converbs. These properties are illustrated by Tundra Nenets examples (1), (2) and (3), respectively.

(1) a. [Wera-h n’a] s’ita lada°
Wera-GEN friend he.ACC hit
‘Wera,’s friend, hit him

b. [Wera-h n’a-da] s’ita lada°
Wera-GEN friend-3SG he.ACC hit
‘Wera,’s friend, hit him

(2) a. [to-wa-nta] mal°ŋkəna] [Wera-h mašina] taxarə°-s°
come-IMPF.AN-GEN.3SG when Wera-GEN car break-PST
‘Wera,’s car broke down when he came.’

b. [to-wa-nta] mal°ŋkəna] [Wera-h mašina-da] taxarə°-s°
come-IMPF.AN-GEN.3SG when Wera-GEN car-3SG break-PST
‘Wera,’s car broke down when he came.’

(3) [yarum-¢ο] [ŋəc’eki°-h ŋëwa*(da)] yes°m’a
cry-SS child-GEN head-3SG start.hurting
‘The child,’s head started hurting while he, was crying.’

In these examples agreeing possessors located at the left periphery of the possessive phrase assume the level of syntactic prominence otherwise associated with the immediate constituents of the clause. The paper will discuss the types of syntactic analysis that may be required for such constructions.