Movement within vP: the case of possessor raising in Kipsigis

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1 Introduction

- Possession in Kipsigis (Southern Nilotic; Kenya) is usually expressed DP-internally, with the possessum being marked with the clitic -*aːp*.[1]

  (1) Kòː-á-mwét   [DP íŋgɔ̀ráìk-àːp **Tʃèːbêːt**].
        PST.REC-1SG-wash   clothes-POSS Cheebeet
        'I washed Cheebeet's clothes.'

- However, the language also possesses an external possession construction: in this case, the possessum is unmarked, and the possessor is a verbal argument. The verb is marked with the applicative suffix -*tʃi*.

  (2) Kòː-á-mwé(t)-[tʃì]   **Tʃèːbêːt** íŋgɔ̀ráìk.
        PST.REC-1SG-wash-APPL Cheebeet clothes
        'I washed Cheebeet's clothes.' (OR 'I washed clothes for Cheebeet.')

- External possession constructions are quite common cross-linguistically, and they have received significant attention in the the theoretical literature because they exhibit a(n at least apparent) mismatch between syntax and semantics: a noun phrase behaves semantically as a possessor of another noun, but syntactically as an argument of the verb.

- There are three families of approaches to the phenomenon (see Deal 2017 for an overview):

  1. The possessor is base-generated as an argument of the verb. The possessor reading arises via binding of an operator within the DP (e.g., Borer & Grodzinsky 1986). This analysis is akin to a control configuration.

  2. The possessor is base-generated inside the DP, where it receives its thematic role. It then moves to a position within the *v*P. This analysis is akin to a raising configuration.

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[1]Glosses follow the Leipzig glossing rules, with the addition of: CL2 = (conjugation) class 2, IMP = impersonal, PART = participant, PST.CURR = current past, PST.DIST = distant past, PST.REC = recent past.

- – This position could be a thematic position (e.g., Lee-Schoenfeld 2006) or a position that is only associated with case/licensing (e.g., Landau 1999, Deal 2013).

   3. The possessor is introduced by a low applicative, and it is the semantics of the low applicative that give rise to the possession reading (e.g., Pylkkänen 2008, Nie 2019).

- In Africa, the phenomenon has mostly been studied for Bantu languages (e.g., Keach & Rochemont 1994 on Swahili, Henderson 2014 on Chimwiini, Halpert 2021, Zeller 2021 on Zulu), but even within Bantu it remains relatively understudied (Van de Velde 2020).

   - – There is barely any work on external possession in Nilotic languages (Payne 1997 on Maasai, Andersen 2019b on Jumjum, Andersen 2019a on Dinka).

Goals for today's talk:

- Provide a preliminary investigation of external possession in Kipsigis.

- Argue that possessor raising best captures the properties of external possession in the language.

- Show that constraints on remnant movement can be used as a diagnostic for possessor raising.

2 Background on Kipsigis

2.1 General information

- Kipsigis is the major variety of Kalenjin, a dialect cluster of the Southern Nilotic branch of Nilo-Saharan.

- It is spoken by approximately 2 million speakers in Kenya (Eberhard et al. 2020).

- Unless otherwise indicated, data in this handout come from fieldwork with four speakers in Kenya.[2]

- The language has the typologically rare marked nominative case system; case is expressed tonally (Toweett 1979, Rottland 1982, Kouneli & Nie 2021).

2.2 Kipsigis applicatives

- The language has two applicative morphemes:

   - – *-tʃi*, primarily used for recipients, beneficiaries, and (directional) location

   - – *-ɛːn*, primarily used for instruments and (static) location

(3) a. Kà-∅-í-gò:-│tʃí│ Tʃé:bê:t Kìbê:t kìtábʋ́:t.
PST.CURR-3-CL2-give-APPL Cheebeet.NOM Kibeet book
'Cheebeet gave Kibeet a book.'

b. Kò:-á-mwé(t)-│tʃì│ Tʃè:bê:t íŋgòráìk.
PST.REC-1SG-wash-APPL Cheebeet clothes
'I washed the clothes for/on behalf of Cheebeet.'

c. Kà-ɑ-twà:l-│tʃì│ kàrí:t.
PST.CURR-1SG-jump-APPL car
'I jumped into the car.'

(4) a. Kà-∅-tɛ́m-│ɛ́:n│ Kíbê:t ímbàr mógó:mbé:t.
PST.CURR-3-dig-INSTR Kibeet.NOM farm hoe
'Kibeet dug the farm with a hoe.'

b. ∅-tjén-│ɛ́:n│ ajnɛ:t.
3-sing-INSTR.IPFV river
'He/she is singing at the river/about the river.'

2.3 Movement in Kipsigis

- The pragmatically neutral word order is VSO, but various post-verbal orders are allowed depending on information structure (Bossi & Diercks 2019).

- Additionally, the language has a pre-verbal position marked by the marker *ko*.

(5) a. Kò:-∅-ké:r Tʃé:bê:t là:kwé:t.
PST.REC-3-see Cheebeet.NOM child
b. Kò:-∅-ké:r là:kwɛ́:t Tʃé:bê:t.
PST.REC-3-see child Cheebeet.NOM
c. Tʃè:bê:t kó kò:-∅-ké:r là:kwɛ́:t.
Cheebeet TOP PST.REC-3-see child
d. Là:kwɛ́:t kó kò:-∅-ké:r Tʃé:bê:t.
child TOP PST.REC-3-see Cheebeet.NOM
'Cheebeet saw the child.'

- In Driemel & Kouneli (2022), we show that this position is used for topicalization, with *ko* being a dedicated topic marker.

- The position is subject to island effects (see also Bossi 2023, as well as Creider & Creider 1989 for the related dialect Nandi).

(6) *Complex NP island*

      ***Kibe:t**$_i$ ⌐ko⌐ kɑ-∅-somɑn   Tʃébê:t   [kìtàbʊ́:t ne
      Kibeet TOP PST.CURR-3-read Cheebeet.NOM book   REL.SG
      ki:-∅-sir-e   **ìné:ndèt**$_i$/__ $_i$].
      PST.DIST-3-write-IPFV 3SG.NOM
      Intended: 'Kibeet, Cheebeet read the book that he wrote.'
      (Driemel & Kouneli 2022: p.14)

(7) *Adjunct island*

      ***Kibe:t**$_i$ ⌐ko⌐ ka-kɪ-sɪːndan-ɛ:tʃ   [ɑmun   mɑ-∅-ɲo: __ $_i$].
      Kibeet TOP PST.CURR-1PL-win-1PL(IMP) because NEG-3-come
      Intended: 'Kibeet, they beat us (at the race) because he didn't come.'
      (Driemel & Kouneli 2022: p.14)

- We can thus assume that topicalization involves movement to SpecCP, with *ko* spelling out the C head (see also Bossi 2023).

- Similar to the same position in the related language Dinka (van Urk 2015), topicalization in Kipsigis shows mixed $A - \bar{A}$ properties.

  $\bar{A}$ *properties:*

- Movement to the *ko*-position is driven by an information structure feature (=topic).

- Movement to the *ko*-position is long-distance.

(8) **Kìbê:t**$_i$ kó   kìː-á-mwá   [àː-lé   kìː-∅-tʃóːr   __ $_i$ ràbíːník].
     Kibeet TOP PST.DIST-1SG-say 1SG-LE PST.DIST-3-steal   money
     'Kibeet, I said that he stole the money.'

- There is reconstruction for Principle C (Bossi 2023).

(9) Linus is looking through a big box of pictures. There's a picture of Chebet, one of Kiplangat, one of Lydia, even one of himself. Some of the pictures were stuck together, though, so Linus saw some of them, but didn't see others. I'm explaining which pictures he saw and which pictures he didn't see. I say:

    a. Pɪchaaɪt-aap Cheebet ko   koo-∅-keer.
       picture-of   C.   TOP PST2-3-see
       'As the the picture of Chebet, he saw it.'

    b. Lɑkini pɪchaaɪt-aap Lɪnas$_j$ ko   mɑ-∅-$_{i/*j}$-keer.
       but   picture-of   L.   TOP NEG-3-see
       'But as for the picture of Linus$_j$, he$_{i/*j}$ didn't see it.'   (Bossi 2023: p.65)

A properties:

- The position is restricted to nominals.[3]

  (10) *__Mù:tjù__ $\boxed{\text{kó}}$ ∅-kè:t-é   Kíbê:t.
         slowly TOP 3-drive-IPFV Kibeet.NOM
         'Slowly, Kibeet drives.'   (Driemel & Kouneli 2022: p.6)

  (11) *__Ak   Kìplàŋgàt__ $\boxed{\text{kó}}$ kɑ-∅-tʃɑp-e   Kíbê:t   ɑmitwɑ:ɡik.
         with Kiplangat TOP PST.CURR-3-make-IPFV Kibeet.NOM food
         'With Kiplangat, Kibeet made food.'   (Driemel & Kouneli 2022: p.6)

- There is a case alternation for subject DPs: marked nominative in post-verbal positions, but unmarked case in the pre-verbal position.

  – This is a robust property in Nilo-Saharan languages with this case system (König 2006, 2008, van Urk 2015).

  (12) a. ∅-ám-è   __Kíbê:t__   kímɲé:t.
            3-eat-IPFV Kibeet.NOM ugali
            'Kibeet is eating ugali.'

        b. __Kìbê:t__ kó ∅-ám-è   kímɲé:t.
            Kibeet TOP 3-eat-IPFV ugali
            'Kibeet is eating ugali.'

- New binding possibilities are created (auxiliary assumption: binding out of possessors is possible).

  (13) a. Kò-∅-ké:r   Kíbê:t$_i$ __tʃo:rwe:(t)-ɲɪ:n$_{j/i}$__.
            PST.REC-3-see Kibeet.NOM friend-his.SG
            'Kibeet saw his friend.'

        b. __tʃo:rwe:(t)-ɲɪ:n$_{j/*i}$__ ko kò:-∅-ké:r   Kíbê:t$_i$ ___.
            friend-his.SG   TOP PST.REC-3-see Kibeet.NOM
            'His friend, Kibeet saw (him).'

  (14) a. kɔ̀:-∅-sús   ŋò:ktà   aɡɛ-tʊ̀ɣʊ́l$_i$ __tʃì:tá-ɲì:n$_{j/i}$__.
            PST.REC-3-bite dog.NOM any-all.NOM person-his.SG
            'Every dog bit its owner.'

        b. __tʃì:tɑ-ɲì:n$_{j/*i}$__ ko kɔ:-∅-sʊs   ŋò:ktà   aɡɛ-tʊ̀ɣʊ́l$_i$ ___.
            person-his.SG TOP PST.REC-3-bite dog.NOM any-all.NOM
            'Its owner, every dog bit.'

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[3]PPs headed by *een* can sometimes appear in this position. See discussion in Driemel & Kouneli (2022) and Bossi (2023).

- For some speakers, quantifier stranding is possible (e.g., Déprez 1989).

  (15) **Làːɣóːk** kó kà-∅-ám   kímɲéːt **tùɣʊ́l**.
        children TOP PST.CURR-3-eat ugali all.NOM
        'The children ate all ugali.'

- Relativization seems to behave in the same way, but I have not run all of the diagnostics yet.

- Even though there are some differences from Dinka that need to be accounted for in future work, I adapt van Urk's (2015) analysis to Kipsigis:

  - for topicalization, I assume that C has two features: [top] and a nominal feature [δ] responsible for the A properties that we observe.[4]

  - for a noun phrase to move to SpecCP, it must be specified for *both* features (thus, any XP with only one of the features will not count as an intervener).

3   External possession in Kipsigis

3.1   Basic properties

- Unlike Bantu languages, where there is a tendency for the applicative morpheme to be absent in these constructions (Van de Velde 2020), the applicative is obligatory in Kipsigis.

  (16) Kòː-á-mwé(t)-*(tʃì)   Tʃèːbêːt íŋgòráìk.
        PST.REC-1SG-wash-APPL Cheebeet clothes
        'I washed Cheebeet's clothes.'

  (17) Kà-∅-méj-*(tʃí)   Tʃèːbêːj ŋòːktà.
        PST.REC-3-die-APPL Cheebeet dog.NOM
        'Cheebeet's dog died.'

- There is a restriction to internal arguments.[5]

  (18) ∅-tjén-tʃíːn   Tʃèːbêːt làːkwɛ̀ːt.
        3-sing-APPL.IPFV Cheebeet child.NOM
        'The child is singing for/on behalf of Cheebeet.'
        # 'Cheebeet's child is singing.'

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[4]I leave the exact nature of this feature open for the time being. For van Urk (2015), this is a [φ] feature, but this choice is (at least partly) motivated by the fact that the verb agrees with the noun phrase in SpecCP in Dinka. This is not the case in Kipsigis.

[5]In this respect, Kipsigis is similar to Hebrew, where external possession has been used as an unaccusativity diagnostic (Borer & Grodzinsky 1986 and subsequent work).

(19) a. Kà-∅-í-twá:l-tʃí Kìbê:t là:kwè:t.
PST.CURR-3-CL2-jump-APPL Kibeet child.NOM
'Kibeet's child jumped.'
'The child jumped on/for/on behalf of Kibeet.'

b. Kɑ-∅-i-twɑ:l-si-e:-tʃi Kíbê:t Tʃè:bê:t là:kwέ:t.
PST.CURR-3-CL2-jump-CAUS-LK-APPL Kib.NOM Cheeb. child
'Kibeet made Cheebeet's child jump.' OR
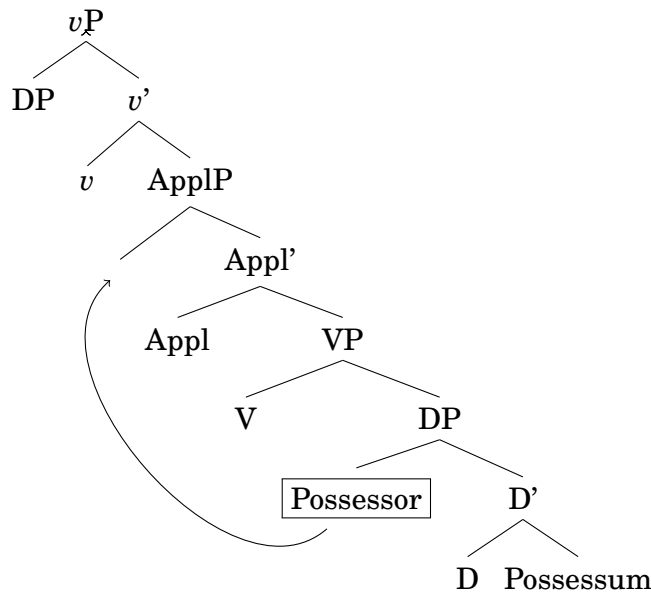'Kibeet made the child jump on/for/on behalf of Cheebeet.'

- The possessor has to be affected. For example, in all of the above examples, speakers rejected the possessor reading in a context where Cheebeet was known to be dead.

- Additionally, possessor readings are impossible with stative verbs, another diagnostic for affectedness (e.g., Tyler 2021).

(20) ɑ:-ŋgen-tʃi:n-i Tʃè:bê:t child
1SG-know-APPL.IPFV-PART Cheebeet child
'I know Cheebeet's child.'

- What the analysis needs to capture:

  - the obligatory presence of the applicative morpheme

  - the restriction to internal arguments

  - the fact that the possessor has an additional thematic role

3.2 The analysis in a nutshell

- I assume that the possessor is base-generated in the DP, where it receives its posssessor thematic role.

  - Since the DP-internal possessive morpheme *-a:p* is not present in external possession constructions, I assume that the language has two distinct possession structures in the DP.

  - In the external possession construction, I assume that the possessor cannot receive case within the DP (see also Landau 1999).

- It then moves to the specifier of a (high) applicative head, where it receives case and an additional thematic role associated with affectedness.

```
                         vP
                    ╱        ╲
                  DP          v'
                          ╱        ╲
                        v          ApplP
                                ╱        ╲
                                       Appl'
                                   ╱         ╲
                                 Appl         VP
                                          ╱        ╲
                                        V           DP
                                             ╱         ╲
                                      [Possessor]       D'
                                                      ╱    ╲
                                                    D    Possessum
```

(21)

4 Why movement?

4.1 A peculiar asymmetry

- Recall that Kipsigis has a dedicated topic position in the left periphery.

- In general, either the IO or the DO can move to this position, irrespective of the thematic role of the IO (and the form of the applicative morpheme).

(22)   IO = Recipient

    a.   **Tʃèːbêːt₁** kó   kà-∅-í-góː-tʃí   Kíbêːt   ___₁ kìtábúːt.
        Cheebeet TOP PST-3-CL2-give-APPL Kibeet.NOM   book
        'Cheebeet, Kibeet gave her a book.'

    b.   **Kìtábʊ̀ː-nì₁** kó   kà-∅-í-góː-tʃí   Kíbêːt   Tʃèːbêːt ___₁.
        book-DEM   TOP PST-3-CL2-give-APPL Kibeet.NOM Cheebeet
        'This book, Kibeet gave to Cheebeet.'

(23)   IO = Benefactive

    a.   **Tʃèːbêːt₁** ko   kà-∅-tém-tʃí   Kíbêːt   ___₁ ímbàr.
        Cheebeet TOP PST-3-plow-APPL Kibeet.NOM   farm
        'Cheebeet, Kibeet plowed a/the farm for her.'

    b.   **ɪmbaraː-nɪ₁** kó   kà-∅-tém-tʃí   Kíbêːt   Tʃèːbêːt ___₁.
        farm-DEM   TOP PST-3-plow-APPL Kibeet.NOM Cheebeet
        'This farm, Kibeet plowed for Cheebeet.'

(24)   IO = Instrument

    a. **Kɪlaːmɪ-nɪ$_1$** kó   kà-∅-sír-ɛ́ːn   Kíbêːt   ___$_1$ párwɛ́ːt.
        pen-DEM   TOP PST-3-write-INSTR Kibeet.NOM   letter
        'This pen, Kibeet wrote the letter with it.'

    b. **Párwàː-nì$_1$** kó   kà-∅-sír-ɛ́ːn   Kíbêːt   kìláːmíːt ___$_1$.
        letter-DEM   TOP PST-3-write-INSTR Kibeet.NOM pen
        'This letter, Kibeet wrote it with a pen.'

(25)   IO = Location (*-tʃi*)

    a. **ajnaː-ni$_1$** kó   kà-∅-wíːr-tʃí   Tʃéːbêːt   ___$_1$ kɔ̀jtá.
        river-DEM TOP PST-3-throw-APPL Cheebeet.NOM   stone
        'This river, Cheebeet threw a stone into it.'

    b. **Kɔ-ɪ$_1$**   kó   kà-∅-wíːr-tʃí   Tʃéːbêːt   ajneːt ___$_1$.
        stone-DEM TOP pst-3-throw-APPL Cheebeet.NOM river
        'This stone, Cheebeet threw into the river.'

(26)   IO = Location (*-ɛːn*)

    a. **Tʃíːgàː-nì$_1$**   kó   ∅-tʃáb-éːn   Kíbêːt   ___$_1$ ɑmitwaːgik.
        kitchen-DEM TOP 3-make-INSTR Kibeet.NOM   food
        'This kitchen, Kibeet is making food in it.'

    b. **ɑmitwaːgi-tʃu$_1$** kó   ∅-tʃáb-éːn   Kíbêːt   tʃí(ː)géːt ___$_1$.
        food-DEM.PL   TOP 3-make-INSTR Kibeet.NOM kitchen
        'This food, Kibeet is making it in the kitchen.'

- This can be easily explained if a noun needs to carry both a [top] and [δ] feature in order to move to SpecCP.

- The same facts hold for relativization.

(27)   IO = Recipient

    a. Ká-á-kéːɾ   **làːkwɛ́ːt$_1$** [ne   kiː-∅-goː-tʃi
        PST.CURR-1SG-see child   REL.SG PST.DIST-3-give-APPL
        Kíbêːt   ___$_1$ **kìtábʊ́ːt**].
        Kibeet.NOM   book
        'I saw the child to whom Kibeet gave a book.'

    b. Ka-a-sɔman   **kìtábʊ́ːt$_1$** [né   kíː-∅-góː-tʃí
        PST.CURR-1SG-read book   REL.SG PST.DIST-3-give-APPL
        Kíbêːt   **làːkwɛ́ːt ___$_1$**].
        Kibeet.NOM child
        'I read the book that Kibeet gave to the child.'

- The only exception to this pattern is found in external possession constructions. In this case, the IO (possessor) can be topicalized, but the DO cannot.

(28) a. **Tʃèːbêːt₁** kó kòː-á-mwé(t)-tʃí ___₁ ŋgɔraɪk.
Cheebeet TOP PST-1SG-wash-APPL clothes
'Cheebeet, I washed her clothes/the clothes for her.'

b. **ŋgɔraɪ-tʃʊ₁** kó kòː-á-mwé(t)-tʃí Tʃèːbêːt ___₁.
clothes-DEM.PL TOP PST-1SG-wash-APPL Cheebeet
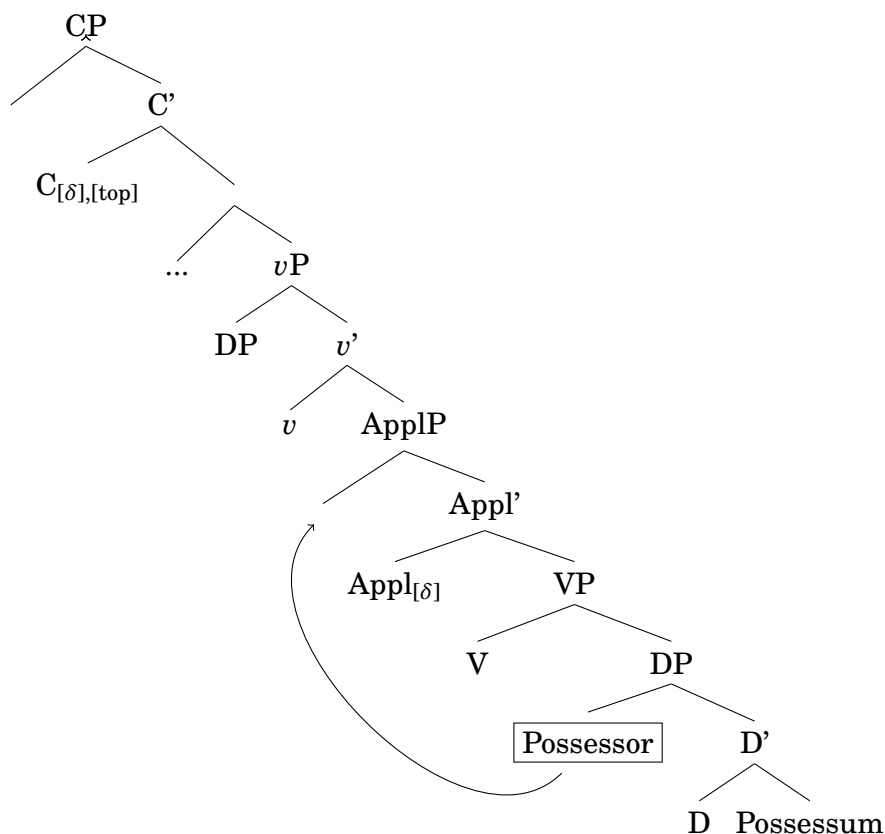'These clothes, I washed them for Cheebeet.'

- The same holds for relativization.

(29) a. ...**làːkwɛ́ːt₁** [né kòː-á-mwé(t)-tʃi ___₁ íŋgɔ̀ráìk].
child REL.SG PST-1SG-wash-APPL clothes
'the child whose clothes I washed/ that I washed clothes for'

b. ...**íŋgɔ̀ráìk₁** [tʃé kòː-á-mwé(t)-tʃi làːkwɛ́ːt ___₁].
clothes REL.PL PST-wash-APPL child
'the clothes that I washed for the child'
'The child's clothes that I washed'

- Unexpected asymmetries in external possession constructions have also been observed in Bantu languages that are otherwise symmetric (e.g., Zulu; Halpert 2021, Zeller 2021).

- This peculiar asymmetry in Kipsigis can be explained if the possessor differs from other IOs in not being base-generated in SpecApplP

  - ... which is exactly what a possessor raising analysis proposes.

4.2 A constraint on remnant movement

- Possessor raising is a clear instance of A movement.

- Recall that topicalization/relativization in Kipsigis have A properties.

- Thus, possessor raising and topicalization/relativization share the feature $[\delta]$, responsible for the A properties.

- Possessor raising creates a remnant DP (=the possessum).

- Movement of the possessum (DO) over the possessor (IO) should then obey well-known constraints on remnant movement.

CP
  C'
    C$_{[\delta],[\text{top}]}$
      ... vP
             DP v'
                   v ApplP
                            Appl'
                          Appl$_{[\delta]}$ VP
                                           V   DP
                                                  Possessor   D'
                                                             D   Possessum
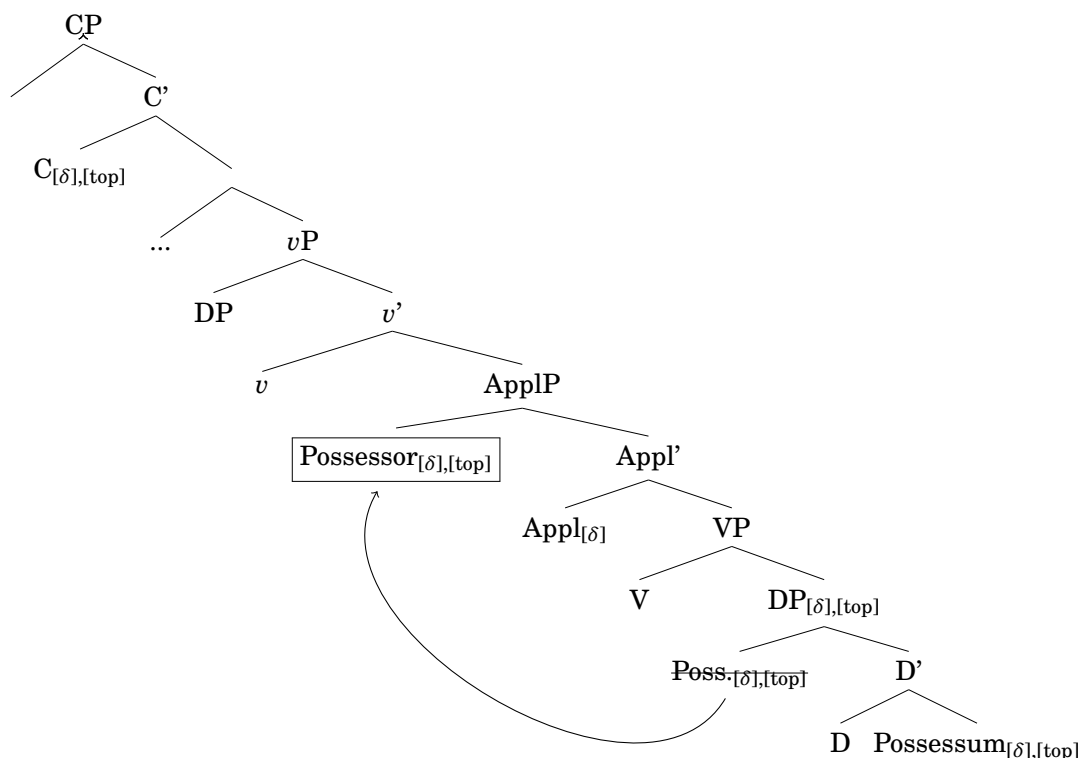
(30)

- The relevant constraint is the following:

  (31)   *The Müller-Takano Generalization* (Müller 1993, 1996, Takano 1994)
         After phrase XP has moved from node α to node ω, a remnant phrase YP
         that dominates α but not ω cannot move to any node c-commanding ω if
         movement of XP and movement of YP are of the same type.

- This constraint rules out movement of the remnant DP containing the possessum
  over the possessor DP if the movement type is of the same type.

- There have been various proposals on how to derive this constraint (see Zompì 2023
  for a recent overview).

  – In the case of Kipsigis, minimality-based accounts can explain the facts if we
    assume that topic features percolate to all DPs contained within a topicalized
    DP.

```
                        CP
                       /\
                        C'
                      /   \
          C_{[δ],[top]}    \
                  /\        \
                ...         vP
                           /  \
                         DP    v'
                              /  \
                             v    ApplP
                                 /    \
                   Possessor_{[δ],[top]}  Appl'
                                        /    \
                                  Appl_{[δ]}   VP
                                             /   \
                                            V    DP_{[δ],[top]}
                                                 /        \
                                    Poss._{[δ],[top]}      D'
                                                          /  \
                                                         D   Possessum_{[δ],[top]}
```

(32)

5 Conclusion

- In this talk, I argued that external possession in Kipsigis is best analyzed in terms of possessor raising.

    – Kipsigis is added to a list of languages in which movement is involved in external possession constructions.

- The interaction of possessor raising and topicalization/relativization highlights that constraints on remnant movement (such as the Müller-Takano generalization) can sometimes be used as a diagnostic for movement in external possession constructions.

- Some open questions for Kipsigis:

    – does possessor raising interact with other types of movement in the language (e.g., scrambling as in Bossi & Diercks 2019)?

    – what is the exact nature of the mixed position in the left periphery and how are we to account for the differences from Dinka?

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