A non-uniform analysis of external possession in Western Muskogean

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1 Introduction

Western Muskogean languages:

• Choctaw
  – Spoken in Mississippi and Oklahoma (<10,000 speakers, according to Ethnologue).
  – Novel data comes from fieldwork in several Mississippi communities since 2016.

• Chickasaw:
  – Spoken in Oklahoma (<75 native speakers)
  – All data from existing literature, in particular: Munro and Will mond (1994); Munro (1999, 2016).

How to possess an intransitive subject

(1) Possessor remains inside subject

John imoofi ya abiikah.
[John im-o-foi-yat] abiika-h
[John 3.DAT-dog-NOM] be.sick-TNS
‘John’s dog is sick.’

(2) Possessor becomes the new subject (2 variants)

a. John at imoofi abiikah.
   John-at im-ofi abiika-h ← DAT agreement on N
   John-NOM 3.DAT-dog be.sick-TNS
   ‘John’s dog is sick.’

b. John at ofi imabiikah.
   John-at ofi im-abiika-h ← DAT agreement on V
   John-NOM dog 3.DAT-be.sick-TNS
   ‘John’s dog is sick.’

• These external possessors bear nominative case, and they may be cross-referenced like:
  – an internal possessor (2a)
  – an oblique argument of the verb (2b).

Preview of the talk

• The two morphological variants of external possession have different syntactic and semantic properties.
• ‘N-attaching’ EP (2a) is compatible with any intransitive verb
• ‘V-attaching’ EP (2b) is more restricted, with the possessor behaving like other applied dative subjects.
• A number of differences between Choctaw and Chickasaw are flagged.

1. Source: https://www.chickasaw.net/Our-Nation/Culture/Language.aspx
2. Underlining on vowels indicates nasalization. I have adopted a slightly modified version of Broadwell’s (1990, 2006) orthography. The main difference is that I do not assume that all nouns end in a consonant, so I do not mark unpronounced glottal stops in word-final positions.
Roadmap:

§2. Background
§3. Proposal
§4. The (non-)subjecthood of the possessee
§5. Differences in compatible possessors
§6. Differences in compatible verbs
§7. Fleshing out the analyses
§8. Conclusion

2 Background

Everything in this section concerns Choctaw, but the relevant facts are the same in Chickasaw.

2.1 General background

Complex verbal morphology:

(3) Issataalowaachaachimomaho?
   is-sa-talowa-ch-aachij-moma-h-o
   2SG.ERG-1SG.ABS-sing-CAUS-FUT-still-TNS-Q
   ‘Are you still going to make me sing?’

Pervasive argument-drop:

(4) Michiichih.
   michi-chi-h
   do-CAUS-TNS
   ‘She made him do it.’

Rigid SOV order, NOM/ACC case:

(5) Imaabachiyat allama afaamatok.
   imaabachi-yat alla-m-a afaama-tok
   teacher-NOM kid-DEM-ACC meet-PST
   ‘The teacher met that kid.’

2.2 Agreement

Verbal agreement picks out oblique (DAT) and theme (ABS) arguments:

(6) Anaakoosh botta amihaksitok.
   anaak-oosh botta am-ihaksi-tok
   LFOC-NOM flour 1SG.DAT-forget-PST
   ‘I forgot the flour.’

(7) Anaakoosh akka sattolatok.
   anaak-oosh akka sa-ttola-tok
   LFOC-NOM down 1SG.ABS-fall-PST
   ‘I fell.’

→ Agreement also picks out agentive (ERG) arguments (cf. (3)) but I ignore those for now.

The DAT and ABS agreement morphemes also show up on nouns, where they agree with the possessor:

(8) ABS agrees with...

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>inalienable possessor</th>
<th>theme</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>sa-shki ‘my mother’</td>
<td>si-abiika ‘I am sick’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>pi-shki ‘our mother’</td>
<td>pi-abiika ‘we are sick’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>hapi-shki ‘all of us’s mother’</td>
<td>hapi-abiika ‘we all are sick’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>chi-shki ‘your mother’</td>
<td>chi-abiika ‘you are sick’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>hachi-shki ‘y’all’s mother’</td>
<td>hachi-abiika ‘y’all are sick’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ø-ishki ‘her mother’</td>
<td>Ø-abiika ‘she is sick’</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
2.3 External Possession

External possession of subjects comes in two variants. In both, the external possessor is marked as nominative:

- **N-attaching**: external possessor controls DAT agreement on N
  
  → As though the possessor was an internal possessor.

(10) *John at imofi abiikah.*
  
  John-at im-ofi abiika-h
  
  John-NOM 3.DAT-dog be.sick-TNS
  
  ‘John’s dog is sick.’

- **V-attaching**: external possessor controls DAT agreement on V
  
  → As though the possessor was an oblique argument of the verb.

(11) *John at ofi imabiikah.*
  
  John-at ofi im-abiika-h
  
  John-NOM dog 3.DAT-be.sick-TNS
  
  ‘John’s dog is sick.’

- N.B. Both variants are compatible only with intransitive verbs.

External possession of objects comes in just one variant: ‘V-attaching’:

(12) a. *Jimmy ishitwashóoha imoppaniilitok.*
  
  Jimmy ishitwashóoha im-oppani-li-tok
  
  Jimmy toy 3.DAT-break-1SG.ERG-PST
  
  ‘I broke Jimmy’s toy.’

b. *Katie at holisso chito ahókhilh.*
  
  Katie-at pro holisso chito a-hókhli-h
  
  Katie-NOM paper big 1SG.DAT-hold.NG-TNS
  
  ‘Katie is holding my book.’

- The existence of the two variants has been noted (Broadwell 1990, 2006 on Choctaw; Munro and Gordon 1982; Munro and Willmond 1994; Munro 1999, 2016 on Chickasaw).

- But the difference between the two variants has not been explored in Choctaw (though it has in Chickasaw, to an extent).

3 Proposal

N-attaching EP and V-attaching EP are not surface morphological variants of the same syntactic structure: they realize different syntactic structures!
N-attaching EP:

• The possessor starts out as an **internal** possessor. It then moves out and receives exceptional NOM case.

(13)  
\[
\text{John-at} \mid \text{im-ofi} \mid \text{abiika-h} \\
\text{John-NOM} \quad 3.\text{DAT-dog} \quad \text{be.sick-TNS}
\]

‘John’s dog is sick.’

→ N.B. This is very similar to Broadwell’s (2006) analysis for all external possession of subjects.

V-attaching EP:

• ‘External possessor’ is just one of several available interpretations for **optional dative arguments** (subject or object).

(14) Adding a DAT subject

a. *Amofosik ittolatok.*  
am-ofosik ittola-tok  
1SG.DAT-puppy fall-PST  
‘My puppy fell.’

b. *Chishnakooch amofosik chimittolatok.*  
chishnak-oosh am-ofosik chim-ittola-tok  
you.FOC-NOM 1SG.DAT-puppy 2SG.DAT-fall-PST  
‘You dropped my puppy.’ (DAT subj = experiencer)

→ Other possible interpretations of DAT subjects are **predicative possessor** and **indirect causer**  
(Munro 1999; Broadwell 2006; Tyler 2018 in prep).

(15) Adding a DAT object

a. *Taчи hopoonilitok.*  
tachi hopooni-li-tok  
corn cook-1SG.ERG-PST  
‘I cooked the corn.’

b. *Amohooyo ya taчи hopoonilitok.*  
am-oohooy-o ya tachi hopooni-li-tok  
1SG.DAT-woman-ACC corn 3.DAT-cook-1SG.ERG-PST  
‘I cooked the corn for my wife.’

→ See Appendix A for further syntactic similarities between V-attaching EP and DAT-argument constructions.

In summary:

• In N-attaching EP, the possessor is an **internal** possessor that ‘escaped’.

• In V-attaching EP, the possessor is an **oblique argument of the verb**.

The two kinds of EP show different behavior and restrictions:

§4. A different argument can be identified as the **subject** in each.

§5. They are compatible with different kinds of **possession relations**.

§6. They are compatible with different kinds of **verbs**.
4 The (non-)subjecthood of the possessee

A subjecthood test in Choctaw:

- Plural subjects may associate with the pre-verbal morpheme okl(ah) [Broadwell 2006 Tyler in press-b].

(16) a. Alla at akaka oklíkpotok.
alla-at akaka okl= ñk-po-tok
child-NOM chicken PL= NEG-eat.N-PST
‘The kids didn’t eat the chicken.’

b. Oklah hapinokshoopat tahah.
oklah hapi-nokshoopa-t tahah.
PL 1PL.ABS-scared-PRT finish-TNS
‘We’re done being scared.’

- ...but plural objects may not associate with okl(ah).

(17) ohooyo-m-a (*oklah) pisá-li-tok
woman-DEM-ACC (*PL) see.NG-1SG.ERG-PST
‘I saw that woman/*those women.’

In the two EP constructions, which argument does oklah associate with?

- V-attaching EP: okl(ah) associates with the possessor.

(18) Alikchiyat ofi oklimabiikah.
alíkchi-yat ofi okl= im-abiika-h
doctor-NOM dog PL= 3.DAT-be.sick-TNS
‘The doctors’ dog is sick’ (*‘The doctor’s dogs are sick’)

- N-attaching EP: okl(ah) associates with the possessee (%).

(19) John at imoofi oklah abiikah.
John-at im-ofi oklah abiika-h
John-NOM 3.DAT-dog PL be.sick-TNS
‘John’s dogs are sick.’

Upshot: the possessee behaves like a subject only in N-attaching EP.

Summary:

<table>
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<tr>
<th>V-attaching EP</th>
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<tr>
<td>Possessee is subject?</td>
<td>N</td>
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</table>

A similar test in Chickasaw?

Verbal prefix hoo- signals that the subject is 3rd-person plural (Munro 1999). In V-attaching EP, hoo- indicates the plurality of the possessor, parallel to okl(ah) in Choctaw:

(20) a. Ihoo-at foshi’-at hoo-in-taloowa.
woman-NOM bird-NOM PL-3.DAT-sing
‘The women’s bird is singing.’ (*‘The woman’s birds are singing.’)

(b) Hattak-at aboh-at hoo-j-litiha.
man-NOM house-NOM PL-3.DAT-dirty
‘The men’s houses is/are dirty.’

(Chickasaw. Carden et al. 1982)

6. There is a caveat, which is that okl(ah) can associate with 1st and 2nd-person objects. See [Tyler in press-b] for discussion of the conditions on okl(ah)-licensing.

7. Some speakers do not allow oklah to appear before a verb in an possessor raising sentence, under any reading.
It seems to be the case that *hoo* associates with the possessee in N-attaching EP, though I could find just one example:

(21) Jan-at in-chipot-at *hoo*-okchää.
    Jan-NOM 3.DAT-child-NOM *hoo*-alive
    ‘Jan’s children are alive.’ [Chickasaw, Carden et al. 1982]

If this example is representative, then Chickasaw *hoo*- interacts with EP in the same way as Choctaw *okl(ah)*.

5 Differences in compatible possessors

In this section:

§5.1. V-attaching EP requires inalienable possessors

§5.2. V-attaching EP requires animate possessors

5.1 Inalienable possessors

Recall that inalienable possessors control ABS agreement on N, rather than DAT agreement.

- N-attaching EP is compatible with inalienable possessors:

(22) a. *Chokfimat haksobis falaayah.*
    chokfi-m-at haksobis falaaya-h
    rabbit-DEM-NOM ear long-TNS
    ‘That rabbit has long ears.’

b. *Kiiyo, chishnakoosh chinoshkoboyat chitoh.*
    kiiyo, chishnak-oosh chinoshkoba-yat chito-h
    no you.FOC-NOM 2SG.ABS-head-NOM big-TNS
    ‘No, you are the one with the big head.’

c. Anakoot sa-shkin-at lakna.
    1SG.NOM 1SG.ABS-eye-NOM be.brown
    ‘My eyes are brown.’ [Chickasaw, Munro 1999:257]

- V-attaching EP is incompatible with inalienable possessors:

(23) a. *ibbak sa/a-basha-h
    hand 1SG.ABS/1SG.DAT-be.cut-TNS
    (‘My hand is cut.’) (EP of subject)

b. *shakba sa/a-kobaffi-tok
    arm 1SG.ABS/1SG.DAT-break-PST
    (‘She broke my arm.’) (EP of object)

5.2 Inanimate possessors

N-attaching EP is compatible with inanimate possessors:

(25) *Chokkamat imokkisa oppoloh.*
    chokka-m-at im-okkisa oppolo-h
    house-DEM-NOM 3.DAT-door broken-TNS
    ‘The house’s door is broken.’ [Davies 1986:46]

The speakers I consulted rejected sentences like this.

Davies (1986) reports that V-attaching EP is compatible with inalienable body parts terms in Choctaw (though he states it is still incompatible with kinship terms):

(24) *Iyyi-t a-hottopa-h.
    leg-NOM 1SG.DAT-hurt-TNS
    ‘My leg hurts.’ [Davies 1986:46]

Davies (1984) documents a construction in which a body part has its inalienable possessor simultaneously controlling ABS agreement on both the body part noun and the verb. The relationship between this construction and the EP constructions discussed in this paper is not clear, and the speakers of Mississippi Choctaw I consulted did not readily accept these examples. Martin (1999) documents a similar construction in the Eastern Muskogean language Creek.
V-attaching EP is **incompatible** with inanimate possessors.

(26) a. *chokka-m-at okkisa im-oppolo-h house-DEM-NOM door 3.DAT-broken-TNS
   ('The house’s door is broken.') (EP of subject)

b. *chokka aapisa i-kooli-li-tok. house window 3.DAT-smash.1SG.ERG-PST
   ('I smashed the house’s windows.') (EP of object)

N.B. **Internal possessors** may be inanimate—we would expect this if N-attaching EP is built off an internal possession structure:

    ‘The house’s windows smashed.’

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<tr>
<td>Munro (1999) Offers this Chickasaw sentence, with an inanimate subject and a possessee which typically has inalienable possessors:</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(28) Aaimp-aat iyy-aat (im)-oshta. table-NOM leg-NOM 3.DAT-be.four
   ‘The table has four legs.’ (Chickasaw, Munro 1999:286)

I am unsure of the acceptability of this sentence in Choctaw.

9. A number of the sentences employed here to illustrate that V-attaching EP is unacceptable, such as (26a), have irrelevant acceptable readings in which the **dat** agreement on the verb associates with the object, rather than the subject. For (26a), for example, this yields “the house is broken for the door”.

Upshot: V-attaching EP imposes restrictions on the possessor that are absent from N-attaching EP.

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6 Differences in compatible verbs

All intransitive verbs are compatible with N-attaching EP. Only a subset of them admit V-attaching EP.

In this section:

6.1. **canonical unergative verbs**

6.2. **motion verbs**

6.3. verbs that predicate **permanent properties** of their subject

6.4. **psych verbs**

- As before, all data is from contemporary Mississippi Choctaw. I flag differences between my findings and the literature where they arise.

6.1 Unergatives

Unergative verbs permit N-attaching EP:

(29) a. Mary at imalla taloowatok.
   Mary-at im-alla taloowa-tok
   Mary-NOM 3.DAT-child sing-PST
   ‘Mary’s child sang.’
b. *Alikchi yat imoofi wohwatok.
alikchi-yat im-ofi wohwa-tok
doctor-NOM 3.DAT-dog bark-PST
‘The doctor’s dog barked.’

Unergative verbs reject V-attaching EP:

(30) a. *Mary-at alla ʒ-taloowa-tok
Mary-NOM child 3.DAT-sing-PST
(‘Mary’s child sang.’)

b. *alikchi-yat ofi ʒ-wohwa-tok
doctor-NOM dog 3.DAT-bark-PST
(‘The doctor’s dog barked.’)

• N.B. The relationship between unergativity and external possession has
been debated (Baker 1988; Broadwell 2006).
  → Problem 1: N/V-attaching EP had not been considered separate.
  → Problem 2: no consensus on how to diagnose unergativity/unaccusativity

Variation alert!

Chickasaw allows V-attaching EP with unergatives:

(31) a. Jan-at foshi’-at in-taloowa.
Jan-NOM bird-NOM 3.DAT-sing
‘Jan’s bird is singing.’ (Chickasaw, Munro 1999:254)

b. Jan-at ofi’-at im-impaa.
Jan-NOM dog-NOM 3.DAT-eat
‘Jan’s dog is eating.’ (Chickasaw, Broadwell 1997)

6.2 Motion verbs

Motion verbs are compatible with N-attaching EP:

(32) Alikchiyat imoofi baliilitok.
alikchi-yat im-ofi baliili-tok
doctor-NOM 3.DAT-dog run-PST
‘The doctor’s dog ran.’

Motion verbs reject V-attaching EP:

(33) *alikchi-yat ofi ʒ-baliili-tok
doctor-NOM dog 3.DAT-run-PST
(‘The doctor’s dog ran.’)

• This is not a uniformly-shared judgment, even among Choctaw speakers:

Variation alert!

In Chickasaw, and other varieties of Choctaw, at least some motion verbs
are compatible with V-attaching EP:

(34) a. Pam-at katos-at ʒ-baliili-h.
Pam-NOM cat-NOM 3.DAT-run-TNS
‘Pam’s cat is running.’ (Choctaw, Broadwell 2006:307)

b. Jan-at ofi-at ʒ-yopi.
Jan-NOM dog-NOM 3.DAT-swim
‘Pam’s dog is swimming.’ (Chickasaw, Carden et al. 1982)
  \[ \rightarrow \text{But are motion verbs really unergative?} \]
• Broadwell relies on the agreement-morphology diagnostic from Davies (1981, 1986).
  \[ \rightarrow \text{Munro and Gordon (1982) and Tyler (in press-a, in prep) argue that agreement-morphology is not a good guide to unergativity/unaccusativity (see also Broadwell 1988).} \]
• So: motion verbs are not necessarily unergative.

6.3 Verbs that predicate permanent properties

Verbs that predicate permanent properties of their subject (possibly: individual-level predicates) allow N-attaching EP:

(35) a. \textit{Hattak mat ilokka lobo chitoh.} \quad \textit{hattak-m-at il-lokka lobo chito-h} \quad \textit{man-DEM-NOM 3.DAT-shirt be.big-TNS} \quad \textit{‘That man’s shirt is big.’}

b. \textit{Ohooyo yat imoofi hommah.} \quad \textit{ohooyo-yat im-ofi homma-h} \quad \textit{woman-NOM 3.DAT-dog be.red-TNS} \quad \textit{‘The woman’s dog is red.’}

These verbs reject V-attaching EP:

(36) a. *\textit{hattak-m-at ilokka lobo i-chito-h} \quad \textit{man-DEM-NOM shirt 3.DAT-be.big-TNS} \quad \textit{‘That man’s shirt is big.’}

b. *\textit{ohooyo-yat ofi i-homma-h} \quad \textit{woman-NOM dog 3.DAT-be.red-TNS} \quad \textit{‘The woman’s dog is red.’}

Variation alert!

Something like this restriction holds in Chickasaw. Verbs denoting colors reject V-attaching EP:

(37) Larry-at ishkin *(i-)lakna. \quad \textit{Larry-NOM eye *(3.DAT-)be.brown} \quad \textit{‘Larry has brown eyes.’} \quad \textit{(Chickasaw, adapted from Munro and Gordon 1982:95)}

But, verbs denoting other permanent properties can appear with V-attaching EP:

(38) a. Doris-at i-hattak-at in-chaaha-hootakot ayoppa. \quad \textit{Doris-NOM 3.DAT-man-NOM 3.DAT-be.tall-because.ss happy} \quad \textit{‘Because Doris’s husband is tall, she is happy.’} \quad \textit{(Chickasaw, Munro and Gordon 1982:100)}

b. Chipot-at pon-chokma’si. \quad \textit{child-NOM 1PL.DAT-be.pretty} \quad \textit{‘Our children are pretty.’} \quad \textit{(Chickasaw, Carden et al. 1982)}

10. Motion verbs pattern like unaccusatives in at least one respect: they display number allomorphy (Broadwell 1988).
6.4 Psych verbs

Psych verbs permit N-attaching EP:

(39) *John at inoofi nokshoopah.
    John-AT 3-DAT-dog be.scared-TNS
    ‘John’s dog is scared.’

Psych verbs reject V-attaching EP (see also Broadwell 2006:308):

(40) a. *John-at alla i-nokshoopah
    John-AT child 3-DAT-be.scared-TNS
    (‘John’s kid is scared.’)

    b. *alla a-hoofahya-h
       child 1SG.DAT-be.ashamed-TNS
       (‘My kid is ashamed.’)

Upshot: V-attaching EP imposes restrictions on the verb that are absent from N-attaching EP.

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7 Fleshing out the analyses

Recall the proposal:

- N-attaching EP involves an ‘escaping’ internal possessor.
- V-attaching EP is simply one way of interpreting an applied dative argument.

7.1 N-attaching EP

Repeated from (13):

(41) John-at [im-ofi] abiika-h
    John-AT 3-DAT-dog be.sick-TNS
    (‘John’s dog is sick.’)

- This explains why N-attaching EP is so unrestricted:
  → *Any possible internal possessor can be moved out.
  → The movement operation doesn’t care about the thematic properties of the predicate (cf. Deal 2013, 2017 on similarities to raising).

7.2 V-attaching EP

I have proposed that ‘external possessor’ is one possible interpretation of an optional dative argument.

Syntactic assumptions:

- Agents/external arguments are introduced as the specifier of Voice (Kratzer 1996).
- The highest argument raises to the subject position Spec-TP.
- Optional dative arguments are introduced in high applicative phrases (Pylkkänen 2008).
EP of object:

(42) a. *Tasi̱bomat hina chanálli amoppanitok.*
    
    tasi̱bo-m-at  hina chanálli  am-oppani-tok
    crazy-DEM-NOM  car  1SG.DAT-break-PST
    'The crazy fool crashed my car.'
    
    b. 

    \[ \begin{array}{c}
    \text{TP} \\
    \text{NP} \\
    \text{VoiceP} \\
    \text{tNP} \\
    \text{ApplP} \\
    \text{VP} \\
    \text{NP} \\
    \text{pro}_{1SG} \\
    \text{hina chanálli} \\
    \text{car} \\
    \end{array} \]

    \[ \begin{array}{c}
    \text{tNP} \\
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    \text{TP} \\
    \text{NP} \\
    \text{John-at} \\
    \text{John-NOM} \\
    \text{NP} \\
    \text{ofi} \\
    \text{abiika} \\
    \text{dog} \\
    \text{be.sick} \\
    \text{Appl} \\
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    \[ \begin{array}{c}
    \text{im-} \\
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    \text{TNS} \\
    \text{VP} \\
    \text{NP} \\
    \text{hina chanálli} \\
    \text{car} \\
    \text{break} \\
    \text{V} \\
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    \text{pro}_{1SG} \\
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    \text{ApplP} \\
    \text{VoiceP} \\
    \end{array} \]

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    \text{NP} \\
    \text{John-at} \\
    \text{John-NOM} \\
    \text{NP} \\
    \text{ofi} \\
    \text{abiika} \\
    \text{dog} \\
    \text{be.sick} \\
    \end{array} \]

    \[ \begin{array}{c}
    \text{Voice} \\
    \text{tNP} \\
    \text{-tok} \\
    \text{PST} \\
    \text{ApplP} \\
    \text{T} \\
    \text{TP} \\
    \text{NP} \\
    \text{John-at} \\
    \text{John-NOM} \\
    \text{NP} \\
    \text{ofi} \\
    \text{abiika} \\
    \text{dog} \\
    \text{be.sick} \\
    \text{Appl} \\
    \end{array} \]

    \[ \begin{array}{c}
    \text{im-} \\
    \text{3.DAT-} \\
    \text{TNS} \\
    \text{VP} \\
    \text{NP} \\
    \text{hina chanálli} \\
    \text{car} \\
    \text{break} \\
    \text{V} \\
    \text{NP} \\
    \text{pro}_{1SG} \\
    \text{Voice} \\
    \text{ApplP} \\
    \text{VoiceP} \\
    \end{array} \]

    \[ \begin{array}{c}
    \text{NP} \\
    \text{tasíbo-m-at} \\
    \text{crazy-DEM-NOM} \\
    \text{NP} \\
    \text{John-at} \\
    \text{John-NOM} \\
    \text{NP} \\
    \text{ofi} \\
    \text{abiika} \\
    \text{dog} \\
    \text{be.sick} \\
    \text{Appl} \\
    \end{array} \]

    \[ \begin{array}{c}
    \text{im-} \\
    \text{3.DAT-} \\
    \text{TNS} \\
    \text{VP} \\
    \text{NP} \\
    \text{hina chanálli} \\
    \text{car} \\
    \text{break} \\
    \text{V} \\
    \text{NP} \\
    \text{pro}_{1SG} \\
    \text{Voice} \\
    \text{ApplP} \\
    \text{VoiceP} \\
    \end{array} \]

    \[ \begin{array}{c}
    \text{NP} \\
    \text{tasíbo-m-at} \\
    \text{crazy-DEM-NOM} \\
    \text{NP} \\
    \text{John-at} \\
    \text{John-NOM} \\
    \text{NP} \\
    \text{ofi} \\
    \text{abiika} \\
    \text{dog} \\
    \text{be.sick} \\
    \text{Appl} \\
    \end{array} \]

    → The dative/applied argument is the highest argument and moves to the subject position.

EP of subject:

(43) a. *John at ofi imabiikah.*
    
    John-at  ofi  im-abiika-h
    John-NOM  dog  3.DAT-be.sick-TNS
    'John's dog is sick.'
    
    b. 

    \[ \begin{array}{c}
    \text{TP} \\
    \text{NP} \\
    \text{John-at} \\
    \text{John-NOM} \\
    \text{NP} \\
    \text{ofi} \\
    \text{abiika} \\
    \text{dog} \\
    \text{be.sick} \\
    \end{array} \]

    \[ \begin{array}{c}
    \text{im-} \\
    \text{3.DAT-} \\
    \text{TNS} \\
    \text{VP} \\
    \text{NP} \\
    \text{hina chanálli} \\
    \text{car} \\
    \text{break} \\
    \text{V} \\
    \text{NP} \\
    \text{pro}_{1SG} \\
    \text{Voice} \\
    \text{ApplP} \\
    \text{VoiceP} \\
    \end{array} \]

    \[ \begin{array}{c}
    \text{NP} \\
    \text{tasíbo-m-at} \\
    \text{crazy-DEM-NOM} \\
    \text{NP} \\
    \text{John-at} \\
    \text{John-NOM} \\
    \text{NP} \\
    \text{ofi} \\
    \text{abiika} \\
    \text{dog} \\
    \text{be.sick} \\
    \text{Appl} \\
    \end{array} \]

    \[ \begin{array}{c}
    \text{im-} \\
    \text{3.DAT-} \\
    \text{TNS} \\
    \text{VP} \\
    \text{NP} \\
    \text{hina chanálli} \\
    \text{car} \\
    \text{break} \\
    \text{V} \\
    \text{NP} \\
    \text{pro}_{1SG} \\
    \text{Voice} \\
    \text{ApplP} \\
    \text{VoiceP} \\
    \end{array} \]

    \[ \begin{array}{c}
    \text{NP} \\
    \text{tasíbo-m-at} \\
    \text{crazy-DEM-NOM} \\
    \text{NP} \\
    \text{John-at} \\
    \text{John-NOM} \\
    \text{NP} \\
    \text{ofi} \\
    \text{abiika} \\
    \text{dog} \\
    \text{be.sick} \\
    \text{Appl} \\
    \end{array} \]

    → The dative/applied argument is the highest argument and moves to the subject position.

Benefits of the high ApplP approach to V-attaching external possession (see also Cuervo 2003; Kallulli 2006; Bosse et al. 2012; Wood and Marantz 2017):

- Subject and object EP are derived from the same underlying syntactic structure—a high applicative.
- The ban on unergatives falls out.\[11\]
- The restriction against certain verb classes (psych, permanent-property, motion) can be encoded as a selectional restriction.
- We can understand the animacy condition: a similar condition holds on applied arguments in many languages (cf. Pesetsky 1996; Adger and Harbour 2007; Torrego 2010).

11. How do we account for Chickasaw, which allows unergatives with V-attaching EP? One possibility would be to claim that unergative subjects in Chickasaw may sit below the high applicative (cf. Grestenberger 2014; Tollan 2018 on the ‘lowness’ of unergative subjects).
8 Conclusion

- The two profiles of external possession in Western Muskogean are not just morphological variants.
- V-attaching EP is simply one of several possible interpretations of ‘optional dative argument’ constructions.
- N-attaching EP involves actual movement (true ‘possessor raising’) out of a subject.

Open questions:
- Is the possessor in V-attaching EP subject to an affectedness condition? (Appendix B).
- Do the two variants of EP have different information structural properties? (cf. Munro and Gordon 1982)
- Why is N-attaching EP restricted to intransitive subjects?

Acknowledgements

Huge thanks are due to the Choctaw speakers who spent time sharing their language with me. In particular: Chris Chickaway, Shayla Chickaway, Pam Smith, Deborah Tubby, Buck Willis and Darlene Willis. Thanks also to the Language Program, the Culture Committee, and the Office of the Chief at the Mississippi Band of Choctaw Indians.

Thanks to Jim Wood, Aaron Broadwell, Jack Martin, Raffaella Zanuttini and audiences at WSCLA 23, WCCFL 34 and the University of Florida.

The research was supported by a Dissertation Research Grant from the Yale MacMillan Center.

References


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Appendix A: syntactic properties of dative-argument constructions

I have proposed that the external possessor in V-attaching EP is a regular optional dative argument.

Dative subjects

Subject EPs share some syntactic properties in common with other dative subjects:

- Optional nominative case on object/theme:

  \[ kátos-(at) \] am-illi-h
cat-(NOM) 1SG.DAT-die-TNS
  ‘My cat died.’

  \[ a-hina chanálli-(yat) \] am-aayiska-tok
  1SG.Poss-car-(NOM) 1SG.DAT-fixed-PST
  ‘I got my car fixed.’

  \[ tówwa-(yat) \] am-ittola-tok
  ball-(NOM) 1SG.DAT-fall-PST
  ‘I dropped the ball.’

- Incompatibility with unergative predicates:

  \[ Shayla-at im-alla i-hoponi-tok \]
  Shayla-NOM 3.DAT-child 3.DAT-cook-PST
  ‘Shayla cooked for her kid.’

  \[ Shayla got her kid to cook. \] *indirect causer reading

  \[ Shayla had her kid cook (for her). \] *experiencer reading

- Theme cannot associate with okl(ah):

  \[ ofi-yat (*okl=) am-asha-h \]
  dog-NOM (*PL) 1SG.DAT-be-TNS
  ‘I have a lot of dogs.’

  \[ kátos alhiiha-t (*okl=) im-ittola-tok \]
  cat PL-NOM (*PL) 3.DAT-fall-PST
  ‘She dropped the cats.’

  \[ Shayla cooked for her kid. \]
Dative objects

Both object EPs and other dative objects are freely re-orderable in the middlefield:

(48) a. Hattak-m-at Suzie lokashto i¯-hilaffi-tok.
    man-DEM-NOM Suzie coat 3.DAT-tear-PST
    ‘That man tore Suzie’s coat.’
    ‘That man tore the coat for Suzie.’
b. Hattak-m-at lokashto Suzie i¯-hilaffi-tok.
    man-DEM-NOM coat Suzie 3.DAT-tear-PST
    ‘That man tore Suzie’s coat.’
    ‘That man tore the coat for Suzie.’

Appendix B: An affectedness condition in V-attaching EP?

  - Although this is not true of all external possession (Aissen 1979; Deal 2013).

Choctaw shows conflicting evidence:

- V-attaching EP is incompatible with many verbs that would not generally affect the possessor of the object, e.g. all perception verbs.
  - On the other hand, incompatibility between V-attaching EP and particular verbs is often idiosyncratic and not obviously related to affectedness.

- An affectedness condition could explain the animacy condition and the incompatibility with permanent-state predicates.
  - On the other hand, speakers are, to varying degrees, OK with dead external possessors!

(49) a. Bill-at illi-tok achiiba-h hi-tok-ø anoti
    Bill-NOM die-PST long.time-TNS and-PST-DS now
    chokka-yaash i-lowa-t taha-h,
    house-FOC.NOM 3.DAT-burn-PTCP finish-TNS
    ‘Bill died a while ago, and now his house has burned down.’
b. A-kátos-at illi-tok achiiba-t taha-h, anoti
    1SG.DAT-cat-NOM die-PST long.time-PTCP finish-TNS now
    himmak-å ishitwashóóha-t im-oppolo-h.
    now-ACC toy-NOM 3.DAT-break-TNS
    ‘My cat died a while ago but just now its toy broke.’
    Speaker comment: “You’re keeping the cat with you ... you’re talking like he’s still there.”

Variation?

Munro (1984) provides the following Choctaw examples showing that idiomatic interpretation is maintained across internal possession and V-attaching EP:

    Anglo 3.DAT-bean-ACC eat-1SG.ERG-PST
    ‘I ate the green peas.’ (lit. ‘I ate the white man’s beans.’)
    Anglo-ACC bean 3.DAT-eat-1SG.ERG-PST
    ‘I ate the green peas.’ (lit. ‘I ate the white man’s beans.’)

This argues against an affectedness condition on the external possessor in this variety.
Appendix C: Miscellaneous points of variation

- Pro-drop of possessee in V-attaching EP (Choctaw OK; Chickasaw *):

  (51) a. *Jan-at im-illi-tok.
     Jan-NOM 3.DAT-die-PST
     ‘Jan’s died.’ (Chickasaw, Munro 1999:272)

  b. John at hokchafoochit imillitok.
     John-at hokchafo-chi-t im-illi-tok
     ‘John’s died when he starved it.’ (Choctaw)

- Iterability in N-attaching EP (Chickasaw OK; Choctaw ?/*)

  (52) a. Jan-at in-kan-aat im-ofi’-at iyy-aat
     Jan-NOM 3.DAT-friend-NOM 3.DAT-dog-NOM leg-NOM
     hishi’-at ibiitop-at lowa-tok.
     hair-NOM end-NOM burn-PERF
     ‘The ends of the hairs on Jan’s friend’s dog’s legs are burnt.’
     (Chickasaw, Munro 1999:268)

  b. *káta-shi [t₁ im-alla-yat] [tₖ i-chokfi]
     who-NOM 3.DAT-child-NOM 3.DAT-rabbit
     abiika-h
     be.sick-TNS
     (‘Whose kid’s rabbit got sick?’) (Choctaw)