Impoverishment in the Hungarian Possessive DP

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Basic Hungarian Possessive DP Facts

In Hungarian possessive DPs, the possessor appears after the determiner and the possessum has a possessive suffix that agrees with the possessor in person and number:

1. a. az   én   kalap-om   d. a   mi   kalap-unk
        the 1SG.NOM hat-POSS.1SG   the 1PL.NOM   hat-POSS.1PL
        my hat   *our hat*

    b. a   te   kalap-od   e. a   ti   kalap-otok.
        the 2SG.NOM hat-POSS.1SG   the 2PL.NOM   hat-POSS.2PL
        your hat   *your hat*

Plurality of the *possessum* is marked between the possessive morpheme and the agreement morpeme:

2. a. az   én   kalap-ja-i-m   b. a   mi   kalap-ja-i-nk
        the 1SG.NOM hat-POSS-PL-1SG   the 1PL.NOM hat-POSS-PL-1PL
        my hats   *our hats*

Hungarian is a *pro*-drop language- all pronouns in (1) and (2) may be dropped; not dropping them results in an emphatic reading. [1]

Some Complications

Third person plural lexical possessors and pronominal possessors behave in different ways, described as "anti-agreement". Lexical possessors do not show plural agreement on the possessum; pronominal possessors do not themselves show plural:

3. a. az   ő   kalap-ja   d. az   ő   kalap-juk
        the 3SG.NOM hat-POSS.3SG   the 3SG.NOM   hat-POSS.3PL
        his hat   *their hat*

    b. a   fiú kalap-ja   e. a   fiú-k   kalap-ja
        the boy hat-POSS.3SG   the boy.PL   hat-POSS.3SG
        the boy's hat   *the boys' hat*

In addition to the post-determiner (DP-internal) position seen in (1-3), possessors may appear as datives when they are on the edge of the DP or have been moved further up in the sentence (e.g. to Topic). Anti-agreement is also subject to some variation (4a,c): the further the possessor is from the possessum, the more acceptable agreement is. Determiners may appear on external possessors, optionally for names (4b):

4. a. a   fiúk-nak a kalap-juk   c. a   fiúk-nak a   kalap-ja
        the boys-DAT the hat-POSS.3PL   the boys-DAT the hat-POSS.3SG
        the boys' hat   *the boys' hat*

    b. (a) Mari   kalap-ja.   d. Mari-nak   a   kalap-ja
        the Mary.NOM   hat-POSS.3SG   Mary-DAT   the hat-POSS.3SG
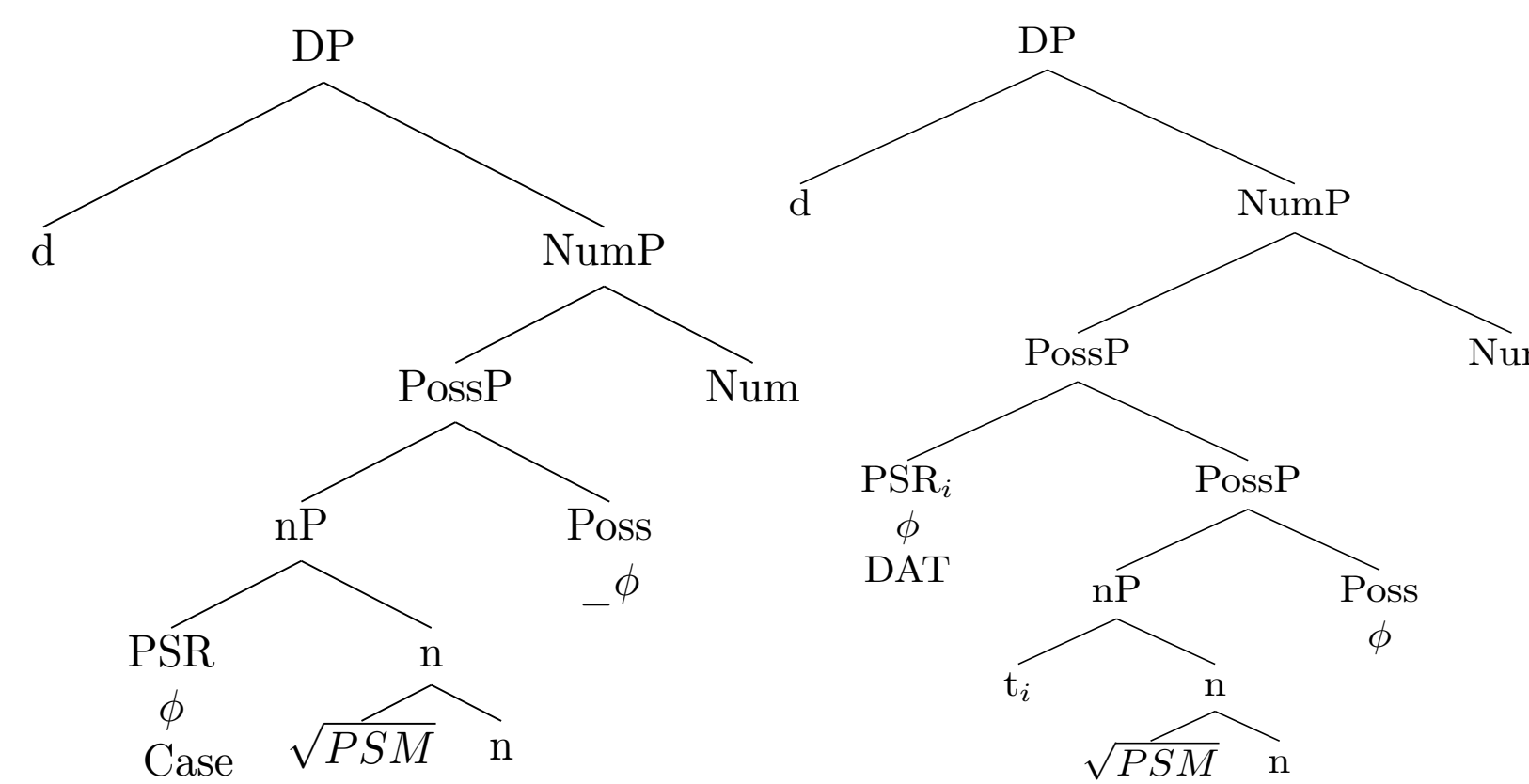   *Mary's hat*   *Mary's hat*

The Questions

→What is the structure of the possessive DP?
→How can we account for the different case-marking of possessors?
→How can we account for anti-agreement?
    →Can we account for them in the same way?
→How can we account for determiner haplology?

Proposed Solution

→All possessive DPs have same basic structure.
→Morphological impoverishment within entire DP leads to case alternation and anti-agreement within entire DP
→Movement out of the DP in syntax creates environment where impoverishment is not triggered

Syntax of DP

Basic case: Possessor DP merges as sister to N
              Agrees with, recieves dative case from Poss
              Movement to edge of DP (or beyond)
              Anti-agreement does not take place
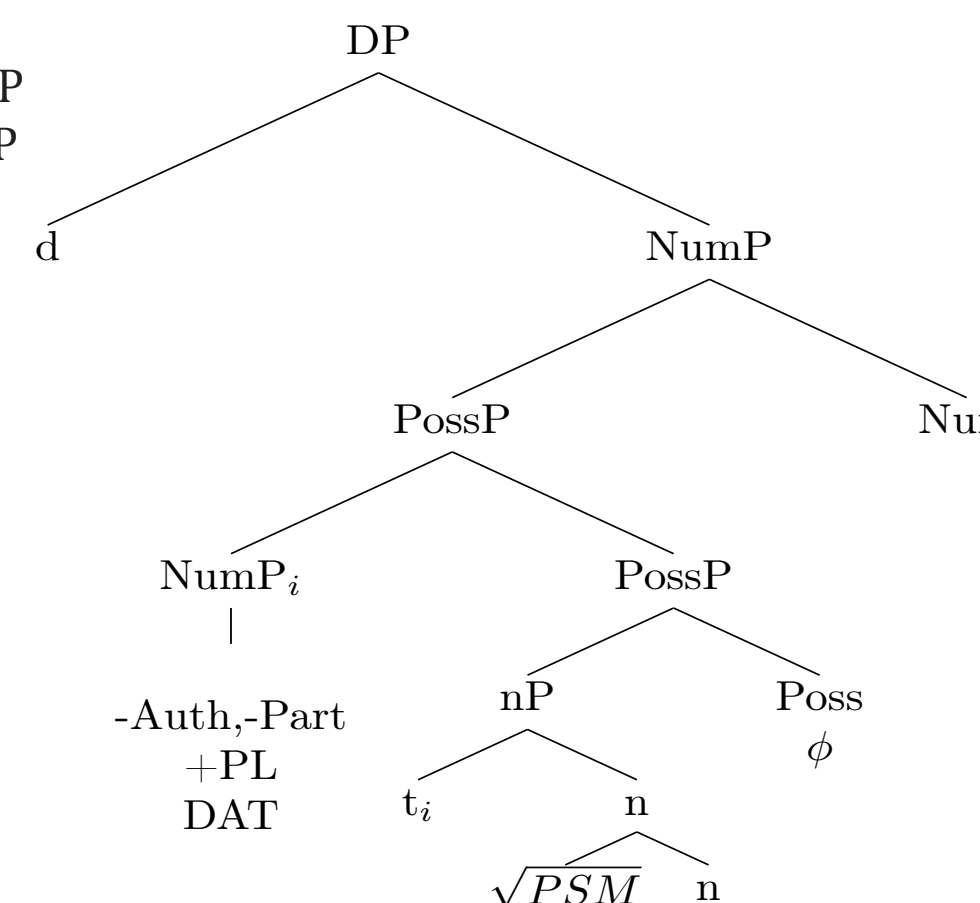   Syntax reflects surface order

Impoverishment Operations

The following impoverishment operations remove certain features from morphemes in particular contexts: [3]

Rule 1:   +DAT → Ø / __ PossP
Rule 2a: +PL   → Ø / __ PossP
Rule 2b: +PL   → Ø / DP __

Assumptions:
•NumP is locus for number
•3SG/3PL are just NumPs
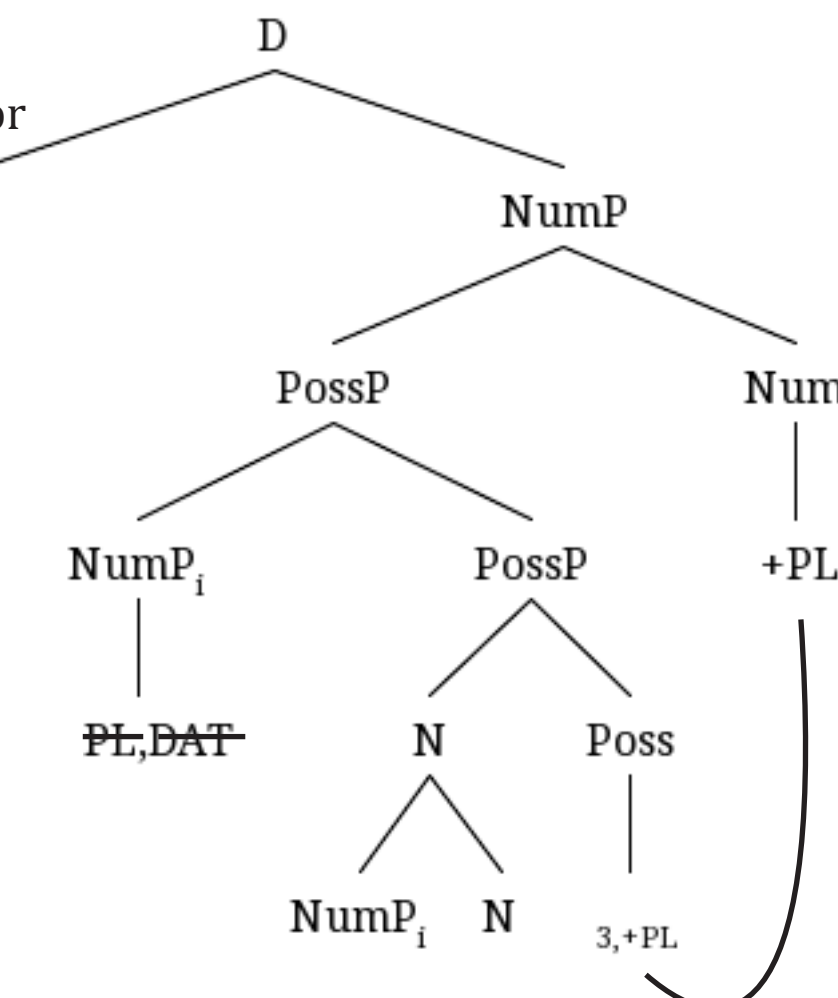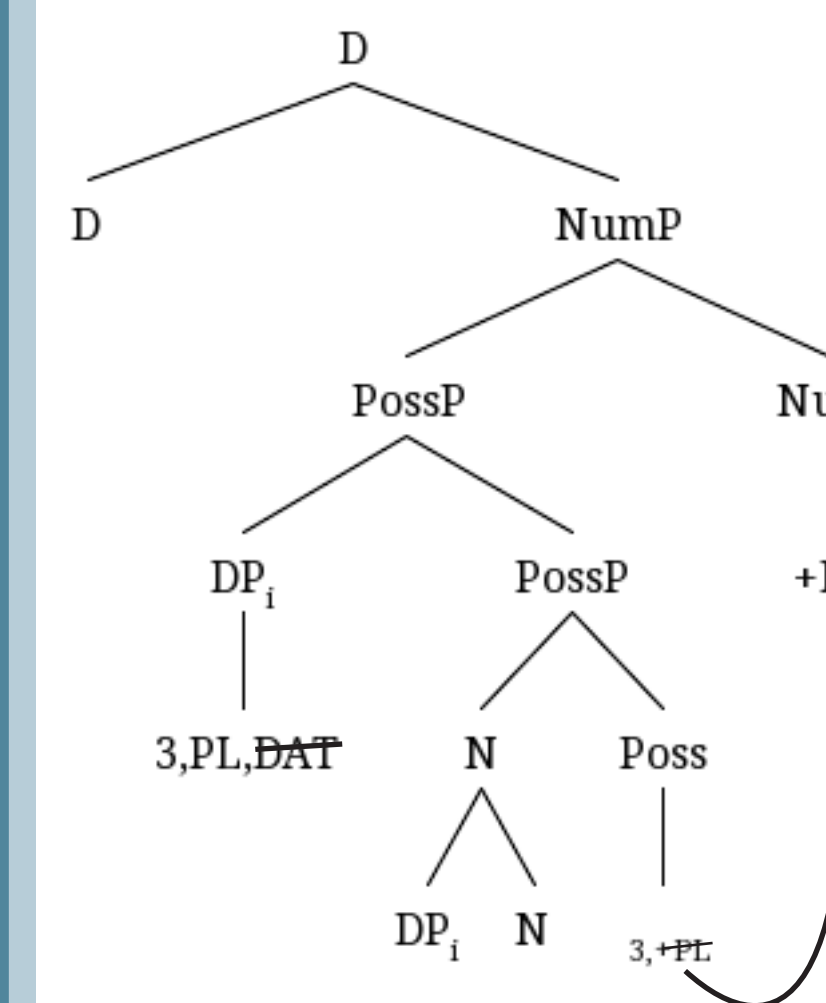•1/2 pronouns are larger
•Lexical possessors are DPs

Pronominal possessor structure before agreement

Following Rules 1and 2a, features are removed from the pronominal possessor

+PL feature of possessum lowers to Poss

Vocabulary insertion may occur next:

    az   ő   kalap-ja-i-k
    the   3.SG hat-POSS-PL-PL
    their hat

Plural lexical possessors lose DAT by 1, +PL feature on Poss by 2b.

Vocabulary insertion gives

    a   fiú-k   kalap-ja-i
    the boy-PL   hat-POSS-PL
    the boys' hats

Conclusions & Issues

Conclusions:
    →Different structures for different possessives can be avoided
    →Existing morphological operations can account for the data
    →Seemingly different phenomena may be unified

Unanswered Questions & Issues:
    →What is the structure of 1/2 pronouns? Why do they behave differently?
    →How is the correct plural morpheme insured insertion?
        ? Context-sensitive VI for PL
        ? (+PL → -i- / Poss _; -k ELSEWHERE)
    →Can determiner haplology also be addressed in same manner?
        ? Rule 3: D → Ø / __ DP
    →Are DP-wide / global impoverishment rules too powerful?
        ? Still constrained by phases- not truly *global*
    →Will this over/ under generate?
        ? Seems to work with possessive pronominals

Selected References

1- Szabolcsi, A. 1994. The noun phrase. In The syntactic structure of Hungarian, ed. Kiefer, F. & Kiss, K. New York: Academic Press. 2- den Dikken, M. 1999. On the structural representation of possession and agreement. In Kenesei, E., ed.,Crossing boundaries 138-178. Philadelphia: John Benjamins. 3- Halle, M. & Marantz, A. 1993. Distributed Morphology and the Pieces of Inflection. In Hale, K. & Keyser,J., eds., The View from Building 20. MIT Press, Cambridge, 111-176.