Two kinds of "possessor raising" in Choctaw[*]

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Abstract: Choctaw has been described as having *possessor raising* of subjects, where a noun phrase which would typically be the possessor of the subject itself functions as the subject. I show that Choctaw possessor raising actually comes in two types, conflated in previous work. In one type — *true possessor raising* — the possessor raises out of the possessee, which sits in the subject position. In another type — *thematic external possession* — the possessor is base-generated as an applicative argument, and is related to the possessee at semantic interpretation. From these different structures, I derive a range of morphological, semantic and syntactic differences between the two constructions. The paper shows not only that possessor raising/external possession can be derived via two different syntactic mechanisms, but also that those two mechanisms may co-exist in the same language.

Keywords: possession, external possession, possessor raising, Choctaw

1 Introduction

In Choctaw, there is more than one way to express the idea that an intransitive subject has a possessor. The most cross-linguistically familiar strategy is to include a possessor inside the subject noun phrase itself, as indicated by the brackets in (1).[1]

(1) [John im-ofi-**yat**] abiika-h.
     [John III-dog-NOM] sick-TNS
     'John's dog is sick.'

Choctaw has also been described as making use of a rarer strategy, known as "(subject) possessor raising" (Broadwell 1990, 2006; Munro and Gordon 1982). Subject possessor raising comes in two main variants, shown in (2). The property that these sentences have in common is that the possessor is external to the possessee and behaves in some respects like a subject — for instance, in both examples it is marked with nominative case.

(2) a. John-**at** im-ofi abiika-h.   b. John-**at** ofi im-abiika-h.
         John-NOM III-dog sick-TNS   John-NOM dog III-sick-TNS
         'John's dog is sick.'   'John's dog is sick.'

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[1] I use a modified verion of Broadwell's (2006) practical orthography. Doubled vowels are long, doubled consonants are geminate, underlined vowels are nasal, the digraph <lh> represents [ɬ]. The following non-transparent glosses are used for Choctaw: I=Class I clitic; II=Class II clitic; III=Class III clitic; NG='n-grade' verb form (akin to progressive aspect); ss=same-subject; TNS=default tense.

However, in this paper I focus on the differences between the two variants, and I aim to show that they make use of quite different underlying syntactic structures. Accordingly, they exhibit different morphological, syntactic and semantic properties. By showing that two distinct kinds of possessor raising may co-exist in the same language, I support recent work arguing that possessor raising is *not* a unitary phenomenon (e.g., Cinque and Krapova 2009; Deal 2013, 2017).

After establishing the necessary background in Section 2, I propose the two distinct structures for each variant in Section 3. Specifically, I propose that only the variant exemplified in (2a) involves an actual *raising* operation, and I therefore refer to it as *true possessor raising*. By contrast, I argue that in the variant in (2b), the possessor is base-generated in a position external to the possessee, as an argument of the verb, and no raising is involved. I therefore refer to this variant as *thematic external possession*. Having proposed the two different structures, I derive a host of morphological (Section 4), semantic (Section 5) and syntactic (Section 6) properties unique to each construction.

2 Possession and "possessor raising" in Choctaw

Choctaw is an SOV language with fairly rigid word order, free argument drop, and a complex agreement system. Overt arguments may be marked according to a nominative-accusative case system, as illustrated in (3), though case-marking is typically omitted on all arguments except the subject.

(3) Imaabachi-**yat** alla-m-**a**   im-an<u>o</u>poli-tok.
    teacher-NOM   kid-DEM-ACC III-talk-PST
    'The teacher talked to that kid.'

While the intricacies of the verbal agreement system do not play a large role in this paper, it is necessary to know some of its basic properties. Verbal agreement markers (likely clitics — see Tyler to appear-a,b) come in three series, labelled I, II and III. These markers exhibit a *split-S* alignment, in that the choice of marker used to cross-reference a particular argument is generally determined by the thematic role of that argument. Broadly speaking, Class I markers cross-reference agents and initiators and Class II markers cross-reference themes and experiencers. (4) provides a representative example. Class III markers cross-reference dative or oblique arguments, as in (3), where the III marker cross-references the goal argument *allam<u>a</u>* 'that kid'.

(4)   **Ii-chi**-lhiyohl-aach<u>i</u>-h.
      1PL.I-2SG.II-chase-FUT-TNS
      'We will chase you.'

The Class II and III markers are of particular interest here, since when they are attached to noun phrases, they function as possessive markers. I now discuss how ('internal') possession of noun phrases works in Choctaw, before moving on to the different kinds of "possessor raising".

2.1 Internal possession

Choctaw morphologically distinguishes alienable from inalienable internal possession, marking alienable possession with a Class III marker on the possessee, and inalienable possessors with a Class II marker. Possessors precede their possessee. (5a) shows some noun phrases with alienable possessors, and (5b) shows some with inalienable possessors.

(5) a. alikchi im-ofi / Mary i̱-shapo / anaako̱ am-ishtishko
        doctor ɪɪɪ-dog / Mary ɪɪɪ-hat / me.ꜰoᴄ 1ꜱɢ.ɪɪɪ-cup
        'the doctor's dog / Mary's hat / MY cup'

    b. ofi iyyi / alikchi hohchifo / anaako̱ sa-shki
        dog foot / doctor name   / me.ꜰoᴄ 1ꜱɢ.ɪɪ-mother
        'the dog's feet / the doctor's name / MY mother'

As shown in (5b), 3rd-person inalienable possessors do not trigger possessive morphology. This is a consequence of a gap in the Class II paradigm — there is no 3rd-person Class II morpheme, either for cross-referencing possessors on noun phrases or clausal arguments on verbs. The full Class II and III paradigms are shown in Tables 1 and 2, exemplifying both their possessive and verb-agreement functions.[2]

Table 1: Class II paradigm

sa-shki	'my mother'	**si**-abiikah	'I am sick'
pi-shki	'our mother'	**pi**-abiikah	'we are sick'
hapi-shki	'all of us's mother'	**hapi**-abiikah	'we all are sick'
chi-shki	'your mother'	**chi**-abiikah	'you are sick'
hachi-shki	'y'all's mother'	**hachi**-abiikah	'y'all are sick'
ishki	'(her) mother'	abiikah	'she is sick'

Table 2: Class III paradigm

am-ofi	'my dog'	**am**-ano̱polih	'she talks to me'
pim-ofi	'our dog'	**pim**-ano̱polih	'she talks to us'
hapim-ofi	'all of us's dog'	**hapim**-ano̱polih	'she talks to us all'
chim-ofi	'your dog'	**chim**-ano̱polih	'she talks to you'
hachim-ofi	'y'all's dog'	**hachim**-ano̱polih	'she talks to y'all'
im-ofi	'her dog'	**im**-ano̱polih	'she talks to her'

2.2 "Possessor raising"

Choctaw has been described as exhibiting *possessor raising* (Broadwell 1990, 2006; Davies 1981a,b, 1986; Munro 1984; Munro and Gordon 1982; Nicklas 1974). I use this term in a purely descriptive sense since, as we will see, I propose that only a subset of Choctaw's possessor raising constructions involve genuine syntactic movement (i.e., 'raising'). Note that while both subjects and objects participate in possessor raising alternations, I focus exclusively on subjects in this article.

The defining characteristics of subject possessor raising are that the possessor of the lone argument of an intransitive verb is marked with nominative case, and no longer forms a constituent with the possessee. An intransitive verb with an 'internally'-possessed argument is shown in (6). Example (7) shows the two main variants of subject possessor raising.

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[2] The 1ꜱɢ Class II marker *sa-* is realized as *si-* in prevocalic position.

(6) [John im-ofi-**yat**]   abiika-h.
    [John III-dog-NOM] sick-TNS
    'John's dog is sick.'

(7) a.   John-**at**   im-ofi abiika-h.   b.   John-**at**   ofi im-abiika-h.
         John-NOM III-dog sick-TNS   John-NOM dog III-sick-TNS
         'John's dog is sick.'   'John's dog is sick.'

In the variant in (7a), the possessee retains its Class III morpheme, as in the internal possession construction in (6). In the variant in (7b), the Class III morpheme disappears from the possessee and reappears on the verb. In this paper, I refer to the (7a) variant as *true possessor raising* and the (7b) variant as *thematic external possession*, where these names are based on the syntactic structures I propose for each in Section 3.

We can show that in both variants, the nominative-marked possessor is not case-marked like an internal possessor: (8) shows that DP-internal possessors, if they are case-marked at all, receive accusative case.

(8) [Alikchi-(**ako/*akoosh**)]   im-ofi yokaachi-li-tok.
    [doctor-(FOC.ACC/*FOC.NOM)] III-dog catch-1SG.I-PST
    'It was the doctor whose dog I caught.'

Furthermore, for both variants, we can show that the possessor and possessee do not form a constituent by placing a sentence-modifying adverb between them, as in (9b) and (9c). (9a), for comparison, shows that it is *not* possible to place an adverb between the possessor and possessee in a single noun phrase.

(9) a.   *John pilaashaash im-ofi-yat   illi-h.
         John yesterday   III-dog-NOM die-TNS
         ('John's dog died yesterday.')   (Broadwell 2006:304)

    b.   John-at   pilaashaash im-ofi-yat   illi-h.
         John-NOM yesterday   III-dog-NOM die-TNS
         'John's dog died yesterday.'   (Broadwell 2006:304)

    c.   John-at   pilaashaash ofi im-illi-h.
         John-NOM yesterday   dog III-die-TNS
         'John's dog died yesterday.'

The fact that the difference between the two variants apparently involves nothing more than displacing the Class III morpheme, often by just one word, has, I believe, led to the two variants being viewed as surface morphological variants of the same syntactic structure (e.g., Broadwell 1990, 2006). In the next section, I propose two different structures to capture the properties of the two variants.
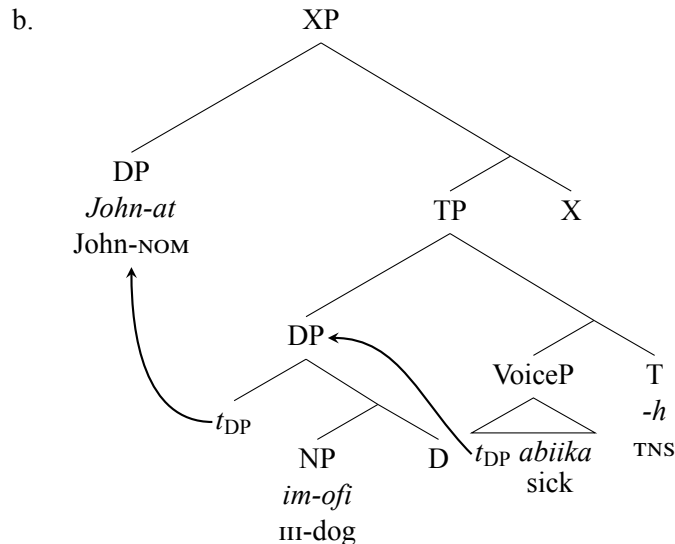
3 Analysis: two different structures

Much work on possessor raising or external possession in the world's languages starts from the assumption that a particular language or dialect will have only one way of building its external pos-

session structures (although see Cinque and Krapova 2009 on Bulgarian for an exception). However, I believe that the properties of subject possessor raising constructions in contemporary Mississippi Choctaw can only be adequately captured with two different strategies.

I propose that true possessor raising constructions, henceforth True PR, as in (10a), have the structure in (10b). The possessor is base-generated in a standard internally-possessed DP with the possessee and undergoes left branch extraction to a higher position, which has here been given the placeholder label (Spec-)XP.[3] The A vs. A'-status of X is unclear: arguments raised to it are assigned nominative case, a property usually associated with A-positions, yet X may have information-structural import, more typical of A'-positions (see Deal 2017 on the mixed A/A' properties of certain raised possessor positions). Crucially for our purposes, arguments in Spec-XP do not receive any special thematic interpretation. The possessee sits in the canonical subject position, assumed to be Spec-TP.

(10) a. John-at   im-ofi abiika-h.
          John-NOM III-dog sick-TNS
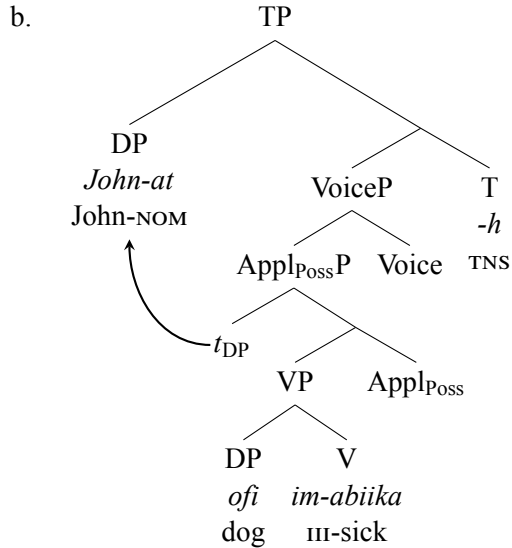   'John's dog is sick.'

b.

Note that this analysis is very similar to the one proposed by Broadwell (1990, 2006), though his structure was intended to cover both subject possessor raising constructions, as he did not distinguish them syntactically.

By contrast, I propose that the thematic external possession construction, henceforth TEP, as in (11a), has the structure in (11b). The possessor and the possessee are base-generated as entirely separate DPs, and at no point in the derivation form a constituent. The possessor receives a thematic role in its base-generated Spec-Appl$_{Poss}$P position and undergoes movement to the canonical subject position. The possessee remains in the object position. At this juncture, there are at least two ways in which one could ensure that this structure results in a possessive interpretation. In one model, the possessor binds a variable inside the possessee DP (Borer and Grodzinsky 1986; Guéron 1985; Hole 2004). In an alternative model, the DP in Spec-Appl$_{Poss}$P becomes a possessor at semantic interpretation via a process of *delayed gratification* of the possessee's possessor theta-role (Myler 2016; Wood 2015; Wood and Marantz 2017). Here, I remain agnostic between the two options.

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[3] Note that extraction of possessors is independently permitted in Choctaw (Broadwell 2006:45).

(11) a. John-at   ofi im-abiika-h.
John-NOM dog III-sick-TNS
'John's dog is sick.'

b.

```
                        TP
                    /        \
                  /            \
            DP              /        \
        John-at         VoiceP        T
        John-NOM       /      \      -h
                 ApplPossP  Voice   TNS
                  /    \
              tDP    
                 /    \
               VP    ApplPoss
              /  \
            DP    V
           ofi  im-abiika
           dog  III-sick
```

In the following three sections, I illustrate the morphological, semantic and syntactic differences between True PR and TEP, and derive the bulk of them from the syntactic structures proposed here.

4 Morphological differences

The clearest difference between True PR and TEP is in their morphology. In True PR the possessor is cross-referenced by a Class III morpheme on the possessee, as in (12a), while in TEP the possessor is cross-referenced by a Class III morpheme on the verb, as in (12b).

(12) a. John-at   **im**-ofi abiika-h.   b. John-at   ofi **im**-abiika-h.
John-NOM III-dog sick-TNS   John-NOM dog III-sick-TNS

This difference follows straightforwardly from the two structures. Turning first to the presence vs. absence of Class III marking on the possessee, the structure for True PR given in (10b) means we would *expect* this marking. This is because the possessor and possessee form a typical internally-possessed DP at one point in the derivation, which is standardly marked with a Class III morpheme on the possessee. By contrast, in TEP the possessor and possessee never form a constituent, and so we would not expect possessive morphology to show up on the possessee.

Turning now to the presence vs. absence of the Class III marker on the verb, I propose that this too follows from their syntactic structures. The basic idea is that verbal agreement only cross-references verbal arguments, which I take to be those arguments that are base-generated as a complement of the verb, or in the specifier of some functional projection in the extended projection of the verb. Possessors in TEP are base-generated in Spec-ApplPossP, and so they are cross-referenced by verbal agreement morphology. Possessors in True PR, on the other hand, are not verbal arguments — they are arguments only of the possessed DP — and so they do not trigger verbal agreement.

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Support for the analysis that possessors in TEP are introduced by an ApplP comes from the larger class of transitive III-subject constructions into which TEP falls. In these constructions, as in TEP, the subject is cross-referenced on the verb by a Class III marker. The class includes predicative possession constructions, as in (13a), constructions where the III-subject is an 'indirect causer', as in (13b), and constructions where the III-subject is an affected experiencer, as in (13c). Following work such as Bjorkman and Cowper (2016), Bosse, Bruening, and Yamada (2012), Wood (2015) and Wood and Marantz (2017), possessors (in both TEP and predicative possession constructions), indirect causers, and affected experiencers are all interpretations typical of arguments introduced by ApplPs.

(13) a. **Mary-at**   ofi **i**-lawa-h.
          Mary-NOM dog III-many-TNS
          'Mary has a lot of dogs.'

     b. **Mary-at**   <u>i</u>-hina chanalli **im**-aayiska-tok.
          Mary-NOM III-car   III-fixed-PST
          'Mary got her car fixed.'

     c.   Am-of<u>o</u>sik   **chim**-ittola-tok.
          ***pro*₂SG** 1SG.III-puppy 2SG.III-fall-PST
          'You dropped my puppy.'

We have therefore seen that the morphological differences between True PR and TEP fall neatly out of the different syntactic structures proposed here. In the next section, I show that True PR and TEP are also associated with different semantic properties.

5 Semantic differences

The generalization that emerges in this section is that TEP is very restricted, both in terms of the predicates it can combine with and the properties of the possessor, while True PR is almost completely unrestricted. I argue that the restrictions on TEP either fall out of the syntactic structure proposed in (11b), or are made possible by it.

5.1 TEP is sensitive to (in)alienability

All of the examples of TEP and True PR provided thus far involve alienable possession (e.g., 'John's dog', 'Mary's car'), but as described in Section 2, Choctaw morphology distinguishes alienable from inalienable internal possession. TEP is sensitive to this distinction: (14) shows that only alienably-possessed DPs can participate in TEP (see also Nicklas 1974).

(14) a. Itii-t   <u>a</u>-kobaafa-h.
          stick-NOM 1SG.III-broken-TNS
          'My stick is broken.'

     b. *Shakba-yat (<u>a</u>/sa)-kobaafa-h.
          arm-NOM   (1SG.III/1SG.II)-broken-TNS
          ('My arm is broken.')

The unacceptability of TEP with inalienably-possessed DPs can be explained as a consequence of the thematic role that Appl$_{Poss}$ imposes on the argument it introduces: specifically, it assigns an *alienable* possessor role.

In contrast with TEP, True PR is fully compatible with inalienably-possessed DPs, as shown by the examples in (15). Note that the possessee *haksobis* 'ears' in (15a) shows no possessive marking because there is no 3rd-person Class II clitic.

(15)   a.   Chokfi-at   haksobis falaaya-h.
            rabbit-NOM ear   long-TNS
            'The rabbit's ears are long.'

       b.   Chishnak-oosh chi-noshkobo chito-h.
            you.FOC-NOM   2SG.II-head   big-TNS
            'You're the one with a big head.'

What's happening in these cases is essentially the same as in alienably-possessed True PR examples like (10a): the possessor is subextracted from the internally-possessed DP in subject position, and the possessee retains its possessive marking. The only difference is that here, the possessive marking takes the form of a Class II clitic, rather than a Class III clitic.

5.2   TEP requires animate possessors

In a TEP construction, the possessor must be animate. This is shown by the contrast in (16).

(16)   a.   **Mary-at**   okkisa im-oppolo-h.
            Mary-NOM door   DAT-broken-TNS
            'Mary's door is broken.'

       b.   *__Chokka-m-at__   okkisa im-oppolo-h.
            house-DEM-NOM door   DAT-broken-TNS
            ('The house's door is broken.')

This restriction does not hold for True PR:

(17)   **Chokka-m-at**   im-okkisa oppolo-h.
       house-DEM-NOM III-door   broken-TNS
       'The house's door is broken.'

Example (18) shows that DP-internally, inanimate possessors are grammatical. It therefore makes sense that inanimate possessors are licit in True PR constructions too: in True PR, the possessor starts out in a DP-internal possession relation with the possessee.

(18)   [Chokka im-okkisa-yat] oppolo-h.
       [house   III-door-NOM] broken-TNS
       'The house's door is broken.'

So why are inanimate possessors banned in TEP? As shown in (11b), possessors in TEP are merged in the specifier of an ApplP. Following work on external possession crosslinguistically, external possessors merged in an applicative phrase are assigned a particular thematic role by the Appl

head in whose specifier they are merged. This thematic role is something like 'mental affectedness' (Deal 2017; Guéron 1985; Haspelmath 1999; Hole 2004; Kempchinsky 1992; Landau 1999; Lee-Schoenfeld 2006). Inanimate entities are incapable of holding mental states, so examples like (16b) sound decidedly odd. Indeed, among applied arguments more generally, animacy requirements are common (Adger and Harbour 2007; Pesetsky 1996).

5.3 TEP is incompatible with unergative and psych predicates

TEP is compatible with a restricted set of unaccusative predicates, including *abiika* 'be sick/get sick', *illi* 'die', *oppolo* 'break (intr.)', *masaali* 'heal (intr.)', *kaniiya* 'get lost/go away', although the set of available predicates is subject to a degree of inter-speaker variation. Most of the examples in this paper use *abiika* 'be sick/get sick' and *illi* 'die', since these verbs were fully compatible with TEP for all speakers. However, TEP is incompatible with all unergative predicates:[4]

(19) a. #Alikchi-yat ofi i-baliili-tok.
          doctor-NOM dog III-run-PST
          ('The doctor's dog ran.'); OK as 'The doctor ran from the dog.'

      b. *   Hoshi a-taloowa-tok.
          *pro*₁SG bird 1SG.III-sing-PST
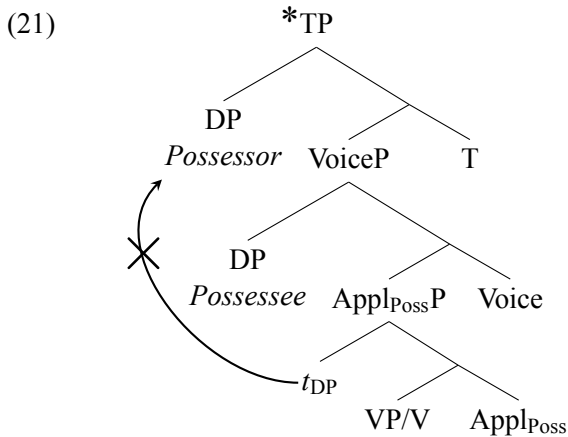   ('My bird sang.')

It is also incompatible with psych predicates:

(20) a. #John-at   alla i-nokshoopa-h.
          John-NOM child III-scared-TNS
          ('John's kid is scared.'); OK as 'John is scared of the kid.'

      b. *   Alla a-hoofahya-h.
          *pro*₁SG child 1SG.III-ashamed-TNS
          ('My kid is ashamed.')

Both of these restrictions fall out of the syntactic structure proposed in (11b). Turning first to the prohibition of unergatives, assume that the subject of unergative predicates is merged in Spec-VoiceP, and the external possessor is merged in Spec-Appl_PossP as usual. In order for the possessor to show up in the canonical subject position, it would have to raise over the in-situ external argument, violating familiar syntactic locality conditions (e.g., Relativized Minimality, Rizzi 1990). The illegal derivation is shown in (21).[5]

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[4] The question of how exactly to categorize Choctaw intransitive verbs as unergative and unaccusative is fairly fraught. Davies (1981a, 1986) and Broadwell (1988) propose that the form of verb agreement used to cross-reference the subject signals its unaccusative vs. unergative status, with Class I agreement used for unergatives and Class II for unaccusatives. However, Tyler (2019, to appear-a) notes some issues with this claim, and proposes that some unaccusative arguments get cross-referenced with Class I agreement too (via a kind of 'raising-to-ergative' operation). I set the issue aside here.
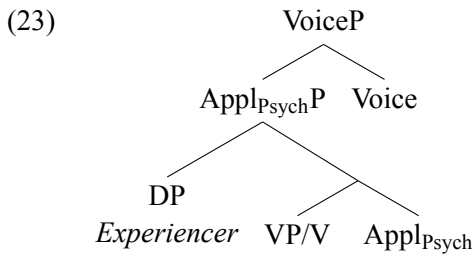
[5] An alternative explanation for the incompatibility of TEP and unergatives would be that while the syntactic movement operation in (21) is permitted, something goes wrong at semantic interpretation when the external-possessor-introducing Appl combines with a complement-less verb. However, in the absence of evidence to distinguish the two possibilities, I set the issue aside.

(21)

```
                        *TP
                      /      \
                    /          \
                  DP            \
               Possessor   VoiceP    T
                          /      \
                        /          \
                      DP            \
                  Possessee   ApplPossP   Voice
                              /      \
                            tDP       \
                                  VP/V   ApplPoss
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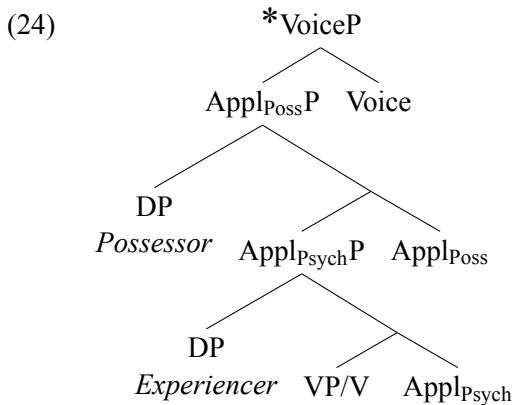
This account explains why TEP is incompatible with transitive subjects too, as shown in (22). Assuming that Choctaw transitives have the same structure as unergatives, except with an added internal argument, it follows that transitive subjects would also be incompatible with TEP.

(22) *Mary-at   im-ofi sa-kopooli-tok.
       Mary-NOM III-dog 1SG.II-bite-PST
       ('Mary's dog bit me.')

Turning now to TEP's incompatibility with psych verbs, Tyler (2019, to appear-a) argues that the experiencer argument of Choctaw psych verbs is introduced in the specifier of an ApplP, as in (23). This follows a line of work arguing that crosslinguistically, experiencer arguments are introduced higher than canonical objects (and unaccusative subjects), but lower than external arguments (Anagnostopoulou 1999; Belletti and Rizzi 1988; McGinnis 1998; Pesetsky 1996; Wood 2015).

(23)

```
                    VoiceP
                   /      \
                 /          \
        ApplPsychP        Voice
          /      \
        DP         \
     Experiencer  VP/V   ApplPsych
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I therefore propose that, as a selectional restriction, the possessor-introducing ApplPoss cannot be stacked on top of the experiencer-introducing ApplPsych. The ruled-out derivation of TEP with a psych verb is shown in (24).

(24)

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                    *VoiceP
                   /      \
                 /          \
         ApplPossP        Voice
          /      \
        DP         \
    Possessor  ApplPsychP   ApplPoss
                /      \
              DP         \
          Experiencer  VP/V   ApplPsych
```

In contrast to TEP, True PR is much less restricted. It can happily combine with unergative and psych predicates:[6]

(25) a. Mary-at   im-alla taloowa-tok.   b. John-at   im-ofi nokshoopa-h.
          Mary-NOM III-child sing-PST   John-NOM III-dog scared-TNS
          'Mary's kid sang.'   'John's dog is scared.'

This unrestrictedness follows from the syntactic structure for True PR proposed in (10b): True PR involves extraction of the possessor from a DP that has already reached the canonical subject position (Spec-TP). It is therefore 'blind' to whether the subject originated in Spec-VoiceP (as with unergatives), Spec-ApplP (as with psych experiencers) or the complement of the verb (as with unaccusative subjects).

5.4   TEP is incompatible with individual-level predicates

The incompatibility of TEP with individual-level predicates is illustrated in (26).

(26) a. *Hattak-m-at   lokka lobo i-chito-h.
          man-DEM-NOM shirt   III-big-TNS
          ('That man's shirt is big.')

      b. *Ohooyo-yat ofi i-homma-h.
          woman-NOM dog III-red-TNS
          ('The woman's dog is red.')

I do not assume that this restriction falls out of any particularly deep syntactic fact about the syntactic structure of TEP. Rather, I propose that the Appl$_{Poss}$ head simply makes certain selectional demands on the verb with which it combines: namely it must combine with a stage-level predicate. In support of the idea that this restriction is not linked to some immutable property of the structure in (11b), we can turn to closely-related Chickasaw, where we see that the restriction does *not* hold:

(27) Doris-at   i-hattak-at   **in**-chaaha-hootakot ayoppa.
      Doris-NOM III-man-NOM III-tall-because.ss   happy
      'Because Doris's husband is tall, she is happy.' (Chickasaw; Munro and Gordon 1982:100)

Furthermore, independently of the facts regarding individual-level predicates, there is a strong case for a selectional relation between the verb and the Appl$_{Poss}$ head. The evidence comes from the degree of idiosyncrasy and variation in terms of which predicates are compatible with TEP. While TEP is uniformly ruled out with unergative, psych and individual-level predicates, there are still a number of unaccusative, non-psych, stage-level predicates that reject TEP for many speakers. (28) provides two cases where speakers disagree.[7]

(28) a. %Suzie-at   ofi i-showa-h.   b. %Miko-at   katos i-laksha-h.
          Suzie-NOM dog III-stink   chief-NOM cat   III-sweat-TNS
          'Suzie's dog stinks.'   'The chief's cat is sweating.'

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[6] Interestingly, True PR is incompatible with transitive verbs. This restriction is not predicted by the account here and I currently have no explanation for it.

[7] Speakers also have differing judgments over the compatibility of TEP with motion verbs.

As we would by now expect, True PR shows no such restriction, and happily admits individual-level predicates:

(29)   a.   Hattak-m-at   i̱-lokka lo̱bo chito-h
             man-DEM-NOM III-shirt   big-TNS
             'That man's shirt is big.'

        b.   Ohooyo-yat im-ofi homma-h.
             woman-NOM III-dog red-TNS
             'The woman's dog is red.'

In fact, the syntactic structure for True PR given in (10b) means that it would be *impossible* for True PR to be picky about the kinds of predicates it can combine with. Neither the verb nor its associated argument-introducing heads are typically able to select for whether an argument has an internal possessor, under standard assumptions about the power of selectional restrictions. Yet if True PR were to be picky about the kinds of predicates it can go with, this would have to be encoded as an (illegal) selectional restriction. It therefore follows that True PR should be compatible with any predicate.

To summarize this section, we have seen that the semantic restrictions on TEP, and the comparative lack of semantic restrictions on True PR, are either forced by their syntactic structures, or are at least enabled by their syntactic structures. The next section provides evidence for a crucial syntactic component of the analyses of True PR and TEP presented in Section 3 — that in TEP, the possessee functions as an object, while in True PR, it does not.

6   A syntactic difference

In this section, I argue for a crucial part of the analysis that separates True PR from TEP: that the possessee sits in different syntactic positions in the two constructions. Specifically, in True PR the possessee sits in the canonical subject position, with the possessor occupying a higher position. By contrast, in TEP the possessee sits in the canonical object position, and patterns like an object. The evidence comes from the possessee's (in)ability to associate with the preverb *okl(ah)*, which indicates that the subject of the clause is plural, and thus serves as a subjecthood diagnostic. I first introduce *okl(ah)* before showing how it interacts with True PR and TEP.

DPs in Choctaw are not marked for number, so the subject of (30) *allaat* 'child' may be interpreted as singular or plural depending on context.

(30)   Alla-at   balii-t   kaniiya-tok.
       child-NOM run-PTCP leave-PST
       'The kid/kids ran away.'

However, there are ways of indicating that particular arguments are plural. Relevant for our purposes is the preverb *okl(ah)*, which signals that the subject is plural (Broadwell 2006). (31) provides some simple examples, though see Tyler (to appear-b) for a more detailed description and account of the licensing conditions on *okl(ah)*.

(31)   a.   Alla-at   ak<u>a</u>ka   **okl**= ik-po-tok.
             child-NOM chicken PL= NEG-eat.NEG-PST
             'The kids didn't eat the chicken.'

b. **Oklah** hapi-nokshoopa-t taha-h.
PL   1PL.II-scared-PTCP finish-TNS
'We're done being scared.'

And (32) shows that *okl(ah)* cannot associate with objects — the plurality of objects must be marked in other ways, such as with adjectives or quantifiers.

(32)   Ohooyo-m-<u>a</u>   (***oklah**) p<u>i</u>sa-li-tok.
woman-DEM-ACC (*PL)   see.NG-1SG.ERG-PST
'I watched the woman/women.'

With the distribution of *okl(ah)* established, we can use it as a diagnostic for the syntactic status of both the possessor and the possessee in the two PR constructions.

Considering first TEP, the examples in (33a) show that *oklah* can associate only with the possessor, and may not associate with the the possessee.

(33)   a.   Alikchi-yat ofi okl= im-abiika-h.
doctor-NOM dog PL= III-sick-TNS
'The doctors' dog is sick' (*'The doctor's dogs are sick.')

b.   *John-at   ofi **okl**= im-abiika-h.
John-NOM dog PL=   III-sick-TNS
('John's dogs are sick.')

This follows as a consequence from the syntactic structure for TEP in (11b): the possessor occupies the subject position, from which it can associate with *okl(ah)*. The possessee, meanwhile, remains in the object position, unable to associate with *oklah*.

Turning now to True PR, speakers' judgments are somewhat more variable, but for those who allow *okl(ah)* to appear at all in this construction, it necessarily associates with the *possessee* — the reverse situation from TEP. This is shown in (34).

(34)   a. %John-at   im-ofi okl= abiika-h.
John-NOM III-dog PL= sick-TNS
'John's dogs are sick.'

b. %Alikchi-at   im-ofi okl= abiika-h.
doctor-NOM III-dog PL= sick-TNS
'The doctor's dogs are sick.' (*'The doctor's dog is sick.')

For speakers who find these sentences acceptable, the ability of the possessee to associate with *okl(ah)* falls straightforwardly out of the syntactic structure for True PR proposed in Section 3: the possessee occupies the subject position. It is less clear why the raised possessor should be unable to associate with *okl(ah)*, but I am unable to pursue this line of inquiry here.

To summarize, in this section we have seen that the ability to associate with the extrinsic plural marker *okl(ah)* diagnoses the possessee as an object in TEP, and a subject in True PR.

7 Conclusion

We have seen that contemporary Mississippi Choctaw allows possessors to surface externally to their possessees using two distinct structures, which have been conflated in previous work. Each of these structures — one involving true *raising* of a possessor, the other involving base-generation of possessor as an applicative argument — has been independently argued to exist in other languages. However, the finding that structures of both kinds can co-exist within the same language supports the claim that possessor raising, or external possession, is not a uniform phenomenon crosslinguistically.

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