

Title: The Anatomy of a New Possessor in Russian
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This paper discusses the syntax and semantics of a possessive construction in Russian that has thus far gone unnoticed in the literature. As is well known, Russian expresses predicative possession with the verb *est'/byt'* 'to be'. Animate possessors occur in the genitive case with the preposition *u* 'at', while the possessum occurs in the nominative case (1a). If the possessor is a complex DP involving an additional possessor, that possessor occurs as an adnominal genitive DP (1b), as it does in other DP-internal possessive contexts (1c–d).

- (1) a. **U Ivana** (est') mašina.
 at Ivan.GEN (be) car.NOM
 'Ivan has a car.'
- b. **U materi Ivana** (est') mašina.
 at mother.GEN Ivan.GEN (be) car.NOM
 'Ivan's mother has a car.'
- c. **Ja znaju mat' Ivana.**
 I.NOM know mother.ACC Ivan.GEN
 'I know Ivan's mother.'
- d. **My govorim o materi Ivana.**
 We.NOM talk about mother.PREP Ivan.GEN
 'We're talking about Ivan's mother.'

However, sentences such as (1b) can be expressed using a different construction, where each possessor is individually introduced by the preposition *u* 'at,' as shown in (2). Questions arise as to what the underlying structure of this construction is and what its semantic or syntactic restrictions are.

- (2) a. **U Ivana u materi** (est') mašina.
 at Ivan.GEN at mother.GEN (be) car.NOM
 'Ivan's mother has a car.'
- b. **U menja u sosedu** (est') mašina.
 at me.GEN at neighbor.GEN (be) car.NOM
 'My neighbor has a car.'

It is tempting to assimilate this construction to other apparent cases of "external possessors" in Russian (Markman 2007). However, the external possessors in (2) have neither the affected reading associated with the external possessors in (3) nor the control or "under X's supervision" reading in (4) (among other possible interpretations of external possessors in various contexts; see Wood and Livitz 2012 for discussion). Among additional potential semantic constraints, the external possessors in (2) can be Topics, express Focus (including *wh*-phrases), are not limited to definite DPs, and can contain existential or universal quantifiers.

- (3) a. **Dima s"el u nas ves' sup.**
 Dima.NOM ate at us.GEN all soup.ACC
 'Dima ate up all our soup on us.'
- b. **Vasja slomal u menja komp'juter.**
 Vasya.NOM broke at me.GEN computer.ACC
 'Vasya broke my computer on me.'
- (4) **U Peti vse podčinennye rabotajut po desjat' časov v den'.**
 at Petja.GEN all subordinates.NOM work *po* ten hours in day
 'Under Petya's supervision, all employees work ten hours a day.' (Wood and Livitz 2012)

Syntactically, it can be shown that the external possessors in (2) do not form a constituent with the second *u*-PP, since other constituents, such as temporal adverbials, can intervene between the two PPs (5). This suggests an analysis whereby the external possessor clearly raises to a position above the DP that it takes as its possessum (e.g., Spec, TP or Spec, FinP). A proposal for the syntax underlying this construction is presented drawing on constructions involving *u*-doubling with scrambling out of *u*-PPs, as in (6).

- (5) a. **U menja v subbotu u sosedu** den' roždenija.
 at me.GEN on Saturday at neighbor.GEN day.NOM birth.GEN
 'On Saturday my neighbor has a birthday.'
- b. **U menja teper' u stola** tol'ko tri nožki.
 at me.GEN now at table.GEN only 3 legs
 'My table now has only three legs.'
- (6) a. **U doma_i u moego t_i vysokie steny.**

at house.GEN at my.GEN tall walls
'My house has tall walls.'

- b. U vse_x_i u t_i materej est' svoi tajny.
at all.GEN at mothers.GEN be self's secrets
'All mothers have their secrets.'

Markman, Vita. 2007. "Applicatives *To, From, and At*: On Dative and Locative Possessors in Russian." Paper presented at NELS 38.

Wood, Jim and Inna Livitz. 2012. "What Isn't an Oblique Subject in Russian and Icelandic?" Paper presented at the workshop "Non-Canonically Case-marked Subjects," Iceland.