

*Possessors in Flemish and German:  
syntactic (in)dependency of the (external)  
possessor on the possessee*

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# 1. Introduction

- Flemish External Possession (FEP)

1. 't Is spijtig da Jan toen just zenen velo kapot was.  
*it is unfortunate that Jan then just his bike broken was*

‘It’s unfortunate that Jan’s bike was broken just then.’

(Haegeman, 2011, Haegeman and van Koppen, 2012, Haegeman and Danckaert, 2013)

# 1. Introduction

- Flemish External Possession (FEP)
  - German Possessive Pronoun Dative (GPPD) (2)
  - German Definite Article Dative (GDAD) (3)
2. Mein Bruder hat **der Mami** leider **ihr Auto** zu Schrott gefahren.  
*my brother has the mom.DAT unfortunately her car to scrap driven*  
‘Unfortunately, my brother totalled mom’s car (totalled the car on mom).’  
(Lee-Schoenfeld, 2006:104 (6a); added adjunct [Buelens&D’Hulster])
3. Mein Bruder hat **der Mami** leider **das Auto** zu Schrott gefahren.  
*my brother has the mom.DAT unfortunately the car to scrap driven*  
‘Unfortunately, my brother totalled mom’s car (totalled the car on mom).’  
(Lee-Schoenfeld, 2006; added adjunct [B&D])

## **Goal of presentation:**

- Provide arguments to show that FEP is an external possessor, with syntactic dependency of the possessor DP on the possessee DP.
- Show that FEP behaves more like the GDAD (external possession) than the superficially more similar GPPD (Affectee DP coreferent with a possessive pronoun).

## 2. Data: Flemish External Possessor

- DP-internal possession in Flemish and Dutch
4. Het is Marie's velo die kapot is. prenominal 's genitive  
*it is Marie's bike that broken is*
  5. Het is de velo van Marie die kapot is. postnominal van-PP  
*it is the bike of Marie that broken is*
  6. Het is Marie eur velo die kapot is. doubling pattern  
*it is Marie her<sub>.f.sg</sub> bike that broken is*  
'It's Mary's bike that's broken.'

## 2. Data: Flemish External Possessor

- Flemish External Possessor (FEP)
7. 't Moest lukken dat Marie toen just eur velo kapot was.  
*it had-to happen that Marie then just her<sub>f.sg</sub> bike broken was*  
'It so happened that Mary's bike was broken just then.'
- DP-internal doubling pattern
8. Het is Marie eur velo die kapot is.  
*it is Marie her<sub>f.sg</sub> bike that broken is*  
'It's Mary's bike that's broken.'

## 2. Data: Flemish External Possessor

- FEP is restricted to non-standard spoken Dutch in Flanders.
- FEP can occur with the possessee DP in subject position (9), object position (10) and predicate position (11).

't Moest lukken dat ...  
*it had-to happen that*

9. ... Marie toen just eur velo kapot was.  
*Mary then just her<sub>f.sg</sub> bike.SUBJ broken was*  
'It so happened that Mary's bike was broken just then.'
10. ... Pieter Marie toen just eur velo geleend had.  
*Pieter Mary then just her<sub>f.sg</sub> bike.DO borrowed had*  
'It so happened that Pieter had borrowed Mary's bike just then.'
11. ... het Marie toen just eur verjaardag was.  
*it Mary then just her<sub>f.sg</sub> birthday.PRED was*  
'It so happened that it was Mary's birthday just then.'



## 2. Data: Flemish External Possessor (Affectee)

- The FEP is obligatorily interpreted as an affected argument:
  - Hole (2005:8) defines an affected argument as an argument that is both consciously involved in and causally affected by the eventuality at hand.
  - Aliveness is seen as a criterium for affectedness by Hole (2006) and is rephrased as a “ban on the dead possessor” by Deal (2010). The idea is that a dead participant cannot be affected by an event.

## 2. Data: Flemish External Possessor (Affectee)

- The ‘ban on the dead Possessor’ is present for the FEP (12), but not for the DP-internal doubling pattern (13)

12. ... omdat ik **men grootmoeder** toen just **eur ring** kwijt was.  
*because I my grandmother then just her<sub>f.sg</sub> ring lost was*  
‘... because I had lost my grandmother’s ring just then .’

13. ... omdat ik **men grootmoeder** **eur ring** toen just kwijt was.  
*because I my grandmother her<sub>f.sg</sub> ring then just lost was*  
‘... because I had lost my grandmother’s ring just then .’

- (12), the DP-internal doubling pattern, is acceptable whether or not the grandmother in question is alive or dead.
- (13), the FEP pattern, is only acceptable when the grandmother is alive.

## 2. Data: Flemish External Possessor (subject)

- The subject-related external possessor has subject properties:
  - Like indefinite subjects (14), indefinite external possessors trigger obligatory *er*-insertion (15).

14. ... dan **\*(der)** veel studenten underen GSM afzetten.  
*that there many students their<sub>.m.sg</sub> mobile off.switch*  
'... that many students switch their phones off.'

(Haegeman & Danckaert, 2013, (25b))

15. ... dan **\*(der)** veel studenten atent underen GSM af stoat.  
*that there many students always their<sub>.m.sg</sub> phone off.stands*  
'... that many students' phones are always off.'

(Haegeman & Danckaert, 2013, (25a))

## 2. Data: Flemish External Possessor (subject)

- The complementizer agrees with the External Possessor (16) rather than with the subject, as it does in patterns with DP-internal possession (17):

16. ... **omda-n**/\*omdat **André en Valère** toen juste **underen** **computer** kapot  
*because.pl/\* .sg André and Valère then just their computer broken*  
**was**/\*woaren.

*was.sg/\*were.pl*

‘... because André and Valère’s computer broke down just then.’

17. ... \*omda-n/**omdat** **André en Valère** **underen** **computer** toen juste kapot  
*because.pl.sg André and Valère their computer then just broken*  
**was**/\*woaren.

*was/\*were*

‘... because André and Valère’s computer broke down just then.’

(Haegeman & Danckaert, 2013, (24b))

### 3. Similar patterns in German

#### 3.1 The German Possessive Pronoun Dative (GPPD)

- The GPPD (18) has surface similarities with the FEP (19):

18. Mein Bruder hat **der Mami** leider **ihr Auto** zu Schrott gefahren.  
*my brother has the mom.DAT unfortunately her car to scrap driven*  
'Unfortunately, my brother totalled mom's car.'

(Lee-Schoenfeld, 2006:104 (6a); added adjunct [Buelens&D'Hulster])

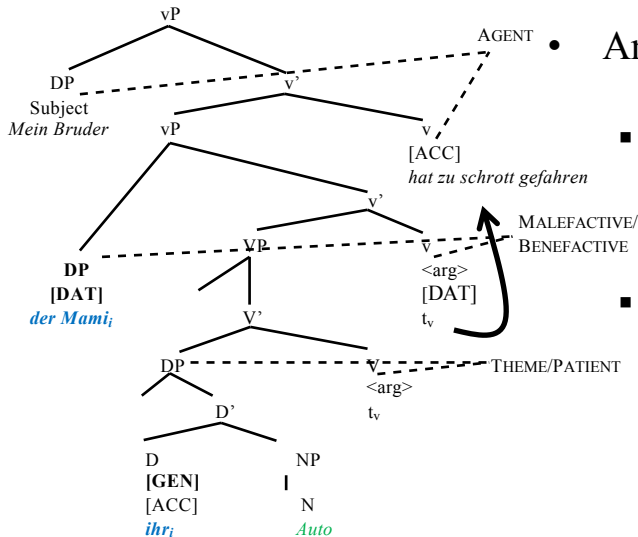
19. Mijn broer had **moeder toen just haar auto** in de gracht gereden,  
*my brother had mother then just her car in the ditch driven*  
'My brother had just then driven mother's car in a ditch,'

- The possessee DP includes a possessive pronoun
- The DP-internal counterpart also has possessive pronoun

Der Mami **ihr Auto** / moeder **haar auto**

## 3. Similar patterns in German

### 3.1 The German Possessive Pronoun Dative (GPPD)



Mein Bruder hat *der Mami ihr* Auto zu Schrott gefahren  
 'My brother has totaled mom's car.'

• Analysis (Lee-Schoenfeld 2006):

- Dative DP: Affectee Argument which corefers with the possessive pronoun in possessee DP;
- Not an instance of External Possession.

## 3. Similar patterns in German

### 3.2. The German Definite Article Dative (GDAD)

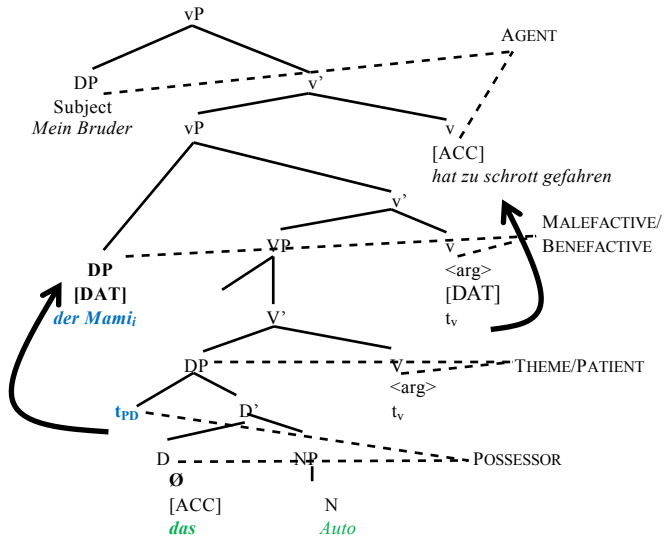
- The GDAD (20) has less obvious similarities with the FEP: no possessive pronoun

20. Mein Bruder hat **der Mami** leider **das Auto** zu Schrott gefahren.  
*my brother has the mom.DAT unfortunately the car to scrap driven*  
'Unfortunately, my brother totalled mom's car (totalled the car on mom).'

(Lee-Schoenfeld, 2006; added adjunct [B&D])

# 3. Similar patterns in German

## 3.2. The German Definite Article Dative (GDAD)



Mein Bruder hat *der Mami das Auto* zu Schrott gefahren.  
 'My brother has totaled mom's car.'

- Analysis (Lee-Schoenfeld 2006):
  - Dative DP: originates in the specifier of the possessee DP;
  - The direct article in D cannot assign case to its specifier;
  - Dative DP moves to an Affectee position to receive Case.



## **3. Similar patterns in German**

### **3.2. The German Definite Article Dative (GDAD)**

- Affectee position is associated with the matrix verb:
  - Matrix verb must be able to have an interpretation of affectedness;
  - Affectedness is syntactically encoded as a light verb;
  - Specifier of the light verb projection can assign/check Dative Case.

## 4. Comparing the FEP with the German Patterns

### 4.1. Arguments for syntactic dependency of the possessor DP on the possessee DP (Lee-Schoenfeld 2006)

- a) Affectee argument obligatorily interpreted as Possessor of possessee DP
- b) Locality: no possession inside complex NPs
- c) Focus-fronting of the possessee DP

Claim:

- GDAD: syntactic dependency
- FEP: syntactic dependency
- GPPD: no syntactic dependency

## 4.1 Arguments for syntactic dependency of the possessor DP on the possessee DP

### a) Affectee argument is Possessor of possessee DP

GDAD: Possessor role must be assigned to the dative argument

21. a. \***Mein Bruder<sub>i</sub>** hat **der Mami** leider **das<sub>i</sub>** **Auto** zu Schrott gefahren.  
*my brother has the mom<sub>DAT</sub> alas the car to scrap driven*  
Intended reading: ‘Unfortunately, my brother has totaled his car to the detriment of mum.’
- b. Mein Bruder<sub>i</sub> hat **der Mami** leider **das<sub>i</sub>** **Auto** zu Schrott gefahren.  
*my brother has the mom<sub>DAT</sub> alas the car to scrap driven*  
‘Unfortunately, my brother totalled mom’s car (totalled the car on mom).’

## 4.1 Arguments for syntactic dependency of the possessor DP on the possessee DP

### a) Affectee argument is Possessor of possessee DP

GDAD: Possessor role must be assigned to the dative argument

FEP: Possessor role must be assigned to the dative argument

22. a. \*Ik heb gezien dat **Angela<sub>i</sub>** **Karel** toen just **eur<sub>i</sub>** **afwas** gedaan heeft.  
*I have seen that Angela Carl.<sub>m.sg</sub> then just her.<sub>f.sg</sub> dishes done has*  
Intended reading: 'I have seen that Angela has just then done her dishes to the benefit of Carl.'
- b. Ik heb gezien dat Angela **Karel<sub>i</sub>** toen just **zijn<sub>i</sub>** **afwas** gedaan heeft.  
*I have seen that Angela Carl.<sub>m.sg</sub> then just his.<sub>m.sg</sub> dishes done has*  
'I have seen that Angela has just then done Carl's dishes (to his benefit).'

## 4.1 Arguments for syntactic dependency of the possessor DP on the possessee DP

### a) Affectee argument is Possessor of possessee DP

GDAD: Possessor role must be assigned to the dative argument

FEP: Possessor role must be assigned to the dative argument

GPPD: Possessor role can be assigned to a different constituent

23. a. ?**Mein Bruder<sub>i</sub>** hat **der Mami<sub>i</sub>** leider sein **Auto<sub>i</sub>** zu Schrott gefahren.  
*my brother has the mom.<sub>DAT</sub> alas his car to scrap driven*  
'Unfortunately, my brother has totaled his car to the detriment of mum.'
- b. Mein Bruder hat **der Mami<sub>i</sub>** leider ihr **Auto<sub>i</sub>** zu Schrott gefahren.  
*my brother has the mom.<sub>DAT</sub> alas her car to scrap driven*  
'Unfortunately, my brother totaled mom's car.'

## 4.1 Arguments for syntactic dependency of the possessor DP on the possessee DP

### b) Locality: no possession inside complex NPs

GDAD: possessor DP cannot be associated with a possessee inside a complex DP

24. Tim pflegte [Lena] [das Fohlen [der Stute]] gesund.  
*Tim treated Lena.DAT the foal the mare.GEN healthy*  
'Tim cured the mare's foal which belongs to Lena.' (Lena is the owner of the foal)  
\*'Tim cured the foal of the mare which belongs to Lena.' (Lena is the owner of the mare)  
(Lee-Schoenfeld, 2006:13 (18a))

## 4.1 Arguments for syntactic dependency of the possessor DP on the possessee DP

### b) Locality: no possession inside complex NPs

GDAD: possessor DP cannot be associated with a possessee inside a complex DP

FEP: possessor DP cannot be associated with a possessee inside a complex DP

25. a. \* ... dat [Lieven]toen just [het stuur [van [zijn **velo**]] gebroken was.  
*that Lieven then just the handlebars of his bike broken were*  
'... that the handlebars of Lieven's bike were broken just then.'

(Haegeman, 2011:11 (42a))

- b. ... dat [Lieven]toen just [zijn **stuur** [van [zijn **velo**]] gebroken was.  
*that Lieven then just his handlebars of his bike broken were*  
'... that Lieven's handlebars of his bike were broken just then.'

## 4.1 Arguments for syntactic dependency of the possessor DP on the possessee DP

### b) Locality: no possession inside complex NPs

GDAD: possessor DP cannot be associated with a possessee inside a complex DP

FEP: possessor DP cannot be associated with a possessee inside a complex DP

GPPD: possessor DP can be associated with a possessee inside a complex DP

26. a. Tim pflegte [Lena<sub>i</sub>] [das Fohlen [ihre Stute<sub>i</sub>]] gesund.  
*Tim treated Lena<sub>DAT</sub> the foal her mare<sub>GEN</sub> healthy*  
'Tim cured the foal of the mare which belongs to Lena.'



## 4.1 Arguments for syntactic dependency of the possessor DP on the possessee DP

### c) Focus-fronting of the possessee DP

GDAD: possessee DP can be focus-fronted

27. **DAS AUTO** hat er **der Mami** zu Schrott gefahren.  
*the car has he the mom.DAT to scrap driven*  
'Mom's CAR he totaled.' (It is THE CAR he totaled on mom)

(Lee-Schoenfeld, 2006: 104 (3b))

## 4.1 Arguments for syntactic dependency of the possessor DP on the possessee DP

### c) Focus-fronting of the possessee DP

GDAD: possessee DP can be focus-fronted

FEP: possessee DP cannot be focus-fronted

28. \***ZIJN HANDEN** heeft Marie **Pieter** gewassen  
*his hands has Marie Pieter washed*  
'HIS HANDS has Marie washed on Pieter.'  
(It was his hands which Marie had washed (on Pieter))

## 4.1 Arguments for syntactic dependency of the possessor DP on the possessee DP

### c) Focus-fronting of the possessee DP

GDAD: possessee DP can be focus-fronted

FEP: possessee DP cannot be focus-fronted

GPPD: possessee DP can be focus-fronted

29. IHR AUTO hat er der Mami zu Schrott gefahren.  
*her car has he the mom.DAT to scrap driven*  
'Mom's CAR he totaled.' (It is HER CAR he totaled on mom)

## 4.2. FEP and GDAD

### a) C-Command restriction on the possessee DP

GDAD: possessee DP must be c-commanded (in its base-position) by the possessor DP

30. a. \* **Der Hund** ist **Lena** herumgelaufen.  
*the dog is Lena.DAT around.run*  
'Lena's dog ran around.'
- b. **Der Hund** ist **Lena** überfahren wurden.  
*the dog is Lena.Dat over.driven PASS*  
'Lena's dog was run over.'

## 4.2. FEP and GDAD

### a) C-Command restriction on the possessee DP

GDAD: possessee DP must be c-commanded (in its base-position) by the possessor DP

FEP: possessee DP must always be c-commanded by the possessor DP

31. \* **ZIJN HANDEN** heeft Marie **Pieter** gewassen  
*his hands has Marie Pieter washed*  
'HIS HANDS has Marie washed on Pieter.'

## 4.2. FEP and GDAD

### b) Clause-mate condition

GDAD: possessor DP and possessee DP are clause-mates

- no subject-containing category can intervene between possessor and possessee

32. a. \* Jan hat **Luise** **beschlossen** [<sub>VP/IP</sub> **die Haare** zu waschen].

*Jan has Luise<sub>DAT</sub> decided the hair to wash*

‘Jan has decided to wash Luise’s hair.’

b. Jan hat **Luise** **versucht** [<sub>VP</sub> **die Haare** zu waschen].

*Jan has Luise<sub>DAT</sub> tried the hair to wash*

‘Jan has tried to wash Luise’s hair.’

## 4.2. FEP and GDAD

### b) Clause-mate condition

GDAD: possessor DP and possessee DP are clause-mates

FEP: negative concord between negated external possessor and sentential negation

33. ... dat er **geeneenen** student toen juste zenen GSM **nie meer** anstond.  
*that there no student then just his.m.sg mobile no more on.stood.sg*  
'... that no student had their phone on at that moment.'

(Haegeman, 2011:10 (38))

## Summary

	GDAD	FEP	GPPD
Possessive linking element	definite article	possessive pronoun	possessive pronoun
Element other than affectee can carry Possessor role	no	no	yes
Possessor can be related to element embedded within complex DP	no	no	yes
Can be focus-moved	yes	no	yes

	FEP	GDAD
C-command	possessor must c-command possessee	possessor must c-command base position of possessee
Clausemates	possessor and possessee must be clausemates	possessor and possessee must be clause mates



## 5. FEP: an analysis

### 5.1. Case as motivation for movement

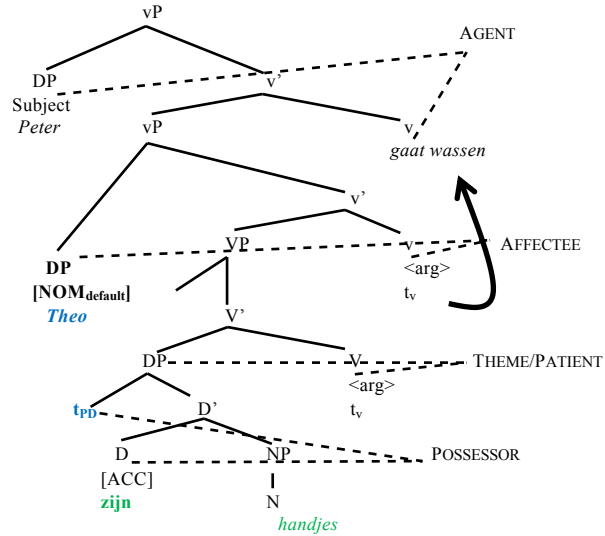
- **GDAD**: case as trigger for movement (definite article cannot assign case to possessor DP in Specifier of possessee DP) (L-S 2006).
- **FEP**: possessive pronoun used in both doubling pattern (34a) and FEP (34b)  
→ Case as trigger unlikely,

34. a. ... dat Marie eur velo toen just kapot was.  
*that Marie her bike then just broken was*  
... 'that Marie's bike was broken just then.'

b. ... dat Marie toen just eur velo kapot was.  
*that Marie then just her bike broken was*  
... 'that Marie's bike was broken just then.'

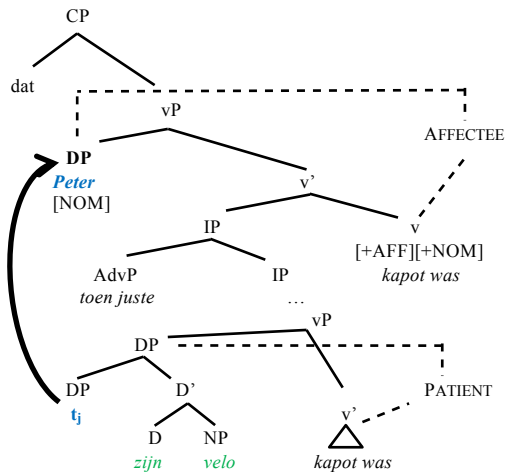
## 5. FEP: an analysis

### 5.2. Analysis of the object-related Flemish External Possessor



## 5. FEP: an analysis

### 5.3. Analysis of the subject-related Flemish External Possessor



## 6. Conclusions

- FEP is a true External Possessor:
  - Argument of the verb, introduced by an Applicative head.
  - Interpretation as Possessor of a DP argument.
- Despite surface similarities, the FEP behaves more like the syntactically dependent GDAD than the syntactically independent GPPD:
  - Obligatory coreferentiality
  - Ban on possession inside complex DPs
- The FEP seems more restrictive than the GDAD:
  - C-command
  - further locality constraints