Enclitic possessive constructions in the dialect of Verzino

Eugenia Greco

(Goethe-University Frankfurt)

In this work, I focus on the internal structure of the DP of kinship nouns and in particular, on the way the relational possessor is realized in the upper part of the DP. I will claim that the presence or absence of the determiner in possessed kinship NPs is due to the fact that the possessive itself moves to the D position, thus preventing the realization of the article.

The empirical domain I analyze is the dialect of Verzino (Calabria, Italy) which displays an interesting alternation between strong and enclitic possessives: example (1a) illustrates the unmarked structure with strong possessives for most Southern Italian dialects and (1b) the corresponding structure in Standard Italian, where the determiner can only be omitted with kinship nouns if the possessive occurs prenominally.

(1) a. **u** tsiɔ **miɔ**/**tuɔ**/**suɔ** ‘the uncle my/your/his/her’ (Verzino)

 b. **mio**/**tuo**/**suo** zio ‘my/your/his/her uncle’ (Standard It.)

One might conclude that Verzinese needs the lexicalization of the determiner and lacks possessive movement that takes place in Standard Italian. But note that in contrast to Standard Italian, Verzinese also allows enclitic possessives for first and second person singular and third person singular/plural. Furthermore, the enclitic possessives of first and second person singular are in complementary distribution with the determiner (2a), whereas the enclitic possessive of third person singular/plural must co-occur with the determiner (2b).

(2) a. tsiə**ma**, tsiə**ta** ‘uncle-my/-your’ (Verzino)

 b. **u** tsiə**sɔ** ‘the uncle-his/her/their’

I will show that the distinction between first and second person on the one hand and third person on the other is due to the necessity of deictic possessives to be bound by the speaker´s coordinates located in the left periphery of the clause (see Giorgi 2010). This distinction has consequences on the way the movements internal to the DP have to be analyzed. Longobardi (1996) claims that kinship nouns are similar to proper names and can occupy D° and the possessive raises to Spec-DP (see the unmarked structure Poss-N in Standard Italian (1b)). Along these lines, I argue that the enclitic possessives of first and second person first attract the N to Poss° and then raises from Poss° to D°, while the Spec-D position remains empty (3a). In third person enclitic possessive constructions the determiner occupies D°, while the head noun and the EP are on the lower head Poss° (3b), since third person possessives do not need to be bound by the speaker´s coordinate and can remain lower in the structure.

(3) a. [DP [D° **tsiə-ta**] [PossP [Poss° ~~tsiə~~-~~ta~~] [NP [N° ~~tsiə~~]]]]

 b. [DP [D° **a**] [PossP [Poss° **tsiə-sa**] [NP [N° ~~tsiə~~]]]]

In the talk, I will provide empirical arguments for this analysis (see (3)) and discuss the structural differences of the (non)-occurrence of the determiner and the (enclitic) possessives.

**Giorgi**, A. 2010: *About the Speaker: Towards a Syntax of Indexicality*, Oxford Studies in Theoretical Linguistics, Oxford, Oxford University Press. **Longobardi**, G. 1996: The Syntax of N-raising: a minimalist theory, *OTS Working Papers* 96-005: 1-55.