

**With or without the definite article:**  
**On the syntax of anaphoric possessor strategies in Hungarian**  
*short title for running head: With or without the definite article*

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**Abstract**

That noun phrases may constitute a binding domain is a key component among the parallelisms between the syntax of noun phrases and clauses. Reuland (2007, 2011) and Despić (2011, 2015) have shown recently that the definite article plays a crucial role in delimiting this domain, since dedicated possessive reflexive anaphors are only possible in languages that lack a prenominal definite article. Hungarian has several anaphoric possessor strategies, which vary in whether they require, allow, or prohibit the use of the definite article in the possessive noun phrase. This paper gives an overview of the grammar of these strategies, and presents a discussion of the results of a questionnaire survey that was conducted to better understand the delicate distribution of the definite article in these constructions. The importance of these Hungarian data lies in showing that Reuland's conjecture describes an important factor not only in cross-linguistic, but also in language internal variation in definite article use in possessive DP's.

**key words:**

anaphor, definite article, Hungarian, logophor, noun phrase, phase, possessive, pronoun, reflexive, reciprocal

## 1. Introduction

The Hungarian possessive construction has figured prominently in research on the syntax of the noun phrase, and, in particular, in the development of the parallel analysis of the structure of the noun phrase and the clause (see Szabolcsi 1983, 1987, 1989, 1994). It is expected under the analogous treatment of the DP and the CP that the possessive noun phrase acts as a binding domain, a prediction that É. Kiss (1987) shows to be accurate for Hungarian. What escaped attention in the GB-theoretic analyses as well as in the subsequent literature, is the crucial role that the definite article plays in the determination of this binding domain.<sup>1</sup> This paper offers an overview of the grammar of the major anaphoric possessor strategies of Hungarian, and it makes the principal claim that the dependency between anaphoric possessor and matrix antecedent is local in the absence of a definite article in the D-head, but it is non-local in its presence.

In Hungarian, each argument anaphor can function as an anaphoric possessor, including the primary reflexive *maga* ‘oneself’ (1b) and the complex reflexive *önmaga* ‘oneself’ (2b), as well as the reciprocal *egymás* ‘each other’ (2a). The definite article shows an interesting distribution across these strategies: it is obligatory if the possessor is a pronoun (irrespective of whether it is coreferential with a matrix antecedent or not) or the primary reflexive (1), but it is ungrammatical or barely acceptable if the possessor is the reciprocal anaphor or the complex reflexive (2).<sup>2</sup>

- (1) a. *János<sub>i</sub> ismeri [DP \*(az) ő<sub>i/k</sub> korlát-a-i-t].*  
John know.3SG the he limit-POSS-PL-ACC  
‘John knows his limits.’
- b. *János<sub>i</sub> ismeri [DP \*(a) maga<sub>i/\*k</sub> korlát-a-i-t].*  
John know.3SG the oneself limit-POSS-PL-ACC  
‘John knows his limits.’

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<sup>1</sup> The list of further standard references on the Hungarian possessive noun phrase include Bartos (1999), Dékány (2011), den Dikken (1999, 2006), É. Kiss (2000, 2002) and Laczkó (1995). I refer the reader to these works for comprehensive descriptions of the syntax of the Hungarian noun phrase. In this paper, I only focus on details that are directly relevant for our purposes.

<sup>2</sup> Abbreviations in the glosses: 1 = first person, 2 = second person, 3 = third person, ACC = accusative case, COND = conditional mood marker, DAT = dative case, DEV = deverbal nominalizing suffix, FREQ = frequentative suffix, IMP = imperative mood marker, MASC = masculine, PL = plural, POSS = possessedness suffix (on the possessum), PRT = verbal particle, SG = singular.

- (2) a. A *fiúk<sub>i</sub>* *ismerik* [DP (\*/?<sup>?</sup> *az*) *egymás<sub>i/\*k</sub>* *korlát-a-i-t*].  
 the boys know.3PL the each\_other limit-POSS-PL-ACC  
 ‘The boys know each other’s limits.’
- b. A *fiúk<sub>i</sub>* *ismerik* [DP (\*/?<sup>?</sup> *az*) *önmaguk<sub>i/\*k</sub>* *korlát-a-i-t*].  
 the boys know.3PL the themselves limit-POSS-PL-ACC  
 ‘The boys know their own limits.’

This partition may seem surprising at first sight, since the primary reflexive patterns up with the personal pronoun (1), rather than with the rest of the anaphors (2).

In recent work (Rákosi 2017), I have shown that this distribution can be better understood from the vantage point of Reuland’s (2007, 2011) conjecture on dedicated possessive reflexives. Reuland argues that dedicated possessive reflexives (like the Latin *suus* ‘self’s’ or the Russian *svoj* ‘self’s’) are available only in languages without a prenominal definite article, which creates an impenetrable domain for binding. As is, this conjecture is a typological universal, but this line of inquiry provides an explanatory framework for the Hungarian data in (1) and (2). The dependency between the anaphor and antecedent is local in the case of the examples in (2), and it is non-local in (1). This prevents a Principle B violation in (1a), and this renders the reflexive in (1b) an exempt anaphor.

My fundamental aim in this paper is to provide further support for this analysis. I have investigated transitive constructions in my earlier work (as in (1) and (2)), but judgements on the distribution of the definite article may be more subtle in other syntactic contexts. To gain a better understanding of the data patterns, I have conducted a questionnaire study. The results of this study strengthen the principal hypothesis on the role of the definite article in the determination of the binding domain for anaphoric possessors in Hungarian. In particular, I argue that possessive anaphors are either exempt in the presence of the definite article in the D-head of the possessive phrase, or they have an antecedent inside of the possessive construction. These results also give further support to the claim that binding domains are phase-based and the DP is a phase (see Despić 2011, 2013, 2015 for more on these claims in the context of possessive reflexives).

The structure of the paper is as follows. In section 2, I give a brief overview of Reuland’s observation and related work, as well as a survey of pertinent remarks in the literature on Hungarian. In section 3, I describe the results of the questionnaire survey, and provide an analysis for each of the anaphoric possessor constructions discussed. Section 4 rounds up the paper with the conclusions and an outlook on remaining research questions.

## 2. The background of the study

### 2.1. Reuland's (2007, 2011) conjecture on dedicated possessive reflexives

Languages differ in whether they employ a dedicated possessive reflexive or not. English, for example, does not avail itself of this option. This creates a potential ambiguity between bound variable and referential readings of possessive pronouns as in (3).

(3) *Everyone<sub>i</sub> loves his<sub>i/k</sub> mother.*

The two readings are disambiguated through the use of two distinct possessive pronoun strategies in many languages. The minimal pair in (4) is from Serbo-Croatian.

(4) *Serbo-Croatian* (Marelj: 2011, 205)

a. *Svako<sub>i</sub> voli njegovu<sub>\*i/k</sub> majku.*  
everyone loves his.3SG.MASC mother  
'Everyone loves his mother.'

b. *Svako<sub>i</sub> voli svoju<sub>i/\*k</sub> majku.*  
everyone loves self's mother  
'Everyone loves his mother.'

Serbo-Croatian has a  $\phi$ -complete pronominal possessor fully specified for person, number, and gender. This pronoun is referential, and it does not license the bound variable reading in (4a). Serbo-Croatian also has a dedicated possessive reflexive, *svoj*, which is  $\phi$ -deficient (4b), and which needs to be bound to a matrix antecedent.<sup>3</sup>

Reuland (2011: 167) observes that the availability of dedicated possessive reflexives of the *svoj*-type strongly correlates with the absence of pronominal definiteness marking. In other words, dedicated possessive reflexives are only available in languages with postnominal definiteness marking (Bulgarian, Icelandic, Romanian, Swedish, etc.), or in languages with no definiteness marking at all (Chinese, Hindi-Urdu, Latin, Russian, *Serbo-Croatian*, etc.).<sup>4</sup> Both Reuland and Marelj (2011) note that Italian, French and Spanish contrast with their Latin ancestor in a particularly interesting manner. Latin has no definiteness marking, and it has a dedicated possessive reflexive *suus*, together with a fully specified pronominal paradigm (*eius* 'his'), with a share of labour between the two that is similar to what is attested in Serbo-Croatian.

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<sup>3</sup> Marelj (2011) and Despić (2013) both provide an in-depth discussion of the Serbo-Croatian data, though their analyses differ. We discuss the relevant aspects of Despić's proposal below.

<sup>4</sup> Despić (2015: 203) provides a detailed inventory of these language types.

Italian has a prenominal definite article, and the cognate of the Latin *suus* patterns up with the English possessive pronouns in licensing both referential and bound variable readings:

- (5) *Italian* (Reuland: 2011, 168)  
*Gianni<sub>i</sub> ama [DP le sue<sub>i/k</sub> due macchine].*  
 Gianni loves the his two cars  
 ‘Gianni loves his two cars.’

So a change towards overt coding of definiteness brought about important changes in the use of the descendants of *suus*. Reuland assumes furthermore that the D-position is also present in possessives in languages that have an overt definite article but do not employ it in possessive structures. English and Dutch are such languages. In sum, the gist of Reuland’s conjecture is that the D-position marks an impenetrable domain for binding, rendering the dedicated possessive reflexive strategy an unavailable option in languages that have prenominal definite articles.

Reuland leaves it open whether the definite article in these languages causes a minimality intervention or it defines a phase domain. The latter position is argued at length in Despić (2015). To account for the English facts specifically, he assumes that reciprocal and pronominal possessors do not occupy the same position.<sup>5</sup> Prenominal possessors are situated in the complement of the D head, in Spec,PossP (6b). Given that the DP is a phase, and binding domains are phase-based, pronominal possessors are free to take antecedents outside of their local domain. So they can be bound by the subject, as happens in (3). Reciprocals, on the other hand, are in Spec,DP, with the possessive morpheme *’s* occupying the D-position (6a).

- (6) a. [DP *each other* [D’ *s* [POSSP [NP *friends*]]]]  
 b. [DP [D’ D [POSSP *their* [POSSP’ POSS [NP *friends*]]]]]

Since Spec,DP is the edge of the DP phase, reciprocal possessors can be bound directly from the next higher phase (the *v*P). Consequently, a reciprocal possessor bound by an antecedent

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<sup>5</sup> One argument that Despić builds on to substantiate this claim is the fact that reciprocal possessors, like lexical possessors and unlike pronominal possessors, allow the ellipsis of the material that follows them (Despić 2015: 212-213). For arguments that pronominal possessors are lower in the possessive structure than lexical possessors, see Bernstein & Tortora (2005).

- (i) *They could read their own files, but they could not read each other’s.*  
 (ii) *They could read their own files, but they could not read John’s.*  
 (iii) *\*They could read their own files, but they could not read my.*

in the embedding clause is a true anaphor in English.<sup>6</sup>

Hungarian is a DP-language. As such, it does not have a dedicated possessive reflexive, but all the anaphors that can serve as internal arguments of the verb are also licit in the possessor position. They together instantiate each of the three scenarios that Reuland and Despić describe for languages with a prenominal definite article. Some anaphoric possessors co-occur with a definite article in the D-cap of the possessive phrase. This definite article is normally overt, but it can also have a covert form in the right (discourse) context. Other anaphoric possessors are licensed in Spec, DP, without an article in D. Whether the dependency between the possessor and its antecedent is local, is determined by the respective position of the possessor in the possessive DP, and by the concomitant presence or absence of the article in D. Thus Hungarian is a language that itself entertains all the syntactic variation that is attested across DP-languages.

## 2.2. The Hungarian background

É. Kiss (1987) is essentially the sole locus in the literature on Hungarian that extensively discusses issues concerning the claim that the Hungarian noun phrase is a binding domain. In particular, she argues that the pronominal coding of anaphoric possessors is the unmarked case, and using the primary reflexive for the same function is a marked strategy (É. Kiss 1987: 197-198). Consider the following examples for illustration.

- (7) a. *János<sub>i</sub> ismeri [DP az ő<sub>(i)/k</sub> korlát-a-i-t].*  
 John know.3SG the he limit-POSS-PL-ACC  
 ‘John knows his limits.’
- b. *János<sub>i</sub> ismeri [DP a pro<sub>i/(k)</sub> korlát-a-i-t].*  
 John know.3SG the he limit-POSS-PL-ACC  
 ‘John knows his limits.’
- c. *János<sub>i</sub> ismeri [DP a maga<sub>i/\*k</sub> korlát-a-i-t].*  
 John know.3SG the oneself limit-POSS-PL-ACC  
 ‘John knows his limits.’

My own judgements of these data are consistent with those of É. Kiss, and I show in 3.3 below

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<sup>6</sup> The Serbo-Croatian facts observed in (4) above are explained in this approach under the assumption that no DP is projected in the Serbo-Croatian possessive noun phrase. Since Hungarian is a DP-language, articleless languages are not directly relevant for the current discussion. See, among others, Bošković (2005, 2014), Despić (2011, 2013, 2015) and Marelj (2011) for three alternative accounts of the Serbo-Croatian facts.

that the marked nature of (7c) derives from the dependence of the anaphoric possessor on an antecedent that is construed as a perspective holder. Pronominal possessors are normally *pro*-dropped, unless they bear a discourse function. The overt pronominal possessor is typically interpreted as non-coreferential with the subject (7a), whereas the most prominent reading of (7b) is the bound variable interpretation.<sup>7</sup> But this is certainly not a strict syntactic constraint, both sentences can have both interpretations in facilitating contexts.<sup>8</sup>

This interpretation of the data entails that the possessive noun phrase is a binding domain. Another argument to support this claim comes from possessors external to the possessive DP.<sup>9</sup> Possessors can occur outside of the possessive phrase if they receive dative case. If that happens, a pronominal possessor cannot be coreferential with the clausemate subject (8a), and a reflexive needs to be used to obtain the anaphoric interpretation (8b).<sup>10</sup>

- (8) a. *János<sub>i</sub> csak neki\*<sub>i/k</sub> ismeri [DP a korlát-a-i-t].*  
 John only DAT.3SG know.3SG the limit-POSS-PL-ACC  
 ‘It is only his limits that John knows.’

<sup>7</sup> A reviewer raises the issue of whether the rules that guide the preferential readings of (7a) and (7b) are also relevant in the interpretation of embedded subjects. Though many other factors may intervene in the case of clausal embedding, the covert pronoun strategy is often a sign of topic continuity with the matrix clause (ii), and the overt pronoun is more likely to be used when topic switch happens (i).

- (i) *János<sub>i</sub> megígérte Peti-nek<sub>k</sub> hogy ő<sub>(i)/k</sub> ittmarad.*  
 John promised.3SG Peti-DAT that he here.stay.3SG  
 ‘John promised Pete that he stays here.’
- (ii) *János<sub>i</sub> megígérte Peti-nek<sub>k</sub> hogy pro<sub>i/(k)</sub> ittmarad.*  
 John promised.3SG Pete-DAT that he here.stay.3SG  
 ‘John promised Pete that he stays here.’

Thus pronoun possessors and subject pronouns in finite embedded clauses show a converging pattern in what preferential readings they manifest. For pertinent discussion, see Pléh (1983) on cross-sentential anaphora.

<sup>8</sup> The coreferential use of overt pronouns often becomes more available if some material is added between the possessor and the possessum. This is the preferred option, for example, if the possessum is modified by the speaker-oriented, non-referentially used adjective *kis* ‘little’:

- (i) *János<sub>i</sub> ismeri [DP az ő<sub>i/(k)</sub> kis korlát-a-i-t].*  
 John know.3SG the (s)he little limit-POSS-PL-ACC  
 ‘John knows his little limits.’

<sup>9</sup> In principle, the dative possessor can be truly extracted from its position internal to the possessive DP, or it can be base-generated in the matrix clause (see É. Kiss 2014 for a comprehensive discussion of this variation). The differences between the two constructions do not matter for the argument presented here.

<sup>10</sup> (8b) arguably has a marked character, just like (7c). But this has nothing to do with the binding facts, and (8b) sharply contrasts with (8a) in grammaticality.

- b. *János<sub>i</sub> csak magá-nak<sub>i/\*k</sub> ismeri [DP a korlát-a-i-t].*  
 John only himself-DAT know.3SG the limit-POSS-PL-ACC  
 ‘It is only his limits that John knows.’

The contrast between (7a) and (8a) is strong, and it instructs us once again that the possessive DP is a distinct binding domain.

The facts concerning the use of the definite article in these constructions, as I argue in this paper, point towards the same conclusion. It is all the more interesting that these facts have not been investigated in the literature on Hungarian. The single exception that I am aware of is Marác (1989: 396-397). Marác notes that the definite article is unacceptable if the possessor is the reciprocal anaphor. I repeat (2a) as (9) for illustration.

- (9) *A fiúk<sub>i</sub> ismerik [DP (\*/?az) egymás<sub>i/\*k</sub> korlát-a-i-t].*  
 the boys know.3PL the each\_other limit-POSS-PL-ACC  
 ‘The boys know each other’s limits.’

He takes the article facts at face value and draws the conclusion that possessive phrases with reciprocal possessors are smaller than DP.<sup>11</sup> But in fact all the possessive phrases investigated here behave as DP’s in the structure of the Hungarian clause, and there is no positive evidence that the possessive in (9) is smaller than a DP. We will also see in 3.4 that reciprocal possessors are not made incompatible with the definite article: they can co-occur with one if their antecedent is inside of the possessive phrase. Thus Marác’s conclusion seems unwarranted, and a more explanatory account of the behaviour of reciprocal possessors can be elaborated under the assumption that the possessive phrase that contains them is a DP.

### 3. Anaphoric possessors with or without the definite article

#### 3.1. Pronominal possessors

The definite article is obligatory in Hungarian if the possessor is an overt personal pronoun. I repeat (1a) as (10) for illustration.

- (10) *János<sub>i</sub> ismeri [DP \*(az) ő<sub>i/k</sub> korlát-a-i-t].*  
 John know.3SG the he limit-POSS-PL-ACC  
 ‘John knows his limits.’

The only exception to this is the case of vocatives. Szabolcsi (1989) points out that the definite

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<sup>11</sup> They are NP’s in the GB-theoretic framework he adopts.



article is ungrammatical in vocatives in Hungarian:

- (11) a. *Én barát-om, gyere!*                      b. \**Az én barát-om, gyere!*  
 I friend-POSS.1SG come.IMP.2SG              the I friend-POSS.1SG come.IMP.2SG  
 ‘My friend, come!’

In her system, the article is needed to create an argumental noun phrase, and its subordinating function is analogous to the role that the complementizer plays in clauses. In the current proposal, the article creates a phasal domain that helps avoid a potential Principle B violation in case there is a clause-mate antecedent for the pronominal possessor. There is no need for such protection in vocatives, where no potential linguistic antecedent is available. Thus nothing forces the presence of the article in (11), and the ungrammaticality of (11b) may in part be due to reasons of economy in this respect.<sup>12</sup>

The article facts are somewhat more complex if the pronominal possessor is *pro*-dropped, which is in fact the most frequently used strategy to code a dependency with a clause-mate antecedent. The definite article can be omitted mostly if the possessum is uniquely identifiable through the possessor in the context of use. So article drop is natural in (12a) because one normally has a salient and uniquely identifiable homeland. Bus stops are different in this respect, so the drop of the article in (12b) is unnatural.

- (12) a. *Elindultam* [DP (a) *pro szép hazá-m-ból*].  
 departed.1SG              the *pro* beautiful homeland-POSS.1SG-from  
 ‘I departed from my beautiful homeland.’  
 b. *Elindultam* [DP #(a) *pro buszmegálló-nk-tól*].  
 departed.1SG              the *pro* bus\_stop-POSS.1PL-from  
 ‘I departed from our bus stop.’

It is important to emphasize that this article drop is not compulsory in any variety of Hungarian,

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<sup>12</sup> (11a) has a somewhat archaic character, but the contrast between (11a) and (11b) is real nevertheless. Szabolcsi (1989:24) argues that vocatives are DP’s, because the possessor can be dative-marked and then it occupies Spec,DP in her system. Her example contains a lexical possessor, but in fact dative pronominal possessors are ungrammatical in vocatives:

- (i) \**Nek-em (a) barát-om!*  
 DAT-1SG the friend-POSS.1SG  
 ‘My friend!’

It has been argued that Romance vocatives are DPs (Coene et al. 2007), and see Hill (2007) for the same claim concerning Romanian, Bulgarian and Umbundu. The ungrammaticality of (i) leaves us without obvious positive evidence for the presence of a DP-cap in (11a). I leave this issue open here.

and the use of the article is always an option with argument possessives. The awkward nature of article drop in (12b) is the result of the lack of a supportive discourse context, and thus the problem is essentially pragmatic, and not syntactic in nature.<sup>13</sup> I conclude that the definite article can have a phonologically zero variety in Hungarian, licensed in the contexts represented by (12a). Note that the possessum is non-restrictively modified in (12a), and the overt definite article is still not compulsory.<sup>14</sup> This renders an N-to-D movement account of (12a) implausible. The postulation of a covert definite article captures the modifier-possessum linearization facts successfully, and it is also a plausible account of the fact that article drop by *pro*-possessors is never compulsory.

In sum, when the possessor is an overt or a *pro*-dropped personal pronoun, the D-position of the possessive phrase is always filled by the definite article. The article has a phonetically empty variant that is licensed only by *pro*-dropped possessors in the right discourse setting.<sup>15</sup>

- (13) a. [DP [D' *az* [FP *én* [NP *házá-m* ]]]                      b. [DP [D' *a/Ø<sub>DEF</sub>* [FP *pro* [NP *házá-m* ]]]  
           the        I        homeland-POSS.1SG                      the            *pro* homeland-POSS.1SG  
           ‘my homeland’

This means that pronominal possessors are always inside the phasal domain constituted by the possessive DP. Any potential clause-mate antecedent is outside of this domain, and therefore Principle B violations cannot arise in dependencies involving the pronominal possessor and an antecedent external to the possessive structure.

### 3.2. The survey

While the definite article is obligatorily spelt out in the D-head of the possessive phrase if the possessor is a personal pronoun, there is some variation in judgements concerning the use of the article if the possessor is an anaphor. I have conducted a web-based questionnaire survey for a firmer grip on the data, the results of which are incorporated in the discussion in sections 3.3-5.

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<sup>13</sup> Dóla et al. (2017) and Virovec (To appear 2019) are two recent discussions of the complex web of factors that influence the acceptability of article drop in Hungarian possessive constructions with covert pronominal possessors.

<sup>14</sup> This is not the case with personal names, which do require the presence of the definite article if they are modified by an adjective. Dékány (2011: 94) gives an overview of the facts and the pertinent literature.

<sup>15</sup> I simply assume for the purposes of this article that possessors are merged in a functional projection FP. See the literature listed in footnote 1 for different syntactic models of the possessive structure in Hungarian.

The questionnaire contained 26 target sentences with anaphoric possessors and 6 filler sentences. The target sentences formed 13 minimal pairs which only differed in the presence or the absence of the definite article in the possessive DP. The possessor was the reciprocal *egymás* ‘each other’ in 5 sentence pairs, the primary reflexive *maga* ‘oneself’ in 4 sentence pairs, and the complex reflexive *önmagam* ‘oneself’ in 3 pairs.<sup>16</sup> I adopted some of the test sentences from the linguistic literature, whereas the rest were mostly (based on) corpus examples. The major conditions tested were the presence or the absence of a clause-mate antecedent and the respective order of the antecedent and the anaphor. The test sentences only included nominative possessors.<sup>17</sup>

The sentences were presented in a fixed, pre-randomized order with non-adjacent minimal pair test items. The test was self-paced, and participants could see one test item at a time. Participants were asked to evaluate the sentence using a 5-point Likert-scale (5=fully acceptable, 1=totally unacceptable). 149 native speakers participated in the survey, each raised and educated in Hungary. The responses from 8 are not included in the results because these participants’ evaluation diverged from the expected value (5 or 1) by at least 2 points on at least two filler sentences. Therefore the data reported in this paper include judgements from 141 native speakers.<sup>18</sup>

### 3.3. The primary reflexive as a possessor

As we have seen in the previous section, the default strategy to code bound variable readings

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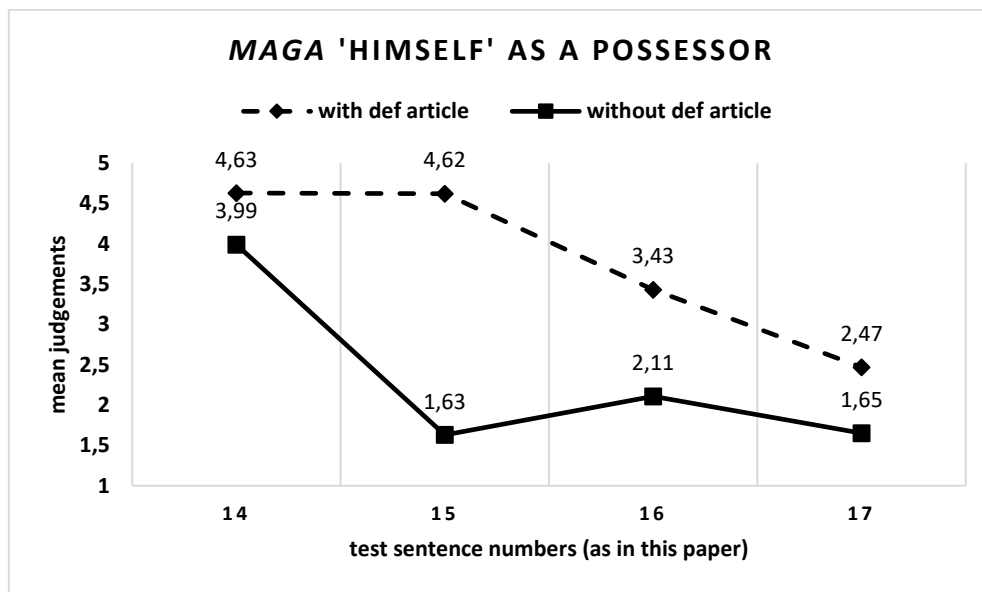
<sup>16</sup> One another pair included the special logophoric reflexive *jómagam* ‘myself’, but I decided not to include it in the current discussion. This reflexive is mostly used in colloquial varieties of Hungarian, but speakers are divided in their overall evaluation of this form. Those who judged it more favourably tended to prefer the absence of the article in the possessive D-head to its absence. This pattern is similar to what we find attested in the case of *önmaga* ‘oneself’, to be discussed in 3.5 below.

<sup>17</sup> Alternatively, the unmarked possessor receives no case. The decision between the two analyses has no direct relevance for the current discussion. See É. Kiss (2002) and Dékány (2011) for some discussion. Dative possessors require the spellout of the definite article in D if the possessive phrase is definite (see 8 in the text), therefore they are less interesting in the context of the current inquiry.

<sup>18</sup> The mean age of these respondents was 31, and 111 of them were female. Most participants were from the eastern part of Hungary, but each major regional dialect was represented in the survey. The response patterns do not correlate obviously with these social factors (age, gender, place of birth and living, education), and I assume that any inter-speaker variation is idiosyncratic in this respect.

for pronominal possessors in Hungarian is to *pro*-drop them. Using the primary reflexive for the same purpose is a marked strategy in this respect. What renders reflexive possessors marked, in comparison to argument reflexives, is that they do not create a reflexive relation themselves, and they frequently have a logophoric character. Let us investigate now how the results of the questionnaire survey can be interpreted in the framework of these assumptions.

Figure 1. provides an overview of the results pertaining to the 4 sentence pairs that contained the primary reflexive. The sentence pairs are referenced as below from (14) to (17).



**Figure 1:** Mean judgements for the reflexive possessor sentences (14-17)

(14) **with article: 4.63, without article: 3.99**

[DP(A) *magam rész-é-ről*] egyetértek.  
 the myself part-POSS-from agree.1SG  
 ‘For my part, I agree.’

(15) **with article: 4.62, without article: 1.63**

*Mi csináltuk* [DP(a) *magunk dolg-á-t*].  
 we did.1PL the ourselves thing-POSS-ACC  
 ‘We went about our own business.’

(16) **with article: 3.43, without article: 2.11**

*Túlságosan sokra becsültem* [DP(a) *magam ere-jé-t*].  
 too much.to estimated.1SG the myself strength-POSS-ACC  
 ‘I much overestimated my own strength.’

(17) **with article: 2.47, without article: 1.65**

*Ez a változás mintha [DP (a) magam gondolkod-ás-á-t]*  
this the change as.though the myself thinking-NOMSUF-POSS-ACC  
*is megváltoztatta volna.*  
too altered.3SG COND

‘As though this change had altered my own way of thinking, too.’

As is evident, the participants of the survey preferred the use of the definite article to its absence in each condition. Thus the primary factor that determines the distribution of the definite article is the choice of the reflexive itself. Nevertheless, there is obvious variation in the mean judgements across the sentences.

The two sentences (14-15) that received the highest score each include an underlying relation that is normally reflexive. One can go about one’s own business, and one can normally express one’s consent on one’s own behalf. Most of the corpus examples for reflexive possessors represent this sort of use, in which the semantic contribution of the primary reflexive is minimal.

There is a pronounced difference in judgements concerning the drop of the definite article. It is barely an option in (15), in which the possessive phrase is an argument inside of the VP; but the article-less variant received much higher scores in (14), in which the possessive phrase is an adjunct in topic position. The participants consistently rated this sentence without the article either as good as the variant with the article, or only a little worse. I assume that this is an instance of article drop in topic position, manifesting the phonologically zero form of the definite article that we discussed in 3.1.

Examples (16) and (17) do not include an underlying reflexive relation. One can, for example, quite naturally overestimate somebody else’s strength. (17), which is based on a sentence from the *Hungarian National Corpus*, does not even include a clause-mate antecedent. I have argued in Rákosi (2014) that the reflexive is a perspective-dependent, logophoric pronoun in this example. (17) becomes totally unacceptable if it is embedded in a context that represents somebody else’s perspective. This sentence, just like all the others, was presented out of context, which might be the reason why the participants did not evaluate it favourably. Perspective dependence also plays a role in the interpretation of (14) and (15), though this factor is much less prominent there than in the case of (16) and (17). The native speakers that I consulted on this in a follow-up inquiry were in agreement that (15) is awkward or less felicitous in a context where the point-of-view holder is not the antecedent of the reflexive. Compare (18a) to (18b).

- (18) a.  $\sqrt{\text{Örültem}}$ , *hogy...*  
 was.happy.1SG that  
 ‘I was happy that...’  
*...mi csinálhattuk [DP (a) magunk dolg-á-t].*  
 we could.do.1PL the ourselves thing-POSS-ACC  
 ‘We could go about our own business.’
- b.  $^{(?)}\text{János örült}$ , *hogy...*  
 John was.happy.3SG that  
 ‘John was happy that...’

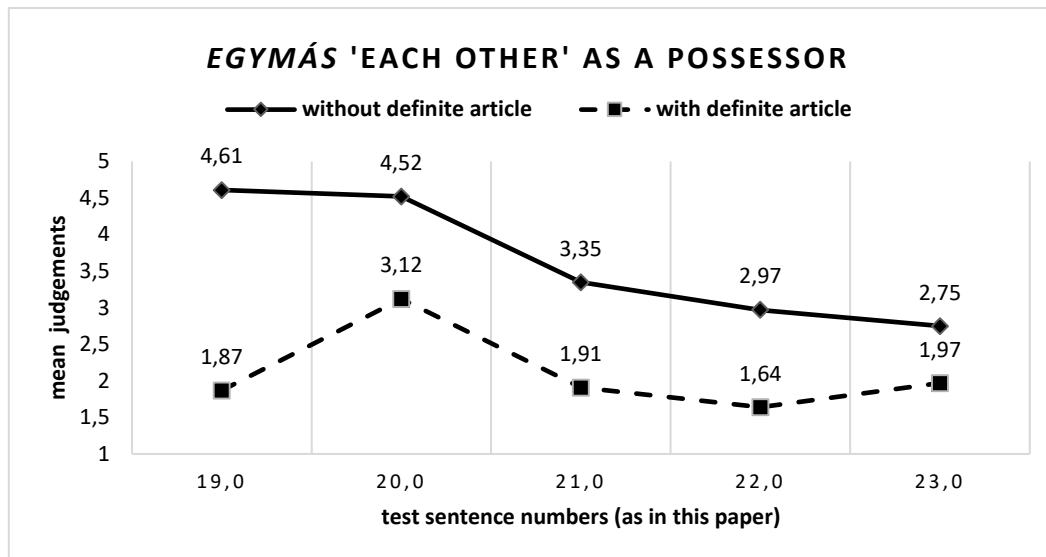
Thus even if these uses are not logophoric in the strict sense of the term, sensitivity to the presence of an antecedent whose perspective structures the piece of discourse around the reflexive is an evident factor in its licensing.

The emerging picture is that these reflexive possessors are exempt anaphors, and as such, they do not need a local syntactic antecedent. They may show different degrees of logophoricity, and they tend to sound best when the semantics of the embedding clause inherently requires the identity of the possessor and a clause-mate antecedent (usually the subject). They co-occur with the definite article in the D-head of the possessive phrase exactly for the reason that they do not act as locally bound variables. Within the current set of assumptions, this means that they are inside of the phasal domain of the possessive phrase, just like pronominal possessors, and their antecedent – if there is one – is outside of this domain.

### 3.4. The reciprocal anaphor as a possessor

What sets a reciprocal possessor apart from the primary reflexive possessor, is that the former does not have a marked character in canonical transitive constructions containing a subject antecedent and a possessive DP object, and that reciprocal possessors do not take the definite article in this configuration. But the overall picture on article use is slightly more complex.

The results of the survey are summarized in Figure 2, and the test sentences are listed below.



**Figure 2:** Mean judgements for the reciprocal possessor sentences (19-23)

- (19) **without article: 4.61, with article: 1.87**

*A fiúk feljelentették [DP (az) egymás szüle-i] a rendőrség-en.*  
 the boys reported.3PL the each\_other parent.POSS-PL-ACC the police-on  
 ‘The boys reported each other’s parents to the police.’

- (20) **without article: 4.52, with article: 3.12**

*Már kicsit unalmas [DP (az) egymás feljelentget-és-e].*  
 already little boring the each\_other report.FREQ-DEV-POSS  
 ‘The constant reporting of each other (to the police) is a little boring already.’

- (21) **without article: 3.35 (Rákosi 2015, 261: √), with article: 1.91**

*[DP (Az) egymás szüle-i] tetszenek a gyerekek-nek.*  
 the each\_other parent.POSS-PL appeal.3PL the children-DAT  
 ‘The children like each other’s parents.’

- (22) **without article: 2.97 (É. Kiss 2008, 464: √), with article: 1.64**

*A fiúk-at feljelentették [DP (az) egymás szüle-i] a rendőrség-en.*  
 the boys-ACC reported.3PL the each\_other parent.POSS-PL the police-on  
 ‘The boys, each other’s parents reported to the police.’

- (23) **without article: 2.75 (É. Kiss 1987, 200: ?), with article: 1.97**

*A lányok féltek, hogy [DP (az) egymás jelölt-je-i] nyer-nek.*  
 the girls feared.3PL that the each\_other candidate-POSS-PL win-3PL  
 ‘The girls were afraid that each other’s candidates would win.’

As is clear, the variant without the definite article is rated highest in each case. The greatest

distance between the two variants is in what we regard as the canonical binding configuration (19). (22) is from É. Kiss (2008), who uses it to illustrate the claim that the object can bind into the subject in Hungarian if the former precedes the latter, and who considers the articleless variant grammatical. But this sentence was in fact rated much lower in this survey than (19), and even (21) received higher scores. In (21), the internal experiencer argument binds into the internal subject argument, the latter preceding the former.<sup>19</sup> What is noteworthy about this example is that the lack of a linear precedence relation between antecedent and anaphor does not improve the acceptability of the article in a significant manner.

The same pattern emerges in the case of example (23), which was the lowest rated sentence in this group in the no-article condition. The reciprocal possessor is embedded within the subordinate subject DP, and its antecedent is in the matrix clause. The example is from É. Kiss (1987), who gives it a question mark, and who considers it an exempt anaphor (being “excluded from the domain of anaphora”, op. cited p. 201). The anaphor and the antecedent are in two distinct binding domains in the phase-based approach, too, given that the finite subordinate clause constitutes a phase. I therefore also treat this reciprocal as an exempt anaphor.<sup>20</sup> We would then expect the definite article to be more acceptable in this configuration than in the previous three, but it fared only slightly better. Only 20 participants out of 141 rated this sentence higher with the article than without it, with an average 1,35 points difference between

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<sup>19</sup> Rákosi (2015) extensively argues for the two-place unaccusative analysis of dative experiencer verbs in Hungarian.

<sup>20</sup> This conclusion is also supported by the general uncertainty in the judgements. The reciprocal possessor can be bound by a local dative antecedent (i), and if it is part of the subordinate subject, it can marginally take either a dative or a nominative argument as its antecedent (ii-iii). If both the nominative and the dative arguments of the matrix verb are plural, then the reciprocal can co-refer with either with a moderate level of success (not shown). More research is needed on the factors that govern grammaticality judgements here, but this construction is apparently not an instance of a well-behaving, local referential dependency.

- (i) *Megmutattam a lányok-nak egymás jelölt-je-i-t.*  
 showed.1SG the girl.PL-DAT each\_other candidate-POSS-PL-ACC  
 ‘I showed the girls each other’s candidates.’
- (ii) <sup>(?)</sup> *Megmutattam a lányok-nak, hogy egymás jelölt-je-i hova állnak.*  
 showed.1SG the girl.PL-DAT that each\_other candidate-POSS-PL where.to stand.3PL  
 ‘I showed it to the girls where each other’s candidate will stand.’
- (iii) <sup>(?)</sup> *A lányok megmutatták nek-em, hogy egymás jelölt-je-i hova állnak.*  
 the girls showed.3PL DAT-1SG that each\_other candidate-POSS-PL where.to stand.3PL  
 ‘The girls showed me where each other’s candidates will stand.’



the respective judgements.

In comparison, the definite article was much better received in (20). This example contains a possessum which is an action nominalization that comes with a *local* antecedent (the agent of the verbal base of the possessum) that can bind the reciprocal.<sup>21</sup> Since the search for the antecedent is within the possessive DP, the presence of the article is expected. And it was fully acceptable (5) for 35 participants out of 141, with 29 of them rejecting it altogether (1). This indicates that there is a split across the speakers, but a much bigger portion of them accepts the article here than in the other conditions. It is also noteworthy that the majority of the relevant examples (a reciprocal possessor with a preceding definite article) that one may find in corpora are possessive phrases containing a nominalized verbal head. (24) is one such example from the *Hungarian National Corpus*.

(24) *A csapatjátéknál [DP az egymás segít-és-é-n ] van a hangsúly.*  
 the team\_game.at the each\_other help-DEV-POSS-on is the emphasis  
 ‘In a team game, the emphasis is on helping each other.’

The importance of this configuration is in demonstrating that reciprocal possessors are not incompatible with the definite article, or at least not totally for most speakers. If the antecedent is available within, the article can be spelled out in the possessive DP.

So in this case the reciprocal possessor stays low in the possessive structure (25a). When the reciprocal possessor has an antecedent in the embedding clause, the D-position of the possessive DP contains no article. Instead, the reciprocal, which is based generated in the specifier of a possessive functional projection (called *FP* in this paper), moves to the specifier of the DP.<sup>22</sup> This movement is driven by the  $\phi$ -deficient nature of the reciprocal anaphor, and also by the lack of an alternative strategy to express reciprocal meanings.

(25) a. [DP [D' DEFINITE ARTICLE [FP RECIPROCAL POSSESSOR [NP POSSESSUM ]]]]  
 b. [DP RECIPROCAL POSSESSOR [FP ~~RECIPROCAL POSSESSOR~~ [NP POSSESSUM ]]]

In (25b), the reciprocal possessor occupies a position at the edge of the DP phase and it can be directly bound by an antecedent from the embedding clause.

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<sup>21</sup> How exactly this agent argument is represented in syntax is less crucial in the context of the current discussion. See Kenesei (2005) and Laczkó (2009) for two opposing views.

<sup>22</sup> This is analogous to how É. Kiss (2002: 166) treats lexical possessors. I also assume with her that dative possessors are hosted in the specifier position of an extra DP adjoined to the core DP-layer represented in (25b).

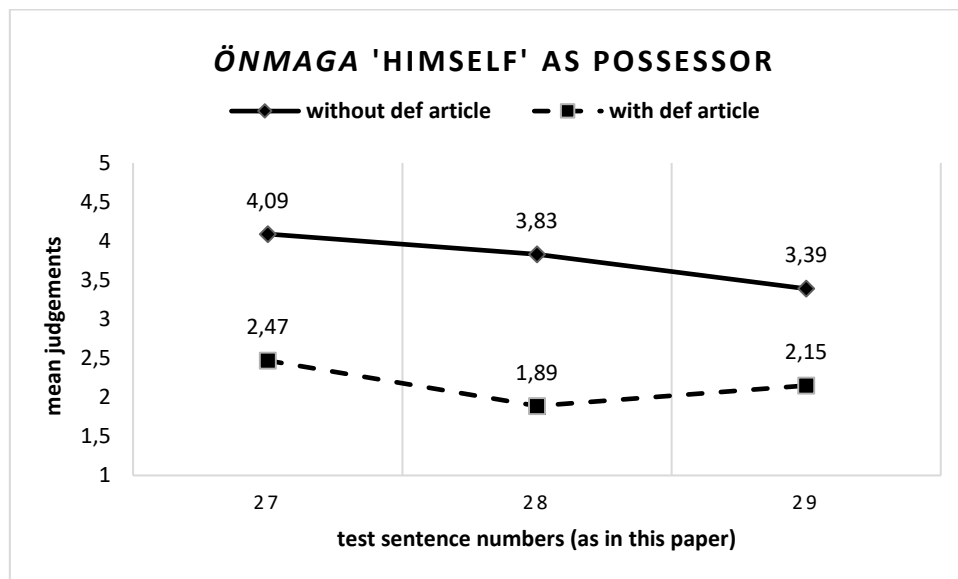
### 3.5. The complex reflexive *önmaga* ‘oneself’ as a possessor

The primary reflexive *maga* ‘oneself’ has several more complex variants. The most frequent one of these is *önmaga* ‘oneself’. This anaphor is primarily used in predicates where a reflexive relation is not expected, and its syntax is similar in certain ways to the syntax of personal names. It can, for example, be modified by a non-restrictive adjective:

- (26) a. \*(a) *korábbi János*  
 the former John  
 ‘the former John’  
 b. (a) *korábbi önmaga*  
 the former oneself  
 ‘his former self’

The difference between the name and the reflexive is that the former necessarily combines with the definite article in this construction (26a), while the article is optional for the reflexive (26b).

The survey contained 3 sentence pairs with this anaphor, as is summarized below.



**Figure 3:** Mean judgements for the complex reflexive possessor sentences (27-29)

- (27) **without article: 4.09, with article: 2.47**

*Minden nap* [DP(az) *önmagam* *leleplez-és-e* *is*] *volt.*  
 every day the myself expose-DEV-POSS too was  
 ‘Every day was the exposing of my own self, too.’

(28) **without article: 3.83, with article: 1.89**

A *fiúk* *felfedezték* [DP (az) *önmaguk* *határ-a-i-t*].  
 the boys discovered the themselves limit-POSS-PL-ACC  
 ‘The boys discovered their own limits.’

(29) **without article: 3.39, with article: 2.15**

[DP (Az) *önmaga* *szerep-é-t*] *Péter is hasonlóan élte meg*.  
 the himself role-POSS-ACC Peter too similarly lived.3SG PRT  
 ‘His own role, Peter experienced in a similar manner.’

(27) received the highest scores in both conditions. The possessum is a nominalized form of a verbal predicate, and thus the reflexive anaphor has an antecedent within the possessive DP. It is for this reason that a subset of the participants of the survey gave higher scores to the variant with the definite article than in the other conditions. The overall distribution of the judgements is similar to what we have seen with reciprocals, though there the definite article is somewhat more acceptable in the presence of a DP-internal antecedent (compare (20) and (27)).

I therefore assume a similar analysis for the two anaphors. The definite article is acceptable here too at least for some speakers if the antecedent is within the possessive DP (30a). But this reflexive has an antecedent in the embedding clause in the usual case, and then the definite article is absent. It is the complex reflexive itself which moves from the DP-internal functional projection to the specifier of the DP-cap to occupy a position at the edge of the DP-phase (30b).

(30) a. [DP [D' DEFINITE ARTICLE [FP COMPLEX REFLEXIVE [NP POSSESSUM ]]]]

b. [DP COMPLEX REFLEXIVE [FP ~~COMPLEX REFLEXIVE~~-[NP POSSESSUM ]]]

What triggers this movement in this case is the analogy with lexical possessors (names), since this reflexive is characterised by a degree of referentiality that sets it apart from run-of-the-mill reflexive anaphors. But *önmaga* ‘oneself’ is an anaphor nevertheless, and it can be bound within the next phasal domain higher up in the tree as a result of this movement.

#### 4. Summary and outlook

I have argued in this paper that the apparently complex distribution of the definite article in Hungarian possessive DP's containing an anaphoric possessor can be better understood once the role of the definite article in determining the binding domain for the possessor is recognized. In particular, I have shown that the definite article in the D-head of the possessive phrase allows the anaphoric possessor to find an antecedent within the possessive DP, but it blocks the

establishment of a local binding dependency between the possessor and an antecedent external to the possessive phrase. Overt or *pro*-dropped personal pronouns require the presence of the article in D, and thus they do not induce a Principle B violation even in the presence of a clause-mate antecedent. The primary reflexive possessor *maga* ‘oneself’ also requires an article in D, and it acts as an exempt anaphor. The reciprocal *egymás* ‘each other’ and the complex reflexive *önmaga* ‘oneself’ move up to Spec,DP to be on the edge of the DP phase, which allows them to be bound from the next phase higher up in the tree. The D-position is not filled in this scenario, but some speakers do find the definite article acceptable with these two anaphors if an antecedent is available within the DP.

This discussion introduces a novel, binding theoretic perspective to the syntax of the Hungarian possessive construction, and the paper also provides a survey of an empirical field that has been relatively neglected in pertinent research. The source of inspiration for this analysis is Reuland’s (2007, 2011) observation on the role of the definite article in binding dependencies involving anaphoric possessors. Reuland shows that dedicated possessive reflexives are only available in languages without prenominal articles. This paper has provided data from Hungarian in support of the claim that the definite article creates an impenetrable domain for binding into possessives, thereby illustrating that Reuland’s conjecture describes an important factor not only in cross-linguistic, but also in language internal variation in definite article use in possessive DP’s. Following Despić (2011, 2013, 2015), I assumed a phase-based approach to the description of the data discussed. The paper demonstrates the role of the definite article in spelling out the boundaries of the phase constituted by the possessive DP. These are also the boundaries of the binding domain for the possessor, which only becomes accessible to the next higher phase if it moves to the edge of the DP phase, to Spec,DP.

The survey that I have reported in this paper is an initial attempt at understanding the empirical data in a more comprehensive manner. The primary data show variation in some of the conditions, especially in the case of exempt anaphoric uses, or in the cases when article use deviates from what we see attested in canonical transitive constructions with subject antecedents and anaphoric possessors in the DP object. It is an important objective for further research to develop a better understanding of variation in definite article use in possessive constructions in general, and variation in native speakers’ assessment of exempt anaphoric possessor strategies. I believe nevertheless that more fine-grained surveys of the empirical field will only give further support to the analysis that I have proposed in this paper.

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