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DATIVE EXTERNAL POSSESSORS IN EARLY ENGLISH

CYNTHIA L. ALLEN

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Dative External Possessors in Early English

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CYNTHIA L. ALLEN

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Series preface

Modern diachronic linguistics has important contacts with other subdisciplines, notably first-language acquisition, learnability theory, computational linguistics, sociolinguistics, and the traditional philological study of texts. It is now recognized in the wider field that diachronic linguistics can make a novel contribution to linguistic theory, to historical linguistics, and arguably to cognitive science more widely.

This series provides a forum for work in both diachronic and historical linguistics, including work on change in grammar, sound, and meaning within and across languages; synchronic studies of languages in the past; and descriptive histories of one or more languages. It is intended to reflect and encourage the links between these subjects and fields such as those mentioned above.

The goal of the series is to publish high-quality monographs and collections of papers in diachronic linguistics generally, i.e. studies focusing on change in linguistic structure, and/or change in grammars, which are also intended to make a contribution to linguistic theory, by developing and adopting a current theoretical model, by raising wider questions concerning the nature of language change, or by developing theoretical connections with other areas of linguistics and cognitive science as listed above. There is no bias towards a particular language or language family, or towards a particular theoretical framework; work in all theoretical frameworks, and work based on the descriptive tradition of language typology, as well as quantitatively based work using theoretical ideas, also feature in the series.

Adam Ledgeway and Ian Roberts

University of Cambridge

Preface

This book developed from a combination of my long-standing interest in the relationship between the loss of inflection and syntactic change in English and a more recent interest in what is known as the 'Celtic Hypothesis', that is, the hypothesis that speakers of Brythonic Celtic languages influenced Old English significantly as they shifted from their mother tongue to the language of their conquerors.

Because so many proposals for explaining syntactic change in English by modern linguists have had to rely on an what seem to me inadequate empirical bases to support their hypotheses about how many changes came about, my own work has tended strongly towards strengthening the empirical base linguists can draw on to evaluate possible accounts for some syntactic changes that I have found particularly interesting, especially ones for which the deflexion or loss of inflection has widely been regarded as being the prime motivator of the change. The loss of dative external possessors is one such change, and is often presented as one of a number of changes related to deflexion that set Modern English apart from 'more typical' Germanic languages. A closer and more systematic examination of the facts shows that this account does not hold up.

The loss of the dative/accusative category distinction in English is the leading traditional explanation for the change being studied in this book and one that has been incorporated into more modern treatments of case assignment. However, more recently, the hypothesis that English lost the dative external possessor construction because Brythonic Celtic, unlike most European languages, did not have it, has gained ground. While this idea has actually been around for a long time, it is only fairly recently that a re-evaluation of the survival of Celtic speakers after the Anglo-Saxon Invasions has combined with developments in the study of language contact phenomena to make the idea of a strong Celtic influence on the syntax of Old English more mainstream.

In a long career, I have sometimes engaged with the question of foreign (Latin, French, or Scandinavian) influence on syntactic change in early English, but for the most part the question of contact phenomena have taken a back seat to documenting the syntax of Old and Early Middle English. While aware that written language is never just the same as spoken language, I have taken the view that while the written language is presumably more

conservative in its morphology and syntax than colloquial spoken language, nevertheless it probably reflects the relative timing of different changes reasonably well, even if the absolute timing of the changes was earlier in spoken language. Furthermore, the texts generally show the sort of systematicity in their morphosyntax that we would not expect of an artificial system that the scribes had learned formally, that is, a system that was natural to the scribe, even if it might be that of a more formal register. It seems to me, however, that the Celtic Hypothesis presents a serious challenge for the study of diachronic English syntax if we adopt the common assumption by proponents of that hypothesis that the spoken English of a majority of the population was suppressed in writing, which was controlled by a Germanic elite, until the Norman Invasion removed that control over the writing of English. If it is true that the syntax of the Early Middle English texts is not a development of the syntax underlying the language of Old English texts but rather the development of the syntax of a language that was not recorded, then our accounts of syntactic changes between these periods and proposed explanations for them are misguided—instead of looking at the history of a language in two periods, we would be looking at one language in one period and another one in a later period.

The severity of the problem depends, of course, on how great the difference between spoken and written language was, and this is not something we can know. My own view is that the Early Middle English texts do not support the idea of a spoken language that burst out into writing once the shackles of the West Saxon *Schriftsprache* had been cast off. The idea of a Celticized 'Brittonic' English that was radically different from the Old English of speakers of Anglo-Saxon descent is at any rate purely hypothetical, and as discussed in Chapter 8 especially, I do not find the arguments that have been proffered for this view convincing. It is plausible enough that at least some Celts would speak an English that was very different from that of their conquerors, but it seems to me that the main reason for assuming that this Brittonic English was the spoken English of the majority of speakers and did not find its way into writing until Middle English is to provide an explanation for why some features of English that have been attributed to Celtic influence, for example, periphrastic *do,* do not make their appearance in the texts until the thirteenth century or later.

The loss of dative external possessors is one of the changes that has sometimes been identified as something that may have taken place in speech but only became apparent in Early Middle English. I hope that I manage to convince the reader in this book that this view of a sudden disappearance of

the construction from the texts, resulting from a new type of language, is incorrect. Internal possessors were always in variation with dative external possessors and were certainly not suppressed as Celticisms in writing. This does not mean, however, that Celtic language learners could not have had a role in the initial decline of the construction by narrowing its range and using internal possessors with a higher frequency than Anglo-Saxons. It does mean, though, that with this particular pair of constructions we can be confident that we are looking at a change to grammatical possibilities that were shared across the English-speaking community generally.

It is a pleasure to thank those who have played a role in making this book possible. My thanks go to the Australian National University for appointing me an Emeritus Fellow on my retirement, facilitating my interaction with colleagues and giving me continued access to library and other facilities vital to my research. This book, as I believe is not unusual with monographs, started as an attempted journal paper, and I gratefully acknowledge helpful comments by Theo Vennemann and anonymous reviewers on drafts of that paper. It eventually became clear to me that the paper I was trying to write contained both too little and too much for a journal article, and these comments were helpful in identifying the matters that a paper could not give enough detail to and discussions that were unclear to the point of misunderstandings by the reviewers. My thanks also go to the anonymous reader who read the first draft of my book manuscript for OUP and caused substantial reorganization of some material. I hope that the book is the better for this feedback, but of course the usual statement about my own responsibility for any shortcomings apply.

In her superb presentation of the grammar of the life of St. Juliana and other Dialect AB texts in her edition of *Þe Liflade ant te passion of Seinte Juliene*, S.R.T.O. d'Ardenne begins with an acknowledgement of the debt that all workers in the field of Middle English owe to each other and their predecessors. I would like here to make a similar acknowledgement to all scholars (including d'Ardenne) and researchers who have been so important to my own work. I would in particular like to thank the compilers of the electronic corpora that have provided the data in this book, and also the makers of the Helsinki Corpus, which led to the development of parsed corpora of earlier periods of English.

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List of abbreviations

Abbreviations used in glosses

ACC	accusative
DAT	dative
DEF	definite
FEM	feminine
FUT	future
GEN	genitive
IMP	imperative
INST	instrumental
MASC	masculine
NOM	nominative
OBJ	object case (for ME)
OPT	optative (=subjunctive)
PL	plural
SG	singular
SUBJ	subject

Abbreviations used in text

ASC	*Anglo-Saxon Chronicle*
BL	Brook and Leslie's edition of Laȝamon's *Brut*
DEP	dative external possessor
DOE	*Dictionary of Old English*
DP	determiner phrase
EME	Early Middle English
EP	external possessor
IO	indirect object
IP	internal possessor
LAEME	*Linguistic Atlas of Early Middle English*
m1	First Middle English period in the electronic corpora (1150–1250)
m2	Second Middle English period in the electronic corpora (1250–1350)
ME	Middle English
N	noun
NP	noun phrase
OBJ_{dat}	dative object

OED	*Oxford English Dictionary*
PDE	Present Day English
PObj	object of preposition
Poss Det	possessive (followed by) determiner
PPCME2	Penn-Helsinki Parsed Corpus of Middle English 2
YCOE	York-Toronto-Helsinki Parsed Corpus of Old English Prose

A note on glossing

The glosses of the examples from earlier English and other languages are loosely based on the Leipzig Glossing Rules, available at https://www.eva.mpg.de/lingua/resources/glossing-rules.php. However, the glosses in this book are not intended to provide full morphological information. So while I have glossed every word in my Old English examples, I have generally provided only such morphological information as I believe will be useful to at least some readers in understanding the syntax of a sentence or a morphological point I am making, such as the ambiguity of some case inflections. The glosses do not usually provide a breakdown of the morphology of a verb; for example, I have glossed the plural past tense form *forcurfon* simply as 'cut' in an example where the fuller translation 'the Romans cut Pope Leo's tongue out' gives as much information as the reader needs to understand the sentence, tense and number being irrelevant to the point being illustrated. I have treated the indicative mood as the default one, but have generally glossed subjunctives, since these often involve the use of a modal verb such as *may* in the Modern English translation. The OE subjunctive is an optative from an Indo-European point of view, and to avoid confusion with SUBJ, which I have reserved for the grammatical relation of subject in the Middle English period in examples in which no distinctive nominative case marking is used, I have glossed subjunctives as OPT.

The emphasis on case marking in this book means that elements of noun phrases are more extensively glossed than are verbs, and some more detailed comments on this glossing are in order. I have not glossed gender except when I considered it important to the discussion, and case is only indicated regularly for possessors and possessa in the roles of subject or object. Since English still distinguishes number in nouns, I have generally used Modern English singular or plural forms in the words of the glosses, combining these with any specification for case, e.g. *men* is glossed 'man:DAT' and *mannum* is 'men:DAT.PL'. I have treated the singular, being the most common, as the default, and have only indicated number in the glosses of plurals. In presenting examples cited by other people, I have adapted the glosses offered in the source when appropriate.

There was a good deal of syncretism already in early Old English in inflections for case, number, and gender. Unless such syncretism raises the possibility of more than one morphosyntactic analysis, in which case there will

be a discussion in the text, I have not generally indicated the ambiguity. For example, the feminine pronoun *hire* was formally ambiguous between the genitive and the dative case in Old English, and this ambiguity makes the analysis of some sentences ambiguous between having a dative external possessor and an internal (genitive) possessor. In such examples, I have indicated the ambiguity. In some sentences, only one case or the other is a serious possibility, and I have simply glossed the pronoun as dative or genitive.

A final note is necessary on the glossing of pronouns. I have generally used Modern English pronouns in the glosses; the gloss 'his' for *his* is adequate and generally easier for a reader to follow than one that breaks the pronoun down into third person, masculine, singular, and genitive. Complications arise from the fact that the third person pronouns *his* 'his, its', *hire* 'her', and *heora* 'their' were different from the first and second persons, which did not use the simple genitive form to express possession, where what are traditionally called 'possessive adjectives' were used. These possessives declined like strong adjectives, agreeing with the noun they modified in case, gender, and number; e.g. *minum* was a masculine or neuter dative singular or all-gender plural form of *min* 'my'. I have not considered it necessary to convey this information in all the glosses, as when the possessive modifies the object of a preposition, which I have glossed for case only when that seemed helpful, usually glossing *minum* simply as 'my'. The third person singular or plural reflexive *sin*, mainly found in poetry, was also an inflecting possessive and is treated here in the same way as the first and second person forms. On the other hand, direct objects often needed to be glossed to show their accusative case, and in this role I have for example glossed the direct object *hige þinne* as 'mind:ACC thy:ACC'. I have not glossed possessives for gender or number, and so have not included the information that the possessive just cited is unambiguously masculine and singular also.

With non-possessive forms of the pronouns I have also used Modern English forms, tagged for case only when the distinctions marked in the earlier and later stages of the language do not match. So, for example, I gloss *hine* as 'him:ACC'and *him* as either him:DAT or 'them:DAT', as the meaning of the sentence requires. In glossing Early Middle English sentences, I have glossed *him* as dative only when a clear dative/accusative category distinction exists in the text in question and is relevant to the discussion; otherwise *him* simply as 'him'. Similarly, *hire* is glossed for case only when relevant to the discussion, e.g. when an example involves dative/genitive ambiguity. In a couple of Middle English examples, I have used the gloss you:OBJ when the Middle English form is clearly an object form but the accusative/dative distinction no longer exists.

1

Introduction

This book explores the loss of a construction in English which is widespread in European languages and was found in earlier English. The construction is illustrated for German in (1.1):

(1.1) Die Mutter wusch dem Kind die Haare
the mother washed the:DAT child the:ACC hairs:ACC
'the mother washed the child's hair' (Haspelmath 1999: 109, ex. 1)

In this example, *dem Kind* is the possessor of *die Haare*, but instead of appearing within the NP containing the possessum, it is an NP at the sentence level, marked with dative case. In Old English (OE) texts, parallel examples are common:

(1.2) Gif þu þæt þurhteon ne mæge scearpa him
If you that carry-out not may scarify him:DAT
þa scancan
the:ACC legs:ACC
'If you can't accomplish that, scarify his legs'
(colaece,Lch_II_[1]:4.4.13.489)[1]

This construction disappeared almost entirely in Middle English (ME), being infrequent already in such texts as are available *c.*1150, although examples like (1.3), from around 1180, indicate that the construction had some productivity after this date:

(1.3) & all himm wærenn fet & þeos / Tobollenn &
and all him were feet and thighs puffed.up and
toblawenn.
swollen
'and his feet and thighs were all puffed up and swollen'
(CMORM,I,280.2293)

[1] Citations beginning with co, as for this example, are taken from the York corpora, and ones beginning with CM are from the Penn-Helsinki Parsed Corpus of Middle English 2. These corpora are briefly mentioned in section 1.3 and more fully described in Chapter 3 and Appendix A. I present the citations as given in the output of those corpora.

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In Present Day English (PDE), the only parallels of this construction are fixed expressions like *look x in the eyes*, *look a gift horse in the mouth*, and *stare x in the face*, where the possessum is the object of a preposition, rather than a subject or object.

The demise in English of the possessive construction using a dative has been of considerable interest to linguists, and English has frequently been singled out as being unusual in European languages generally and the Germanic languages more specifically in not having this construction. The primary goal of this book is an empirical one: to provide data bearing on the question of when and how this construction died out as a productive possibility in English.

Explanations that have been proposed for this development fall into two major categories: internal and external motivation. The leading possibility for an internal trigger is the loss of the dative/accusative distinction, which Ahlgren (1946) identified as the main cause of the change. The reasoning is that once the distinction had become completely levelled, it was not possible to distinguish an object as dative.

While the internal motivation just outlined is the leading traditional explanation for the loss of the construction under examination, more recently a system-external explanation, language contact, has received serious attention. Language contact is a traditionally assumed trigger for the collapse of the case marking system and was therefore assumed by Ahlgren to play an indirect role in the disappearance of 'sympathetic datives'; however, a more central role for language contact has recently been argued by Vennemann (2002), McWhorter (2002), Filppula et al. (2008), and Filppula (2010), among others. While McWhorter argues for the role of contact with Scandinavian speakers, the other sources point to the influence of Celtic speakers on English.

All of these proposed explanations suffer from insufficient data for a proper evaluation of the assumptions that underlie them. Vennemann (2002: 212)[2] comments that his impression is that the 'genitival' construction is 'relatively rare' in earlier OE, but he notes the need for a more detailed investigation. In the years which have elapsed since the publication of Vennemann's article, no substantial progress has been made in this regard, and it is the major goal of this book to provide the more detailed investigation that Vennemann called for. A secondary goal is to evaluate the hypotheses concerning the causes of

[2] Vennemann (2002) is reprinted without changes of content as Vennemann (2012). The citations given here are to the 2002 publication, but can easily be found in the 2012 reprint because it helpfully supplies the page numbers corresponding to the original.

the disappearance of the dative construction in English in light of the fresh data produced by this investigation. Linguists interested in investigating this development have had to rely on examples taken from the sources discussed in section 1.4. The present book presents the results of the first systematic investigation of the structures exemplified in (1.2) and (1.3) based on the syntactically parsed corpora now available for Old and Middle English, introduced in section 1.5 and described more thoroughly in Chapter 3 and Appendix A. The focus will be on the two major categories of inalienable possessions where the construction with a dative referring to the possessor was the mostly widely used in OE, namely words referring to bodies or body parts and those referring to the mind or spirit. I will refer to the former as *body* words and the latter as *mind* words.

This investigation reveals that the explanations that have been suggested to date for the loss of the dative construction suffer from a common flaw: they focus on the Early Middle English (EME) period as the crucial period for this development. In this book I will argue that the decline of the use of the dative to refer to the possessor began much earlier, probably by the late ninth century and certainly within the OE period. This being so, explanations that depend on developments of the EME period, such as the decline of case marking or the demise of the what is known as the 'West Saxon Standard' or 'West Saxon *Schriftsprache*', must be reassessed.

The following two sections provide background for this study by surveying relevant literature: first cross-linguistic and then specifically history of English.

1.1 Dative external possessors

The possessors in the construction illustrated in examples (1.1) through (1.3) have gone under many names, including 'sympathetic dative' (or *dativus sympatheticus*), introduced by Havers (1911) as a label for datives that could be replaced by a genitive, and *possessor dative*. Because the possessor is external to the NP[3] that contains the possessum, Vergnaud and Zubizaretta (1992) introduced the term 'external possessor', contrasting with the 'internal possessor', used in *the child's hair* or *his legs,* in which the possessor is internal to the NP containing the possessa *hair* and *legs.* I will adopt this terminology

[3] I will take no position on the existence of a determiner phrase (DP) and will use NP (noun phrase) for the phrases containing the possessa, ignoring the issue of whether NPs are complements to determiners inside DP, as is widely assumed in current syntactic theories.

here, using the abbreviation EP when the case of the possessor is not being specifically referred to, except when discussing the work of authors using different terminology. I will use the abbreviation IP for the internal possessor construction, which may also be referred to as the 'genitive', 'genitival', or 'possessive' construction by different scholars. In discussing IPs in this book, I will generally use 'genitive' to cover both nouns in the genitive case and possessive pronominal forms, although in some instances I will use a more specific term when it seems clearer.

Cross-linguistically, a phrase in the dative case is by no means the only possibility for an EP, but as Haspelmath (1999) shows, it is the most typical EP in European languages. I will adopt Haspelmath's term 'dative external possessor' (henceforth DEP) for these possessors in the dative case. A terminological difficulty arises for EME examples like (1.3) above. The problem is that the use of the term 'dative' is questionable here because although the text from which this example comes, the *Ormulum*, is from early in the EME period, it is from an area in which the loss of case marking was very advanced, and the text shows no hint of a dative/accusative distinction. *Him* must be regarded as a general object case form, like the modern *him*, rather than a specifically dative form, in the *Ormulum*.[4] I will nevertheless continue to use the term DEP for examples like this because the use of the object pronoun can be considered a continuation of the OE DEP—the object-marked pronoun refers to the possessor of the feet and thighs, is not part of the normal case-frame of the intransitive participles *tobolen* and *toblawen*, and is clearly added to signal the adverse effect that the swelling had on the possessor of the body parts. In some modern syntactic treatments, *him* would be treated as having abstract dative case even though there is no longer a morphological dative/accusative distinction.

1.2 Theoretical issues

External possessor constructions have attracted a great deal of attention among linguists for the theoretical questions they pose. Arguments based on data from a written corpus that is the result of chance rather than design are of limited utility in marshalling arguments supporting a particular formal treatment of DEPs. However, even though we cannot learn as much about the properties of the DEP in Old English as can be learned for living languages, where the intuitions of native speakers can be used in conjunction with written

[4] For a detailed discussion, see Allen (1995: §5.4.1).

and spoken corpora, we can learn a good deal about the way the DEP was used in earlier English texts and how it disappeared. While this information will be limited in its ability to evaluate specific proposals about the demise of the DEP, it can often rule out general approaches, such as accounts that depend exclusively on the loss of the morphological dative/accusative distinction, a widely-held approach both in informal and formal treatments. We can also get data that bears on the possible role of language contact in the demise of the DEP.

In my research into the syntax of DEPs and related constructions in Old and Early Middle English, I have tried to be aware of questions of particular interest currently to formal syntacticians as well as ones that have been the focus of traditional grammarians. Although no particular formal analysis will be argued for, this empirical study is informed by the issues raised in the formal literature, which underpin some of the decisions made about the categories used in gathering the data, and I will make some suggestions about the broad outlines of possible analyses that the data suggest. In the following discussion, I briefly outline some of the major points of theoretical interest in external possessors, giving an overview of the sorts of approaches that have been taken to the analysis of DEPs in particular, without going into details.

In EP constructions, an NP which behaves as an argument of the clause bears a semantic relationship of possessor to a noun within another NP in that clause. Payne and Barshi comment that these constructions 'challenge the notion that clause-level syntax depends directly on the argument structure and subcategorization frame of individual verbs or verb stems' (1999: 14–15). Landau (1999: 2) summarizes the 'surface phenomenon' of PDCs (Possessor Dative Constructions, an alternative name for DEPs):

> a dative phrase, syntactically behaving like a normal dative argument of the verb (by movement diagnostics and so on), is in fact associated with another argument in the sentence, interpreted as a possessor of that argument.

The argument-like syntax of the dative in this construction sets it apart from superficially similar 'free datives' such as the 'ethical' (or 'ethic') dative; these and other datives that are not the focus of this investigation are surveyed in Chapter 2.

There is substantial disagreement on the best syntactic treatment of EPs. Landau (1999) outlines the two basic approaches. The first is exemplified by this clause in König's (2001: 971) cross-linguistic definition of EP constructions:

> (iii) Despite being coded as a core argument, the possessor phrase is not licensed by the argument frame of the verb itself.

Payne and Barshi give essentially the same definition (1999: 3). By this approach, the dative element is not an argument of the verb, and its syntax is usually explained as being due to a process of raising from the NP containing the possessum. This approach is the basis for the older terms 'possessor raising', which is now normally replaced by the more neutral terms 'external possessor' or 'possessor dative'. Landau (1999) is one of the fairly recent treatments taking this general approach.

The second basic approach, as Landau explains, is that the possessor dative is an argument of the verb, carrying a thematic role such as AFFECTEE. The appeal of such a treatment is that the construction is usually associated with a particular semantics. That is, a DEP is usually associated with some sort of effect on the possessor, which may be beneficial or adverse.

Virtually everyone who has written on the subject of external possessors mentions that affectedness plays some sort of role in their use. For Haspelmath (1999: 111), the two most important characteristics of the 'European EP prototype' are the use of dative case for the possessor and the 'strict affectedness condition, i.e. EPs are only possible if the possessor is thought of as being mentally affected by the described situation'.[5] Vennemann, who assumes that OE was essentially like Modern German with regard to DEPs, states that 'the dative is obligatory for affected possessors in German' and explains that a DEP in German presents an action which happens to the possessor with respect to some body part, while an IP reports an event which happened to the body part (2002: 208). Krahe (1972: 88) similarly contrasts the emotive 'dativus sympatheticus' *Er zerschmetterte der Schlange den Kopf* 'he shattered the snake:DAT the head:ACC' with the 'ganz objektive' ('completely objective') genitive *Er zerschmetterte den Kopf der Schlange* 'he shattered the snake's head' (lit. head:ACC of the snake). Deal (2013) also comments on the fact that a DEP is very strange in German if the possessor is dead, and therefore incapable of feeling an effect, but points out that in some languages affectedness plays no role in external possession and comments that more research is needed into languages where this is the case.

Vergnaud and Zubizaretta (1992: 595) treat the dative possessor in French as a complement of the verb which is 'affected by the action or state referred

[5] Haspelmath goes on to note that 'the affectedness condition is not equally strong in all languages, and it has been conventionalized in various ways by different languages (1999: 113)'. See Wierzbicka (1979) for an insightful discussion of how different languages treat different situations as involving an effect and subtle semantic differences in the choice of construction used in different languages to express possession of body parts. Although a corpus search cannot give us a complete picture of what role affectedness played in early Old English, it is nevertheless informative.

to', and Landau (1999: 3) notes that PDCs are not semantically equivalent to their IP counterparts because they all imply that the possessor is somehow *affected* by the action denoted by the verb [Landau's emphasis].[6] The notion of affectedness plays a central role in Lee-Schoenfeld's analysis of possessor dative constructions in German, where it is observed that the German PDC gets better as the negative or positive effect is more obvious (2006: 108). The importance of affectedness in OE DEPs is discussed in Chapter 4.

Lee-Schoenfeld (2006), making use of developments in the Minimalist approach to syntax, adopts an analysis in which the dative possessor both carries a sematic role and is raised. The basic idea is the possessor is generated with dative case in a position where that case cannot be licensed, and so the element raises to the position of the AFFECTEE argument of the verb. Deal (2013) similarly assumes that some sort of analysis in which a theta-role is assigned by the main verb is appropriate for German and other languages in which affectedness is part of an EP construction and adopts a case-driven analysis that prevents the possessor from staying in the same NP as the possessum. She argues, however, that in languages like Nez Perce, where affectedness does not play a role, EPs involve possessor raising rather than control.

Objects of prepositions (PObjs) present some difficulties for the analysis of EPs, and the present investigation makes a systematic distinction between what I will refer to as 'direct argument' possessa, that is, subjects and objects, and PObj possessa. In their treatment comparing French and Modern English, Vergnaud and Zubizaretta (1992) note that English does not in general productively allow external possessors parallel to French, e.g. (1.4):

(1.4) Le médecin leur a radographié l'estomac
the doctor them:DAT has x-rayed the.stomach
'The doctor x-rayed their stomachs'
(Vergnaud and Zubizaretta 1992, ex. 4.a)[7]

However, Modern English does allow what they treat as external possessor of complements of prepositions in what they call the 'PP construction':

(1.5) John tickled the children on the foot.

[6] Landau points out problems with defining 'affectedness' in his section 5.2.3. However, he comments in footnote 1 that 'unless otherwise mentioned, PDC is always associated with an affectedness implication for PD'.

[7] I have modified the glossing that Vergnaud and Zubizaretta supply, in conformity with the Leipzig Glossing Rules. Note also that what they refer to as the 'distributivity' effect, by which a singular form is used in this example to refer to more than one stomach, is a general feature of the French construction, as Vergnaud and Zubizaretta (1992: 598) discuss.

Vergnaud and Zubizaretta's analysis and their explanation for the grammaticality of the PP construction incorporates many theory-specific assumptions, and the details are not important here. However, their conclusion that 'the inalienable phrase in the PP has a different analysis from the inalienable phrase in direct object position'(1992: 642) is highly relevant to this study, as is their observation about the entailment relationship involved in the PP construction.

Although Vergnaud and Zubizaretta treat sentences like (1.5) as having EPs, not everyone does. König (2001) excludes sentences like (1.5) and his own parallel example, presented in (1.6), in his definition of EPs:

(1.6) Ben punched Jim on the nose (König 2001 ex.7a)

The basis for this exclusion is that the possessor (*Jim* in this example) is licensed by the argument frame of the verb. This is ruled out by clause (iii), presented above, in his definition of EPs. König notes that the omissible prepositional phrase 'provides a further (metonymic) specification of the precise endpoint of the action expressed by the verb'. As discussed in more detail in Chapter 3, I similarly excluded such examples from my data collecting, while including non-thematic objects similar to those found in Modern English relics such as *the answer is staring you in the face* and *I looked them in the eye.*

For our purposes, the most important fact about a Modern English PP construction like (1.5) and (1.6) is that the possessor is clearly a thematic argument, that is, one in the basic argument frame of the verb. This is evidenced by the fact that in the examples of (1.7) the possessor of the cheek cannot be left out, while the PP can be omitted and still result in a grammatical sentence:

(1.7) a. John kissed the child on the cheek.
b. John kissed the child.
c. *John kissed on the cheek.

(1.7a) entails (1.7b); if John kissed the child on the cheek, he kissed the child. In contrast, with the fixed expressions found in the (a) sentences of (1.8) and (1.9), the prepositional phrase is not omissible and there is no entailment relationship, as the ungrammaticality of the (b) sentences shows.

(1.8) a. She looked him in the eye.
b. *She looked him.

(1.9) a. The answer was staring him in the face.
b. *The answer was staring him.

In (1.7a), *the child* is a thematic object, that is, it is part of the verb's argument frame. Linguists disagree on whether to count constructions in which the possessor is a thematic argument, as in (1.7a), as external possessor constructions. König notes that such examples in which the prepositional phrase can be omitted are different from uncontroversial EPs in lacking a semantic and syntactic dependence between the possessor phrase and the possessum phrase. While König's overview of external possession does not use the term 'implicit' for the possessive relationship found in such examples with thematic objects understood to be the possessor, Haspelmath and König (2001: 579) present (1.10) as an example in which the possessor of the object of a preposition is 'implicit', the reference being controlled by the object:

(1.10) Pierre a embrassé les enfants sur la joue
Pierre has kissed the children on the cheek
'Pierre kissed the children on the cheek'

An implicit possessor relationship is one that is not explicitly stated but understood. Whether or not we want to define external possessor constructions to include the PP construction, for this investigation it was important to include examples parallel to (1.8) and (1.9), with athematic objects, but to exclude ones like (1.5), (1.6), and (1.7a), with thematic objects. (1.5), (1.6), and (1.7a) have their OE parallel in examples like (1.11):

(1.11) oþ hiene an cwene sceat þurh þæt þeoh
until him:ACC a woman shot through the thigh
'until a woman shot him through the thigh'
(coorosiu,Or_3:7.64.28.1264)

In this example, there is a clear entailment relationship between the sentence with and without the prepositional phrase, and *hiene* is clearly the object of the verb. Since the focus in this book is on documenting the decline and loss of EP constructions that became impossible in English, examples like this are excluded from the data of this study. In contrast, (1.12) has no productive parallel in Modern English:

(1.12) ðonne hie him on ðæt nebb spætton
when they him:DAT in the face spat
'when they spat in his face' (cocura,CP:36.261.7.1700)

It is examples like (1.12) that will be included in my statistics for PObjs.

While I have used the term 'implicit' for the understood possessors of PObjs as in (1.10) and (1.11), the more common use of this term is for the

understood possessors of direct objects. No overt expression of the possessive relationship is necessary in French in situations where it is obligatory in Modern English, as noted by Vergnaud and Zubizaretta:

(1.13)	Les	enfants	ont	levé	la	main
	the	children	have	raised	the	hand

‘the children raised their hands’ (Vergnaud and Zubizaretta ex. 1)

The corresponding literal English translation **the children raised the hand* is of course ungrammatical in the possessive meaning, but could only have a meaning that there was a detached hand that the children all raised, as Vergnaud and Zubizaretta point out. The English translation does not improve by substituting the plural *hands,* either. Vergnaud and Zubizaretta treat the construction of (1.13) as an EP, but like the prepositional objects just discussed, it is excluded by König’s (2001) definition of EPs.

In Vergnaud and Zubizaretta’s analysis, the possessor relationship in (1.13) is not implicit, because they assume a binding relation between the possessum and the possessor, which is established via Predication. They seek to relate the difference between French and English to the fact that French, unlike English, allows expletive determiners (that is, determiners without a reference), while English does not. This is the same fact that they see as the key to the grammaticality of EPs in French. In this way, they make a typological prediction: languages that allow ‘implicit’ possessors will also allow EPs more generally. We find implicit possessors in OE, which is consistent with this correlation:

(1.14)	Hond	up	abræd	Geata	dryhten,
	hand:ACC	up	raised	Geats:GEN.PL	lord:NOM

‘the lord of the Geats raised up his hand’

(cobeowul,80.2575.2108) Beowulf 2575

However, König and Haspelmath (1998: 579) note that while one might try to propose a correlation between implicit and external possessors, they find counterexamples to this proposed correlation and conclude that it cannot stand as a typological universal. While it would be interesting to see whether the decline of DEPs in English went hand in hand with the decline of implicit possessors, searches for implicit possessors would greatly complicate the already complex data gathering, since any search for them would have to encompass all sentences that mentioned a body part. My impression is that implicit possessors of objects are not very common in OE prose, and so such searches are unlikely to yield enough examples to make any convincing link

between the loss of DEPs and the loss of the types of implicit possessors that are no longer possible in English. Furthermore, any linguist who is committed to an analysis of EPs that links them with implicit possessors will surely not be convinced by an apparent counterexample that comes from the history of English, but only by counterexamples that come from spoken languages where native speakers are available to give grammaticality judgements. For this reason, I have not made a systematic study of implicit possessors in my corpus, but I will make some observations about the appearance or otherwise of implicit possessors in the various texts.

Lee-Schoenfeld (2006: 138), who presents a formal syntactic account of the possessive relationship obtaining with DEPS, differs from Vergnaud and Zubizaretta in considering that the possessive relationship in corresponding German sentences like (1.15) is what she refers to as 'pragmatic', that is, implicit rather than syntactic:

(1.15) Er hebt die Hand
He raises the hand
'He raises his hand' (Lee-Schoenfeld 2006 ex. 53)

Lee-Schoenfeld also mentions other situations that are relevant to the present study in which she considers that a pragmatic rather than a syntactic relationship of possession is involved because no possessor interpretation is obligatory (2006: 109). One is in the case of verbs that independently select a dative argument. Here, no possessive relationship need be involved, and when such a relationship is understood, no second dative is added. Similarly, a verb may be compatible with the addition of some other type of dative, such as an 'ethical' or 'estimative' dative. Datives of this sort are relevant to the comparison of DEPs and IPs in OE because they raise the issue of whether they should be included in the counts of DEPs. In keeping with my exclusion of sentences with thematic arguments in my counts of DEPs with PObjs, I follow Lee-Schoenfeld in treating understood possessive relationships between such datives and a *body* or *mind* word as pragmatic rather than syntactic, and exclude these datives from my counts of DEPs. This is further discussed in Chapter 3, section 3.5.

Scholten's (2018) study of external possession in Dutch varieties takes a very different approach to those discussed so far and aims to provide a unified account of EP constructions cross-linguistically. For Scholten, the treatment of definite articles is key to a unified analysis. Scholten follows Giusti's (2015) treatment of definiteness, and a major difference between Scholten's account and all previous ones is that she assumes that all articles are expletive—a

definite interpretation of a DP is not due to the presence of a definite article but rather to the presence of a definite operator.[8]

Rather than assuming a movement analysis or one introducing an external possessor as a benefactive argument, Scholten assumes that the possessor and possessum are generated in separate nominal phrases (2018: 65). The possessum lacks its own referential index but gets it from the possessor, which does have such an index, through Agree. Scholten comments: 'Because the definite article is not inextricably linked to a referential index, they have the possibility to receive their referential index from another element in the structure.' A direct consequence of Scholten's approach relevant to this study is the fact that if we follow it, the absence of DEPs in Present Day English cannot be due to a loss of expletive determiners somewhere along the line in the history of English.

Apart from any theoretical considerations, Scholten's study represents an important addition to the database that linguists have for working on external possession, especially in view of the fact that the existence of productive EP constructions in Dutch has been the matter of some debate, as discussed in section 8.2.1. Dutch has been cited as providing arguments both for and against a widely held language-internal explanation for the loss of DEPs in English, namely the collapse of the dative/accusative distinction. The discrepant views seem to have arisen from the rather limited acceptability of different EP constructions in Standard Dutch as well as variability among Dutch varieties. Scholten's data furthermore indicates that any approach that makes a simple link between DEPs and implicit possessors must fail, because the broad generalization can be made that while most Dutch dialects allow implicit external possessors equivalent to (1.13) through (1.15), only those close to the German border allow external possession by an indirect object (i.e. a DEP) of a direct object body part.

1.3 Typological considerations

The surveys of external possession constructions that have been carried out by typologists both provide parameters for categorizing the OE data and

[8] In contrast, Le Bruyn (2014) argues that the French article in the DEP is not expletive but rather a 'run-of-the-mill definite article'. Le Bruyn's analysis will not be further discussed here, but for a discussion and criticism, see Scholten (2018: 53–7).