

Possessives in Catalan and the structure of DP

Francesc Roca

(Grup de recerca Llengües, Gramàtica Discurs
i Variació Lingüística)

Romance Linguistics Circle

May 26th, 2026

Possessives in Catalan and the structure of DP

Joint work with Luis Eguren (UAM)
and Carla Ferrerós (UPVD)



Universitat de Girona
**Departament de Filologia
i Comunicació**

Microparameters and Networks in Romance Variation
(PID2021-123617NB-C42 funded by MCIN/AEI
/10.13039/50110001103 and FEDER, EU)



Contents

- Goals
- Introduction: Possessives in Romance languages
 - Stresses/unstressed possessives
 - Kinds of possessives
- Possessives in Catalan
 - Standard Catalan
 - Northeastern Catalan
 - Gender defective possessive
 - Prenominal possessives with indefinides
 - DP structure
 - Further dialectal variation
- Conclusion
- References

Goals of the talk

- To discuss the syntactic status of prenominal possessives in Catalan.
- To describe in depth the grammatical properties of a morphologically defective possessive in Catalan.
- To situate possessives within the context of a complex DP structure.
- To highlight the relevance of microvariation (and minoritized linguistic varieties) to the study of human language.
- To compare the possessive systems of (some) Romance languages.

Possessives in Romance languages

UdG

Romance languages

- Languages with two possessive paradigms
 - Unstressed possessives
 - Person feature and Φ features ([gender] and number).
 - Prenominal.
 - They head the nominal construction.
 - They turn the nominal construction into a [+def] DP.
 - They enable the phrase to function as an argument.

- (1) Este año *(*sus*) estudiantes no han aprobado. (Spanish)
'This year, his/her/their students didn't pass.'

- (2) As-tu vu *(*mon*) livre de linguistique? (French)
'Did you see my linguistics book?'

→ They are (similar to) **determiners**.

Romance languages

- Languages with two possessive paradigms
 - Stressed possessives (1)
 - Person feature and Φ features (gender and number).
 - Prenominal or postnominal.
 - The nominal construction can be [\pm def].
 - They can occur in isolation and predicative position.
 - They do not enable the phrase to function as an argument.
- (3) a. el libro *mío* / *el *mío* libro (Spanish)
'my book'
- b. esos libros *míos*, algunos libros *míos*
'these books of mine, some of my books'
- c. —¿De quién es? —*Mío*. / *Es mía*.
'Whose is it? Mine. / It's mine.'

Romance languages

- Languages with two possessive paradigms
 - Stressed possessives (2)
 - Person feature and Φ features (gender and number).
 - They are preceded by the definite article.
 - They are used only with null nouns.

- (4) a. le *mien*, les *miennes* (French)
the mine the.PL mine.F.PL
- b. *une *mienne*, *cette *mienne*
- c. *le livre *mien*

[→ Zribi Hertz (1999)]

Romance languages

- Languages with a single possessive paradigm
 - Stressed possessives
 - Person feature and Φ features (gender and number).
 - Prenominal or postnominal.
 - The nominal construction can be [\pm def].
 - They can occur in isolation and predicative position.
 - They don't enable the phrase to function as an argument.

(5) a. un *mio* libro de lingüística (Italian)
'one of my books in linguistics'

b. Questo libro è *mio*.
'This book is mine.'

(6) a. um livro *meu* de linguística (Portuguese)
'one of my books in linguistics'

b. Encontrou *(o) *meu* livro de linguística?
'Did you find my linguistics book?'

Possessives in Romance languages

Three kinds of possessives

[Cardinaletti (1998)]

- STRONG → found in postnominal position
- WEAK → found in prenominal position; preceded by D (\pm def)
- CLITIC → found in DP; it heads a [+def] DP

	Spanish	French	Italian	Portuguese
STRONG	<i>suyo</i>		<i>su(o/a)</i>	<i>seu/sua</i>
WEAK		<i>sien(ne)</i>	<i>su(o/a)</i>	<i>seu/sua</i>
CLITIC	<i>su</i>	<i>son/sa</i>		

Possessives in Romance languages

- DP structure and possessives

[Cardinaletti (1998)]

- Strong possessive

Postnominal possessives in Italian, Spanish and Portuguese. It remains in the base position (inside NP):

[_{DP} la [_{AgrP} [_{FP} casa_K ... [_{NP} [sua] t_k ...]]]] (Italian)

- Weak possessive

Prenominal possessives in Italian and Portuguese, and stressed possessive in French. The possessive moves to a high functional projection (“immediately” below DP):

[_{DP} la [_{AgrP} [sua]_i [_{FP} casa_K ... [_{NP} t_i t_k ...]]]] (Italian)

- Clitic possessive

Unstressed possessives in Spanish and French. The possessive moves to DP:



[_{DP} [su]_i [_{AgrP} t_i [_{FP} casa_K ... [_{NP} t_i t_k ...]]]] (Spanish)

Possessives in Catalan

Standard Catalan

Possessives in Catalan



La *teua* filla no és *teva*, i jo vaig matar *ta* mare.

La *teua* filla no és *teva*, i jo vaig matar la *teu* mare.

‘Your daughter is not yours, and I killed your mother’

Catalan

- Unstressed forms

["possessius àtons"; IEC (2016)]

- | | | | |
|-----|----|--------------------------|---------------------------------|
| (7) | a. | <i>mon, mos, ma, mes</i> | 1st singular (possessor) |
| | b. | <i>ton, tos, ta, tes</i> | 2nd singular (possessor) |
| | c. | <i>son, sos, sa, ses</i> | 3rd singular/plural (possessor) |

- Stressed forms

["possessius tòncics"; GIEC (2016)]

- | | | | |
|-----|----|---|---|
| (8) | a. | <i>meu, meus</i>
<i>meva/meua, meves/meues</i> | 1st singular (possessor) |
| | b. | <i>nostre, nostra, nostres</i> | 1st plural (possessor) |
| | c. | <i>teu, teus</i>
<i>teva/teua, teves/teues</i> | 2nd singular (possessor) |
| | d. | <i>vostre, vostra, vostres</i> | 2nd plural (possessor) |
| | e. | <i>seu, seus</i>
<i>seva/seua, seves/seues</i> | 3rd singular/plural (possessor) |
| | f. | <i>llur, llurs</i>
<i>llura, llurs</i> | 3rd plural (possessor)
(Roussillonese) |

Catalan

- Unstressed possessive
 - Person feature and Φ features (gender and number).
 - Prenominal and incompatible with any determiner.
 - It heads the nominal construction.
 - It turns the nominal construction into a [+def] DP.
 - It enables the phrase to function as an argument.

- (9) a. *sa* *mare*, *son* *germà*
 his/her.F mother his/her.M brother
- b. *mes* *germanes*
 ‘my.F.PL sisters’
- c. **el ton* *germà*
 the your brother
- d. *Son* *avi* *arribarà* *demà*.
 ‘His/her grandfather will arrive tomorrow.’

Catalan

- Unstressed possessive

- It cannot be used in ellipsis contexts (no empty nouns).
- It is not used as a vocative.
- It cannot occur in isolation and predicative position.

- (10) a. **mon* cosí de Terrassa i ton Ø
 my.M cousin from Terrassa and your
- b. **Mon* germà, vine!
 my.M brother come
- c. —De qui és? —**Mon*. —**És mon*.
 of who is my.M is my.M

Catalan

- Unstressed possessive

- It is restricted to kinship terms and some particular cases.

- (11) a. *ma* mare / *la* *meva* mare
 my.F mother the.F mine.F mother
- b. Això no ho ha fet *en sa* *vida*.
 that not it has done in his/her life
 ‘He/she has never done that before.’
- c. **mes* claus / *les* *meves* claus
 my.F.PL keys the.F.PL mine.F.PL keys

→ The unstressed possessive is (similar to) a [+def] **determiner**.

→ The unstressed possessive reveals a different treatment of kinship terms (as in Italian) [Cardinaletti and Giusti (2019)]

Catalan

- Stressed possessive

- Person feature and Φ features (gender and number).
- Prenominal or postnominal.
- The nominal construction can be [\pm def].
- It can occur in isolation and predicative position.
- It does not enable the phrase to function as an argument.

- (12) a. *la meva veïna*
 ‘my neighbor’
- b. *alguna/qualsevol veïna teva*
 ‘one/any of your neighbors’
- c. —*De qui és?* —*Meu.* / —*És meu.*
 ‘Whose is it? Mine. / It’s mine.’
- d. **Teu avi* *arribarà* *demà.*
 your grandfather arrive.FUT tomorrow

Catalan

- Stressed possessive

- It can be used in ellipsis contexts (i.e. no empty nouns).
- It can be used in vocatives.
- It is not restricted to a particular kind of nouns.

- (13) a. La *meva* amiga arribarà tard, però la *teva* Ø no.
the.F mine.F friend arrive.FUT late but the.F your.F not
'My friend will be late, but yours won't.'
- b. Filla *meva*, ¿per què ho dius, això?
daughter mine.F why it say.2SG that
'My dear daughter, why do you say that?'
- c. la *seva* mare / casa / llibreta / xerrada
'His/her mother / house / notebook / talk'

→ The stressed possessive **is not a determiner**.

Catalan

- Stressed possessive: prenominal vs. postnominal position
 - If prenominal ...
 - It can not be combined with any kind of determiner/quantifier.
 - It can be focalized, but it does not admit contrastive focus.
 - It cannot be coordinated nor modified.

- (14) a. el *meu* amic
 ‘my friend’
 b. ??aquest *meu* amic
 this mine friend
 c. *un/*algun/*qualsevol *meu* amic
 a some any mine friend

- (15) a. És el *MEU* amic, no *TEU / no el TEU.
 is the mine friend not your not the your
 b. *el *meu* i *seu* amic
 the mine and his/her friend
 c. *l'exclusivament *meu* amic
 the-exclusively mine friend

Catalan

- Stressed possessive: prenominal vs. postnominal position
 - If postnominal ...
 - It can be combined with any kind of determiner/quantifier.
 - It admits contrastive focus.
 - It can be coordinated or modified.

- (16) a. l'amic *meu* ← definite article
 b. aquest amic *meu* ← demonstrative
 c. un/algun amic *meu* ← indefinites

- (17) a. És l'amic *MEU*, no TEU.
 'He is my friend, not yours.'
 b. els llibres *meus* i *seus* / d'ells
 the.PL books mine.PL and their.PL of-them
 c. una idea exclusivament *teva*
 'It is entirely your idea.'

Catalan

- Stressed possessive: prenominal vs. postnominal position
 - If the DP is headed by the definite article, the possessive takes on a particular interpretation when postnominal (but not when prenominal).
 - The postnominal possessive is interpreted as [+hum].

- (18) a. el *meu* amic [non-marked interpretation]
 the mine friend
 b. l'amic *meu* [emphatic interpretation]
 the-friend mine

- (19) a. Amb la *seva* tapa, anirà més bé. (*seva* = Maria, paella)
 'It will be better with the lid on.' Mary frying pan
 b. Amb la/una tapa *seva*, anirà més bé. (*seva* = Maria, *paella)

→ Stressed prenominal possessives are **weak** possessives.
Stressed postnominal possessives are **strong** possessives.

Possessives in Catalan

- **Possessive system**

Catalan has three kinds of possessives and two possessive paradigms.

- **DP structure and possessives**

- Strong possessive

Stressed possessives in postnominal position (as in Italian, Portuguese and Spanish):

[_{DP} la [_{AgrP} [_{FP} germana_k ... [_{NP} [seva] t_k ...]]]] (Catalan)

- Weak possessive

Stressed possessives in prenominal position (as in Italian and Portuguese):

[_{DP} la [_{AgrP} [seva]_i [_{FP} germana_k ... [_{NP} t_i t_k ...]]]] (Catalan)

- Clitic possessive

Unstressed possessives (as in Spanish and French):

[_{DP} [sa]_i [_{AgrP} t_i [_{FP} germana_k ... [_{NP} t_i t_k ...]]]] (Catalan)

Possessives in Romance languages

Three kinds of possessives

- STRONG → found in postnominal position
- WEAK → found in prenominal position
[±def] DP (Italian); [+def] DP (Catalan)
- CLITIC → found in DP; it heads a [+def] DP

	Spanish	French	Italian	Portuguese	Catalan
STRONG	<i>suyo</i>		<i>su(o/a)</i>	<i>seu/sua</i>	<i>seu/seva</i>
WEAK		<i>sien(ne)</i>	<i>su(o/a)</i>	<i>seu/sua</i>	<i>seu/seva</i>
CLITIC	<i>su</i>	<i>son/sa</i>			<i>son/sa</i>

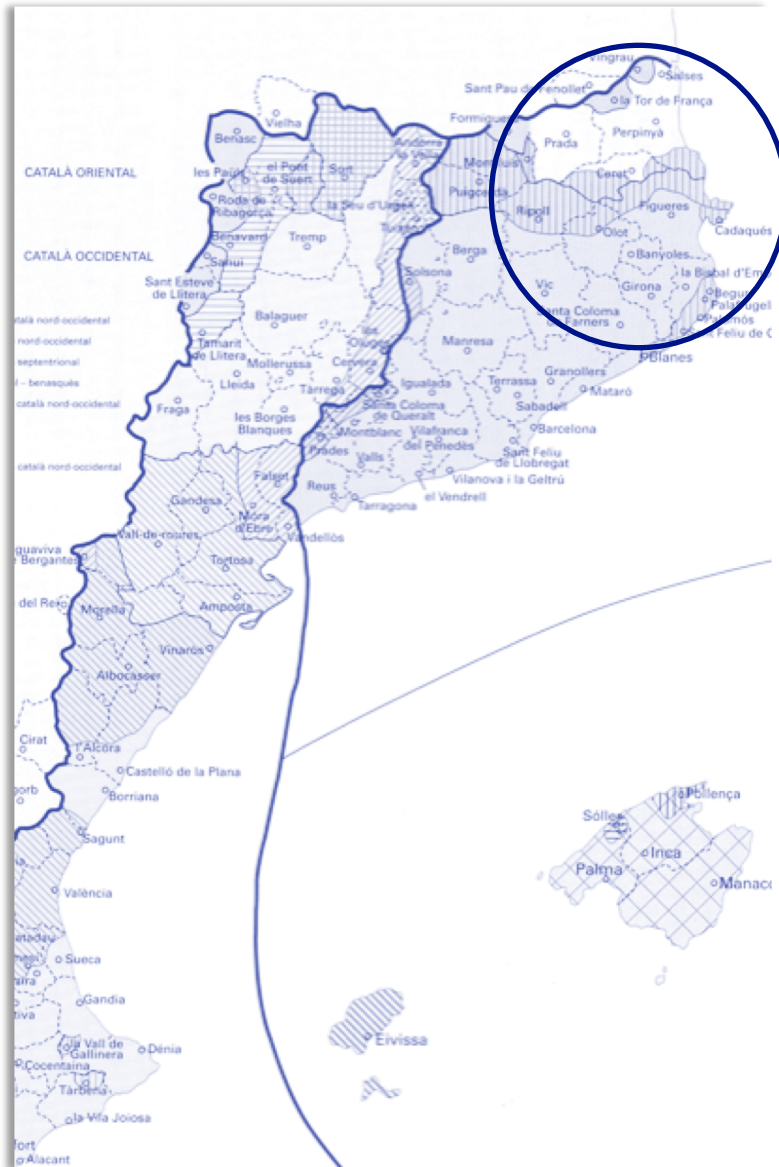
→ Catalan is like Italian and Portuguese (plus a clitic form).

Possessives in Catalan

Northeastern Catalan



Northeastern Catalan



- Defective possessives

- Prenominal possessives

Possessives in Northeastern Catalan

Gender defective possessives

Northeastern Catalan

- Gender defective possessive

- Northeastern Catalan

(20) a. el *meu* pare, la *meu* mare
the mine father the mine mother

b. els *meus* amics, les *meus* amigues
the.PL mine.PL friends(M) the.PL mine.PL friends(F)

(21) a. ca(sa) *meu* (Tossa de Mar; Bosch and Sallés 2025)
home mine

b. la *meu* dona (Girona; Gros 2024)
the.F mine wife

c. les *teus* llibretes (Pau; Comes i Caussa 1996)
the.F.PL your.PL notebooks

c. (la) *llur* casa (Perpinyà; Ferrerós and Roca 2025)
the.F their house

Northeastern Catalan

- Semantic properties of the gender defective possessive
 - Inalienability

(22)	la <i>meu</i> mare 'my mother'		+ inalienable
	<i>casa meu</i> 'home'		
	la <i>meu</i> millor amiga 'my best friend'		
	la <i>teu</i> companya de feina 'your coworker'		
	les <i>meus</i> ulleres 'my glasses'		– inalienable

The gender defective possessive is more common in relationships of stronger inalienability.

Northeastern Catalan

- Semantic properties of the gender defective possessive
 - [\pm human] referents

- (23) a. Tu fes la *teu* feina i calla.
you do the.F your job and shut up
'Just do your job and keep quiet'
- b. La *seu* mà és més petita que la *teva*.
the.F his/her hand is more small than the.F your.F
'His hand is smaller than yours.'
- c. Cada escriptori té la *seu* cadira.
every desk has the.F its chair
'Every desk has its own chair'

[+hum] referents are preferred, by [-hum] referents are also possible.

Northeastern Catalan

- Semantic properties of the gender defective possessive
 - Thematic relations

- (24) a. la **teu / teva* lectura d'aquests poemes *teu/teva* = AGENT
 the.F your your.F reading of-these poems
 'your reading of these poems'
- b. la **teu / teva* fotografia *teu/teva* = AGENT OR THEME
 the.F your your.F photo
- c. la *teu / teva* fotografia *teu/teva* = POSSESSOR
 'your photo'

The gender defective possessive does not encode thematic relations such as AGENT or THEME; its use is restricted to possessive relations (relational nouns, kinship terms, etc.).

Northeastern Catalan

- Syntactic properties of the gender defective possessive
 - Prenominal.
 - Not used as vocative.
 - Not used in ellipsis contexts.
 - It cannot occur in isolation and predicative position.

- (25) a. *la seu filla* vs. **la filla seu*
 the.F his/her daughter the.F daughter his/her
- b. **Meu filla, sigues més puntual, si us plau.*
 ‘My dear daughter, please more accurate with your timing.’
- c. **La teu Ø és allà.*
 the.F your is there
- d. **Aquesta llibreta és meu.*
 this.F notebook.F is mine
- e. —*De qui és germana?* — **Meu / Meva.*
 of who is sister mine mine.F



→ Syntactic properties shared with the clitic possessive.

Northeastern Catalan

- Syntactic properties of the gender defective possessive
 - The nominal construction can be [\pm def].
 - It has to be preceded by a determiner or a quantifier.
 - It does not enable the phrase to function as an argument.

- (26) a. *la meu* cosina
 the.F mine cousin.F
- b. *aquestes / tres meus cosines*
 these.F.PL three mine.PL cousin.F.PL

- (27) a. **Ha vingut *(la) meu* mare.
 has come the.F mine mother
- b. *Han vingut *(les) meus cosines.*
 have.3PL come the.F.PL mine.PL cousin.F.PL

Northeastern Catalan

- Syntactic properties of the gender defective possessive
 - It cannot be coordinated nor modified.
 - It can be focalized, but it does not admit contrastive focus.

(28) a. *la *meu* i *seu* cosina
the.F mine and his/her cousin.F

b. *l'exclusivament *meu* amiga
the-exclusively mine friend.F

(29) a. *És la MEU taula, i no teva!
is the.F mine table and not your.F

b. És la MEU taula, i no la teva!
'It's my table, not yours!'

→ The gender defective possessive is not a determiner; it shares several properties with the prenominal stressed possessive (**weak possessive**).

Possessives in (Northeastern) Catalan

- DP structure and possessives

- Strong possessive

Stressed possessives in postnominal position:

[_{DP} la [_{AgrP} [_{FP} germana_k ... [_{NP} [seva] t_k ...]]]]

- Weak possessive

Stressed possessives in prenominal position:

[_{DP} la [_{AgrP} [seva]_i [_{FP} germana_k ... [_{NP} t_i t_k ...]]]]

- Weak defective possessive

(Northeastern Catalan)

Stressed possessives in prenominal position:

[_{DP} la [_{FP} [seu]_i [_{AgrP} [_{FP} germana_k ... [_{NP} t_i t_k ...]]]]

- Clitic possessive

Unstressed possessives:

[_{DP} [sa]_i [_{AgrP} t_i [_{FP} germana_k ... [_{NP} t_i t_k ...]]]]



→ There are four syntactic positions available for possessives.

Possessives in Romance languages

Three kinds of possessives

- STRONG → found in postnominal position
- WEAK → found in prenominal position
 [±def] DP/QP (Italian); [+def] DP (Catalan)
 Gender defective possessive (North-East Catalan)
- CLITIC → found in DP; it heads a [+def] DP

	Spanish	French	Italian	Portuguese	Catalan	North-East Catalan
STRONG	<i>suyo</i>		<i>su(o/a)</i>	<i>seu/sua</i>	<i>seu/seva</i>	<i>seu/seva</i>
WEAK		<i>sien(ne)</i>	<i>su(o/a)</i>	<i>seu/sua</i>	<i>seu/seva</i>	<i>seu/seva</i> <i>seu</i>
CLITIC	<i>su</i>	<i>son/sa</i>			<i>son/sa</i>	<i>(son/sa)</i>

→ Catalan has four possessive forms.

→ The use of possessives expresses different semantic relations.

Possessives in Northeastern Catalan

Prenominal possessives

Northeastern Catalan

- Stressed prenominal possessives with indefinites
 - Preference for relational nouns (inalienable possession) and argumental nouns.

- (34) a. un *meu* amic
a mine friend
- b. una *meva* proposta
a mine proposal
- c. #un *meu* cotxe
a mine car

(34c) is possible if the speaker intends to express that a proximity/close relationship holds between the possessor and the possessum.

Northeastern Catalan

- Stressed prenominal possessives with indefinites

- The DP is interpreted as [+specific].

- (35) a. Estic buscant un *meu* amic que *vol* venir
am looking for a mine friend that wants.IND come
amb mi a París.
with me to Paris
'I.m looking for a friend of mine who wants to come with me to Paris.'
- b. *Estic buscant un *meu* amic que *vulgui* venir
am looking for a mine friend that wants.SUBJ come
amb mi a París.
with me to Paris

The subjunctive relative clause forces the [−spec] reading; it is incompatible with the prenominal possessive (35b).

Northeastern Catalan

- Stressed prenominal possessives with indefinites
 - Weak or strong possessive?
 - The possessive can be contrastively focused.
 - The possessive is restricted to [+human] referents.

(36) Un *SEU* amic, no TEU, ha vingut a visitar-me.
a his/her/their friend, not your has come to visit.INF-me

(37) a. M'han mostrat una seva habitació (seva = Maria)
me-have.3PL shown a her.F room Mary
b. *M'han mostrat una seva habitació (seva = casa)
me-have.3PL shown a her.F room house

→ Prenominal possessives with indefinites are **strong possessives**.

Northeastern Catalan

- Stressed prenominal possessives with indefinites
 - Syntactic position
 - The prenominal possessive can follow/precede certain adjectives.

- (38) a. He llegit una seva famosa novel·la.
have.1SG read a his/her/their.F famous.F novel
'I've read one of his/her/their famous novels.'
- b. He llegit una famosa seva novel·la.
'I've read one of his/her/their famous novels.'

Strong forms (pronouns/possessives) need not remain in situ, but may move for interpretive reasons.

[→ Cardinaletti and Starke (1996)]

→ Prenominal possessives with indefinites are **strong possessives**.

Northeastern Catalan

- Stressed prenominal possessives with indefinites

- DP structure

- Non-evaluative prenominal weak possessives (Italian):

[_{DP} la/una [_{XP} [*sua*]_i [_{YP} casa_k ... [_{NP} t_i t_k ...]]]]

- Evaluative prenominal strong possessives (Northeastern Catalan):

[_{DP} una ... [_{ZP} [*seva*]_i [famosa ... [_{YP} novel·la ... [_{NP} t_i t_k ...]]]]]]

[_{DP} una ... [famosa [_{ZP} [*seva*]_i ... [_{YP} novel·la ... [_{NP} t_i t_k ...]]]]]]

[→ Eguren and Roca (2025)]

Possessives in Northeastern Catalan

DP structure



Northeastern Catalan

- Prenominal possessives
 - Syntactic order (defective possessive)

(41) a. la *meu* millor amiga
 the.F mine best friend
 ‘my best friend’

 b. *la millor *meu* amiga

(42) a. les *meus* futures companyes de feina
 the.F.PL mine.PL future.F.PL coworker.F.PL
 ‘my future coworkers’

 b. *les futures *meus* companyes de feina

(43) a. aquestes *teus* famosos companyes de feina
 these.F.PL mine.PL famous.F.PL coworker.F.PL
 ‘these famous coworkers of yours’

 b. *aquestes famosos *teus* companyes de feina

Northeastern Catalan

- Prenominal possessives
 - Syntactic order ('Indef + possessive')

(44) a. un *seu* famós amic
the his/her/their famous friend
'a famous friend of his/her/them'

b. un famós *seu* amic

(45) a. aquelles *teves* famoses companyes de feina
that.F.PL your.F.PL future.F.PL coworker.F.PL
'those famous coworkers of yours'

b. aquelles famoses *teves* companyes de feina

(46) a. aquesta *teva* futura companya de feina
these.F your.F future.F coworker.F
'this famous coworker of yours'

b. aquesta futura *teva* companya de feina

Possessives in (Northeastern) Catalan

- DP structure and possessives

- Strong possessive

Stressed possessives in postnominal position:

[_{DP} la [_{XP} [_{YP} germana_K ... [_{NP} [seva] t_k ...]]]]

- Strong possessive (Northeastern Catalan)

Stressed possessives in prenominal position (evaluative content):

[_{DP} la/una [_{XP} ... [_{ZP} [seva]_i ... [_{YP} germana_K ... [_{NP} t_i t_k ...]]]]]]

- Weak possessive

Stressed possessives in prenominal position:

[_{DP} la [_{XP(=AgrP)} [seva]_i ... [_{ZP} ... [_{YP} germana_k ... [_{NP} t_i t_k ...]]]]]]

- Weak defective possessive (Northeastern Catalan)

Stressed possessives in prenominal position:

[_{DP} la [_{FP} [seu]_i [_{XP} [_{YP} germana_k ... [_{NP} t_i t_k ...]]]]]]

- Clitic possessive

 Unstressed possessives:

[_{DP} [sa]_i [_{FP} t_i [_{XP} t_i [_{YP} germana_k ... [_{NP} t_i t_k ...]]]]]]

Possessives in (Northeastern) Catalan

- DP structure and possessives

- Strong possessive

Stressed possessives in postnominal position:

[_{DP} la [_{XP} [_{YP} germana_K ... [_{NP} [seva] t_k ...]]]]

- Strong possessive (Northeastern Catalan)

Stressed possessives in prenominal position (evaluative content):

[_{DP} la/una [_{XP} ... [_{ZP} [seva]_i ... [_{YP} germana_K ... [_{NP} t_i t_k ...]]]]]]

- Weak possessive

Stressed possessives with definite articles and defective possessives:

[_{DP} la [_{FP} [seu/seva]_i [_{XP} [_{YP} germana_K ... [_{NP} t_i t_k ...]]]]]]

- Clitic possessive

Unstressed possessives:

[_{DP} [sa]_i [_{FP} t_i [_{XP} t_i [_{YP} germana_K ... [_{NP} t_i t_k ...]]]]]]

→ Four syntactic positions; FP is close to the complex DP domain.

[→ Bernstein et al (forthcoming)]

Possessives in Catalan

Further dialectal variation

Catalan

- Further dialectal variation

- Western Catalan

- The clitic possessive loses the plural form *mes*.

(47)	a.	<i>mon</i> pare	(Lleida; Casanovas and Creus 1999)
		my.M father	
	b.	<i>mons</i> cosins	* <i>mes</i> cosins
		my.M.PL cousin.P	
	c.	les <i>meves</i> cosines	* <i>mes</i> cosines
		the.F.PL mine.M.PL cousins.F.P	

- Western Catalan

- Alternation between masculine and feminine clitic possessive forms.

(48)	a.	<i>ma</i> germà	(Tarragona, Tortosa; Rull 2026)
		my. F brother	
	b.	<i>mon</i> àvia	
		my.M grandmother	

- Balearic Catalan

- Clitic possessive *mu* for feminine.

(49)	<i>mu</i> mare	(Mallorca and Menorca)
	my mother	

Conclusions

UdG

Conclusion

- The grammatical properties of possessives in Catalan distinguish three kinds of possessives (with different morphological properties) and support a complex functional structure in nominal constructions.
- The morphologically defective possessive found in Northeastern Catalan contrast with the rest of possessive forms in some relevant syntactic and semantic particular.
- A close look at dialectal variation reveals phenomena that are relevant to characterizing human language.
- The Catalan possessive system codifies different semantic relations (similarly to Italian and Italian dialects).

References

UdG

References

- Bernstein, J., Ordóñez, F. i Roca, F. (forthcoming): "Two D heads: Cartographic evidence from Romance". In S. Wolfe (ed.) *The Oxford Handbook of Syntactic Cartography*. Oxford: OUP.
- Brito, Ana M. (2003). "Os possessivos em português numa perspectiva de sintaxe comparada". *Revista da Faculdade de Letras XX(II)*. 495-522.
- Bosch i Rodoreda, A.; Sallés Fernández, C. (2025). *El català de Tossa. Un dels parlars salats de la Costa Brava*. Centre d'Estudis Tossencs. Tossa de Mar.
- Casanovas, M.; Creus, I. (1999). "Apunts sobre el lleidatà: fonètica i morfosintaxi". *Zeitschrift für Katalanistik* 12. 83-108.
- Cardinaletti, A. (1998). "On the deficient/strong opposition in possessive Systems". In A. Alexiadou i C. Wilder (eds.), *Possessors, predicates and movement in the determiner phrase*, 22, Amsterdam, John Benjamins Publishing. 17-53.
- Cardinaletti, A.; Starke, M. (1996). "Deficient pronouns: a view from Germanic". In S. Epstein and H. Thráinsson (eds.), *Studies in comparative Germanic syntax* 2: 21-56. Dordrecht: Kluwer
- Cardinaletti A.; Starke, M. (1999). "The typology of structural deficiency: A case study of the three classes of pronouns". In H. van Riemsdijk (ed.), *Clitics in the Languages of Europe* 5.1, Berlin/New York, De Gruyter Mouton. 145-234.

References

- Cardinaletti, A.; Giusti, G. (2019). “Microvariation in the possessive systems of Italian dialects”. *Language Use and Linguistic Structure. Proceedings of the Olomouc Linguistics Colloquium*. 137-144.
- Comes i Causa, J. (1996). “El parlar de Pau (Alt Empordà) a la dècada 60-70 (I)”. *Annals de l’Institut d’Estudis Empordanesos* 29. 357-377.
- Cinque, G. (1994): “On the evidence for partial N-movement in the Romance DP”, dins G. Cinque, J. Koster, J-Y. Pollock, L. Rizzi i R. Zanuttini (eds.), *Paths towards universal grammar*, Washington D.C., Georgetown University Press, pp. 85-110.
- Eguren, L. (2017). “Un apunte sobre las propiedades de los posesivos prenominales”. In Á. Gallego, Y. Rodríguez, and J. Fernández-Sánchez (eds.), *Relaciones sintácticas. Homenaje a José M^a Brucart y M^a Lluïsa Hernanz*, Bellaterra, Servei de Publicacions UAB. 241-254.
- Eguren L.; Roca F. (2025). “Prenominal possessives with indefinites in Romance”. *RLLT* 26, P. Barbosa, C. Flores, E. Rinke, and E. M. Roessler. *Special Issue of Isogloss. Open Journal of Romance Linguistics* 11(7)/4. 1-26.
- Escandell, M. V. (1999). “Notas sobre la gramática de los posesivos”. In P. Gómez Manzano, P. Carbonero Cano i M. Casado Velarde (coords.), *Lengua y discurso: estudios dedicados al profesor Vidal Lamíquiz*, Madrid, Arco Libros. 265-278.

References

- Ferrerós, C. Roca, F. (2023). “Possessius invariables en gènere en català septentrional”. In E. Gibert-Sotelo et al. (eds.), *Linguistica sine finibus. Estudis dedicats a Montserrat Batllori Dillet*. Girona: Servei de Publicacions de la Universitat de Girona. 85-118
- Ferrerós, C., Roca, F. (2025). “The effect of linguistic attitudes on grammatical preferences: possessive elements in Roussilonese Catalan”. Ms. UPVD – UdG.
- Gros, M. (2024). “El parlar gironí: estat de la qüestió”. *Estudis Romànics* 46. 345-357.
- Longobardi, G. (1994). “Reference and proper names: A theory of N-movement in syntax and logical form”, *Linguistic inquiry* 25(4). 609-665.
- Picallo, C. (1994): “Catalan possessive pronouns: The Avoid Pronoun Principle revisited”, *Natural Language & Linguistic Theory* 12(2). 259-299.
- Picallo, C. (2008): “Gender and number in Romance”, *Lingue e linguaggio* 7. 47-66.
- Rull, X. (2026). A l’entorn dels clítics en català. Sis estudis. Sevilla. Aula Magna.
- Zribi-Hertz, A. (1999). “Le système des possessifs en français standard moderne”, *Langue française* 122. 7-29.

Thank you!!