Accusative or Possessive?
The Suffix of Pronominal Objects in Ob-Ugric[*]

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This paper seeks an answer to the question why pronominal objects in Mansi and Northern Khanty are personal pronouns bearing a possessive agreement morpheme encoding the person and number of the given pronoun, and why the possessive suffix of these pronouns is identified as an accusative case marker in Mansi and Northern Khanty grammars. The answer is derived from the morphosyntax of reflexive pronouns, and the morphosyntax of differential object marking in Ob-Ugric. It is argued that pronouns bearing a possessive agreement morpheme are formally reflexive pronouns functioning as referentially independent, emphatic, strong pronouns. In Ob-Ugric, 1st and 2nd person pronominal objects used to be – and in some dialects, still are – barred from topic position by the Inverse Topicality Constraint, and, as focal elements, they are represented by strong pronouns. In Northern Khanty and Northern Mansi, the consistent possessive marking of 1st and 2nd person object pronouns has been analogically extended to 3rd person pronouns, as well. Since only subjects and familiar objects can be topicalized, oblique pronouns have also been barred from topic position, and therefore they also appear in their strong forms. Subjects are topics in these languages, hence subject pronouns have been grammaticized in their weak forms. Since subject pronouns have been consistently represented by the weak (i.e., base) forms, and 1st and 2nd person (and in some languages, 3rd person) object pronouns have been consistently represented by the possessive-marked strong forms, the possessive morphemes of the latter have come to be interpreted as object markers.

Keywords: *accusative case, differential object marking (DOM), Inverse Agreement Constraint, possessive agreement, pronominal object*

1   The problem

In Mansi and Northern Khanty, pronominal objects bear suffixes encoding the person and number of the pronominal stem. These suffixes appear to be identical with the possessive agreement suffixes cross-referencing an overt or pro-dropped possessor on the possessums. A puzzle of Uralic morphosyntax is why pronominal objects bear a possessive agreement morpheme, and why the possessive suffix of these pronouns is identified as an accusative case marker in Mansi and Northern Khanty grammars. In these dialects, the possessive "accusative" suffix is also present on the pronominal stem when the pronoun is supplied with an oblique case marker. Pronominal subjects, on the contrary, never bear an agreement morpheme. In Hungarian, possessive agreement stands in, or can stand in, for accusative marking in the case of first and second person objects and objects with a first or second person possessor. So far, it has remained unexplained how possession is related to personal pronouns and to object function. After summarizing the relevant facts, this squib will attempt a hypothetical answer.

2 The facts

Observe the Northern Mansi pronominal paradigm, as described by Kálmán (1976). (The dual and plural 2nd and 3rd person forms not spelled out in the table display the same behavior as the 1st person forms.)

(1) Declension of personal pronouns in Northern Mansi (Kálmán 1976: 50)

	1SG[1]	2SG	3SG	1DU	1PL
NOM	*am*	*naŋ*	*taw*	*me:n*	*ma:n*
ACC	*a:n^{u}m*	*naŋən*	*tawe*	*me:nmen*	*ma:naw*
DAT	*a:n^{u}mn*	*naŋənn*	*tawen*	*me:nmenn*	*ma:nawn*
ABL	*a:n^{u}mnəl*	*naŋənnəl*	*tawenəl*	*me:nmennəl*	*ma:nawnəl*
COM	*a:n^{u}mtəl*	*naŋəntəl*	*tawetəl*	*me:nmentəl*	*ma:nawtəl*

The "accusative" suffixes are identical with the corresponding members of the paradigm of possessive agreement morphemes except for the epenthetic vowel connecting the suffix to the stem:

(2) Paradigm of possessive agreement in Northern Mansi (Kálmán 1976: 46)

possessed possessor	SG	SG	SG	DU	PL
1SG	*-^{u}m*				
2SG		*-ən*			
3SG			*-e*		
1DU				*-men*	
1PL					*-uw*

Interestingly, the possessive suffix is also present in the oblique cases; it intervenes between the pronominal stem and the oblique case marker. (This is not unexpected – in fact, it is capitalized on – in the theories of Caha (2009) and Smith et al. (2019), assuming that morphological cases are internally complex with more complex cases containing less complex ones.)

Unlike Northern Mansi, Eastern Mansi has preserved the Proto-Ugric accusative suffix *-m*; still, 1st and 2nd person singular and plural pronominal objects, and a variant of the 3rd person singular pronominal object bear the corresponding possessive agreement morphemes instead. (In the case of the dual and 3rd person plural pronouns, the accusative form is the same as the nominative form (Virtanen 2015: 34).) Compare the nominative and accusative forms of these pronouns with the corresponding possessive agreement morphemes:

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[1] The following abbreviations are used in the paper: 1 = first person, 2 = second person, 3 = third person, ABE = abessive case, ABL = ablative case, ACC = accusative case, APPR = approximative case, COM = comitative case, DAT = dative case, DEM = demonstrative, DU = dual, INSF = instructive-final case, LAT = lative case, LOC = locative case, NEG = negative particle, NOM = nominative case, PART = particle, PL = plural, POSS.AGR = possessive agreement, PST = past tense, SG = singular, TRA = translative case.

(3) Nominative and accusative personal pronouns in Eastern Mansi (Kulonen 2007: 87)

	1SG	2SG	3SG	1PL	2PL
NOM	*om*	*näg*	*täw*	*möän*	*nöän*
ACC	*oånəm*[2]	*nä:n*	*tääwə*	*möänəw*	*nöän*

(4) Partial paradigm of possessive agreement in Eastern Mansi (Kulonen 2007: 31)

possessed possessor	SG	SG	SG	PL	PL
1SG	*-(ə)m*				
2SG		*-(ə)n*			
3SG			*-ə*		
1PL				*-nəw*	
2PL					*-ään*

As pointed out by Virtanen (2014: 13), and illustrated by examples like (5a–b), the accusative morpheme is also absent on lexical objects that bear a 1st or 2nd person possessive morpheme cross-referencing a 1st or 2nd person possessor:

(5) a. *Püw.syəsyk°-əm   öat   tə   pümənt-əs-ləm.*[3]
       son.dear-1SG   NEG   PART   command-PST-SG<1SG[4]
       'I have not commanded my dear son enough.'   (Virtanen 2015: 44)
    b. *Ääk-ən   koməly   woåxtl-əs-lən!*
       uncle-2SG   how   leave-PST-SG<2SG
       'How could you leave your uncle!'   (Virtanen 2014: 13)

A similar resemblance is attested between the "accusative" case endings of pronouns and the corresponding possessive agreement suffixes in Northern Khanty. The impoverished case system of Northern Khanty only includes a single oblique case. Notice that the possessive suffix is also present on the stem when it combines with the locative case suffix.

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[2]   So as to facilitate comparison, I have replaced Kulonen's (2007) *ø* character with *ə*.
[3]   The suffix *-əm* cannot be interpreted as the combination of the *-ə* 3rd person possessive morpheme and the *-m* accusative morpheme because the 3rd person singular possessive accusative ending is represented by the portmanteu morpheme *-ääm/-ətääm*.
[4]   The symbol < separates the object agreement morpheme, cross-referencing the number of the object, and the subject agreement morpheme, cross-referencing the number and person of the subject. (In the Ob-Ugric Database of the EuroBABEL project (http://www.babel.gwi.uni-muenchen.de/) the symbol > is used for this purpose. This paper adopts the convention of the Uralic databases of the Research Institute for Linguistics, Budapest (http://www.nytud.hu/oszt/elmnyelv/urali/adatbazisok.html), where the direction of < corresponds to the relative prominence of object and subject.

(6) Declension of personal pronouns in Northern Khanty (Nikolaeva 1999: 16)

	1SG	3SG	1DU	1PL
NOM	*ma*	*luw*	*min*	*muŋ*
ACC	*ma:ne:m*	*luwe:l*	*mine:mən*	*muŋe:w*
LOC	*ma:ne:mna*	*luwe:lna*	*mine:mənna*	*muŋe:wna*

(7) Partial paradigm of possessive agreement in Northern Khanty (Nikolaeva 1999: 14)

possessed possessor	SG	SG	DU	PL
1SG	*-e:m*			
3SG		*-l* [5]		
1DU			*-mən*	
1PL				*-uw*

Eastern Khanty marks pronominal objects with a *-t* accusative suffix (the same suffix that functions as the general accusative morpheme in Hungarian).[6] In the Eastern Khanty pronominal paradigm, the possessive suffix appears on 1st person dative pronouns, following the dative morpheme. The rest of the case suffixes other than locative (lative, approximative, translative, instructive-final, comitative, and abessive) are attached to the pronoun+dative suffix+possessive suffix complex – systematically in 1st and 2nd person, and less systematically in 3rd person. That is, the dative form of the pronouns serves as their oblique stem, as opposed to Northern Mansi and Northern Khanty, where the accusative form performs this function. Only the singular pronominal paradigm is cited below, but the dual and plural forms, too, are constructed along parallel principles. The possessive suffixes *-əm*, *-ən* and *-əł,* cross-referencing a singular possessum, are underlined in the pronouns:

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⁵ Whereas the accusative suffix of the 3rd person singular pronoun (*-e:ł*) contains the *-ł* 3rd person singular possessive agreement suffix, the *-e:ł* complex is formally identical with the 3rd person plural possessive agreement morpheme. I tentatively assume that the epenthetic vowel preceding *-ł* has been replaced by *-e:-* analogically – since *-e:-* is present in the accusative forms of the other pronouns.

⁶ Pronominal objects in the Baltic Finnic languages bear the same *-t* morpheme. According to Kulonen (1989), the suffix *-t* marked pronominal objects in Proto-Finno-Ugric.

(8) Declension of personal pronouns in Eastern Khanty (Csepregi 2017: 105–106;
     forthcoming)

	1SG	2SG	3SG
NOM	*ma*	*nŭŋ*	*łŭw*
ACC	*mant*	*nŭŋat*	*łŭwat*
DAT	*mantem, manem*	*nŭŋati*	*łŭwati*
LAT	*mantema*	*nŭŋatena*	*łŭwatła*
LOC	*manə*	*nŭŋnə*	*łŭwnə*
ABL	*mantemi, manemi*	*nŭŋateni*	*łŭwatłi*
APPR	*mantemnàm*	*nŭŋatennam*	*łŭwatłnam, łŭwatinnam*
TRA	*mantemyə*	*nŭŋatiyə, nŭŋatenyə*	*łŭwatiyə, lükkə*
INSF	*mantemat*	*nŭŋatinat, nŭŋatiyat*	*łŭwatiyat*
COM	*mantemnat*	*nŭŋatenat*	*łŭwatinat*
ABE	*mantemłəγ*	*nŭŋatiłəγ*	*łŭwatłəγ*

In Eastern Khanty, lexical objects bear no accusative suffix, which raises a further question: why are pronominal objects more likely targets of accusative morphology than lexical noun phrases in languages with differential accusative morphology?

Among the Ugric languages, Hungarian has removed farthest from Proto-Ugric and Proto-Uralic; nevertheless, it still has relics of a system of object marking resembling that surviving in Ob-Ugric, especially that preserved in Eastern Mansi. Namely, Hungarian 1st and 2nd person singular pronominal objects have a possessive ending instead of the accusative *-t*. The possessive ending is also present on the 1st and 2nd person plural pronominal objects, albeit it is followed by the accusative *-t* morpheme.

(9) Nominal and accusative personal pronouns in Hungarian

	1SG	2SG	1PL	2PL
NOM	*én*	*te*	*mi*	*ti*
ACC	*en-g-em*	*té-g-ed*[7]	*mi-nk-et*	*ti-tek-et*
POSS. AGR.	*-m*	*-d*	*-nk*	*-tEk*

The phenomenon observed in Eastern Mansi in connection with (5a–b), i.e., the lack of accusative case suffix on objects with a 1st or 2nd person possessor, has also survived in Hungarian as an option. The accusative marking of the object in Hungarian is optional if and only if the object has an overt or covert 1st or 2nd person possessor:

(10) *Hova   tetted   a   kulcs-om(-at) / kulcs-od(-at) / kulcs-unk(-at) /*
      where put.PST.2SG   the   key-1SG(-ACC)/   key-2SG(-ACC)/   key-1PL(-ACC)/
      kulcso-tok(-at)?
      key-2PL(-ACC)
      'Where have you put my key/your_sg key/our key/your_pl key?'

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3   An explanation

The Ugric data surveyed above raise the following questions:

   i. Why do pronominal objects in Mansi and in Northern Khanty (and 1st and 2nd person pronominal objects in Hungarian) bear a possessive agreement morpheme agreeing with the person and number of the given pronoun?

   ii. Why is the possessive "accusative" suffix also present on the pronominal stem when the pronoun is supplied with an oblique case marker?

   iii. Why is it never present on subject pronouns?

   iv. Why is the possessive suffix of these pronouns identified as an accusative case marker in Mansi and Northern Khanty grammars?

   The explanation to be proposed is derived from independently motivated analyses of two phenomena of Ugric grammar: reflexive pronouns, and differential object marking.

   According to Volkova (2014), reflexive pronouns in Northern (Tegi) Khanty are represented by a possessive construction, where both the pro-dropped possessor and the possessum are personal pronouns of the same person and number, and the possessum bears an agreement suffix cross-referencing the possessor.[8] For example:

(11) *Utłtiteχo$_i$*   *łuv-eł$_{i/j}$*   *išək-s-əlle.*
      teacher   he-3SG   praise-PST-SG<3SG
      'The teacher praised himself/him .'

The assumption that (11) under the reflexive interpretation involves binding rather than coreference is confirmed by examples involving a quantified subject such as (12). If *łuv-eł* is understood as a reflexive, the sentence means 'for no x, x a person, x praised x'.

(12) *Nemχojat$_i$*   *łuv-eł$_{i/j}$* *ănt*   *išək-s-əlle.*
      nobody   he-3SG NEG   praise-PST-SG<3SG
      'Nobody praised him/himself'

   In the Ob-Ugric languages, only contextually given objects elicit verbal agreement; the verb does not agree with objects introducing a new referent (Nikolaeva 2001; Dalrymple and Nikolaeva 2011). Accordingly, if the verb does not bear object agreement, as in (13), *łuveł* cannot be bound by the subject; it only has a disjoint reading:

(13) *Utłtiteχo$_i$*   *łuv-eł$_{*i/j}$* *išək-s.*
      teacher   he-3SG praise-PST.3SG
      'The teacher praised him/*himself.'

   In the case of object–verb agreement, both the bound and the disjoint interpretations are possible. *Łuveł* can be licensed as a referentially independent pronoun because reflexives also serve as intensifiers of a lexical NP or a pronominal across languages (Baker 1995). In a pro-drop language like Khanty, the pronominal associate of the intensifier may be silent, hence the reflexive itself is intuitively identified with the emphatic referent. In fact, a reflexive pronoun eliciting verbal agreement, e.g., that in (11), is ambiguous between the bound reflexive and the free emphatic interpretation because it

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   8   This strategy is also employed in other Uralic languages. For an overview, see Burukina (2020).

is structurally ambiguous: it can represent the object, which yields the reflexive interpretation, or the modifier of a pro-dropped object, which yields the emphatic reading.

Reflexive pronouns are personal pronouns supplied with a possessive suffix corresponding in number and person to the stem in the Vasyugan dialect of Eastern Khanty, as well – but in this dialect, also an emphatic *-ti-* morpheme intervenes between them (Filchenko 2007: 130–132), e.g.:

(14) a. *män-t-im*
          I-*t*-1SG
          'myself'
     b. *nöŋ-t-in*
          you-*t*-2SG
          'yourself'
     c. *joγ-t-il / loγ-t-il*
          he-*t*-3SG / he-*t*-3SG
          'himself, herself'

As shown by Filchenko, these pronouns can function either as reflexives (15a) or as emphatic pronouns (15b) in Vasyugan Khanty, as well.

(15) a. *Mä*   *män-t-im*   *sem-γəl-äm-nə*   *t'i*   *təγɨ*   *əjnäm*   *wu-γal-ɨm.*
          I   I-*t*-1SG   eye-DU-1SG-COM   DEM   place   all   see-PST-1SG
          'I saw this all with my own eyes.'
     b. pro   *joγ-t-il*   *küm*   *lüγt-əs.*
               he-*t*-3SG   out   exit-PST.3SG
          'He himself went out.'

Reflexive pronouns are possessive constructions in Northern Mansi, too. Northern Mansi reflexive pronouns include a *-ki-* morpheme between the pronominal stem and the possessive suffix – see (16a). The personal pronoun that is modified by the emphatic pronoun can be spelled out, yielding a reduplicated structure (Riese 2001: 31) – see (16b).

(16) a. *am-ki-naːm*
          I-KI-1SG
          'myself'
     b. *am   am-ki-naːm*
          I   I-KI-1SG
          'I myself'

The Mansi grammar of Riese (2001) calls *-ki* an emphatic clitic. Helimski (1982: 88-97) derived a similar *-ki* morpheme of the corresponding Selkup reflexive pronouns from a Samoyedic noun meaning 'shape, form, soul'. Helimski also related the *-g-* element intervening between the personal pronoun and the possessive suffix in the Hungarian 1st and 2nd person singular pronominal objects (see (9)) to this *-ki* morpheme. The assmption that Uralic reflexives with a possessive ending involve a lexical root that can be traced back to a proto-Uralic word meaning 'shadow, soul' goes back to Majtinskaja (1964). Den Dikken (2006) proposed a similar analysis for the Hungarian accusative pronouns *en-g-em* 'me' and *té-g-ed* 'you-ACC' based on synchronic considerations, claiming that they are

possessive constructions where *én* and *te* are the possessors, and *g* is the left-over of a possessum; possibly the left-over of *mag* 'kernel', the element corresponding to 'self' in Hungarian reflexive pronouns. These approaches are similar to that of Volkova in that they analyze the pronoun + person-number agreement complex as a (grammaticalized) possessive construction, but, whereas Volkova identifies the pronoun with the possessum, and assumes a pro-dropped possessor, Majtinskaja, Helimski and den Dikken identify the pronoun with the possessor, and assume an obsolete possessum.

An anonymous reviewer has suggested analyzing the person-number suffixes on personal pronouns simply as agreement morphemes independent of possession. It is, in principle, an appealing assumption that emphatic pronouns reduplicate their person and number feature in the form of a suffix, but Majtinskaja's and Helimski's proposals argue for preserving the traditional assumption that these pronominal suffixes are possessive agreement morphemes.

The Tegi and the Vasyugan data suggest that the (referentially independent) Ugric pronominal objects and oblique arguments that bear a possessive suffix are emphatically used reflexive pronouns. As argued by Cardinaletti and Starke (1994), pronouns tend to have a weak version and a morphologically more complex strong version, which have different distributions. Apparently, in some Ugric languages, the strong forms of personal pronouns are represented by the corresponding reflexives.

The use of reflexive forms as emphatic pronouns is attested cross-linguistically (Baker 1995). What needs to be explained is why the Ugric emphatic/strong object pronouns discussed above get no case suffixes, and why the emphatic object and oblique pronouns appear to have no weak equivalents without any possessive agreement.

The answer can be derived from the system of differential object marking (DOM) reconstructed for Proto-Ugric. All the present-day Ugric languages and dialects display elements of DOM. As shown by Nikolaeva (1999; 2001) about Khanty, and by Skribnik (2001) about Mansi, the object in the Ob-Ugric languages elicits object–verb agreement if and only if it is a secondary topic, occupying a predicate-phrase-external position. Its topicalization is a resultant of its 'referential' and 'contectually given' features.[9] (The primary topic role is fused with the subject role in these languages, hence an object cannot be primary topic.) In Hungarian, the criterion of topic status has been replaced by definiteness: the object elicits verbal agreement if it is definite. In Eastern Khanty and in Hungarian, 1st and 2nd person objects elicit no agreement even though they refer to a given referent in most cases, which is derived by É. Kiss (2013; 2017) from the Inverse Agreement Constraint. The Inverse Agreement Constraint is a manifestation, or relic, of the Inverse Topicality Constraint, forbidding that the structurally less prominent secondary topic be more prominent than the primary topic in the topicality hierarchy '1st person/2nd person > 3rd person'. (In Hungarian, the hierarchy is more articulated; the 1st person is more prominent than the 2nd person, and singular pronouns are more prominent than plural pronouns of the same person.) If the object is of a higher person than the subject, it cannot be topicalized; it can only be formulated as a focus, eliciting no agreement. The topicality hierarchy is a hierarchy of referents based on how active a role they play in the discourse. Since possessive constructions with a 1st or 2nd person possessor denote a part

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[9]   In Northern Khanty, the object of a secundative construction and the causee of a causative construction have a grammaticalized [+topic] feature, which is independent of their referential and contextual status.

or a belonging of the 1st or 2nd person participant, some languages treat them similarly to 1st/2nd person nominals.[10]

In Eastern Mansi, topicalized objects are not only cross-referenced on the verb but are also marked by a *-m(ə)* accusative suffix (Kulonen 2007: 51; Virtanen 2014), whereas focal objects are caseless. At the same time, objects with a 1st or 2nd person referent, as well as objects with a 1st or 2nd person possessor (denoting a part or a belonging of a 1st or 2nd person referent) are never case-marked, even though they tend to refer to familiar referents, and tend to elicit verbal agreement. The lack of accusative marking on 1st and 2nd person referents used to be a manifestation, and is now a relic, of the same Inverse Topicality Constraint that blocks agreement with 1st and 2nd person objects in Eastern Khanty and in Hungarian: an object that was of a higher person than the subject could not figure as a secondary topic; it could only be formulated as a focus (unless the sentence was passivized and it was promoted to subject-topic.) The fact that Hungarian 1st and 2nd person singular objects bear no accusative suffix, and objects with a 1st or 2nd person possessor can also remain caseless is a consequence of the same type of DOM and the same Inverse Topicality Constraint that is attested in Eastern Mansi. In fact, it is a fossilized consequence both in Hungarian and in Eastern Mansi – because 1st and 2nd person objects are not barred from topic position any more in either language. For example, the Eastern Mansi caseless objects with 1st and 2nd person possessors in (5a–b) are both topics as is shown by the fact that they elicit verbal agreement.

Assuming that the elements of DOM that are shared by at least two Ugric languages represent Proto-Ugric heritage,[11] É. Kiss (2017) reconstructed for Proto-Ugric a system of object marking where the object bears accusative case and elicits verbal agreement if and only if it is topic, and where 1st and 2nd person objects are barred from topic position by the Inverse Topicality Constraint. At this stage of Proto-Ugric, 1st and 2nd person pronominal objects were always part of the predicate phrase, hence they never received accusative case. As they were necessarily focal, they could systematically be represented by strong pronouns. This was true – and still tends to be true in most varieties of Ob-Ugric – of pronominal oblique arguments, as well, as only subjects and objects can be topicalized. An underlying goal, locative, or other oblique argument can be topicalized via passivization (Kulonen 1989). The oblique argument is NP-moved into subjec-topic position, where it receives nominative case, which overwrites its inherent case – see (17).

(17) *Näɣ   tak   mujnēt-nə   jɔχt-nə-n.*
       you   so   guest.PL-LAT   come-PASS-2SG
       'Guests come to you.'   Lit.: 'You are come by guests.'
                                                              (Eastern Mansi; Kulonen 1989: 158)

The Proto-Ugric system of DOM has been grammaticized to varying degrees in the different Ugric dialects. In Northern Khanty and Northern Mansi, the consistent possessive marking of object pronouns has been extended from 1st and 2nd person pronouns to 3rd person pronouns, as well; in Eastern Mansi, it has been extended to a variant of 3rd person singular pronouns. Since subject pronouns used to be (and still are) topics, whereas 1st and 2nd person object pronouns used to be foci, the possessive

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[10] Pronominal imposters of this kind are attested across languages – see Collins (2014).

[11] A reviewer has called attention to the potential drawbacks of extrapolating conclusions based on pieces of evidence attested in different Ugric languages and dialects. Indeed, syntactic reconstruction is necessarily hypothetical.

marking of the focal pronouns has also served the purpose of distinguishing object pronouns from subject pronouns, which eventually led to the reinterpretation of pronominal possessive endings as accusative case suffixes.[12]

The fact that in Eastern Khanty, all lexical objects are caseless whereas pronominal objects can be case-marked can also be accounted for in this framework: lexical noun phrases tend to introduce new referents, therefore, they have grammaticized as foci in this language.

4   Conclusion

By way of conclusion, let us give itemized answers to the questions raised at the beginning of section 2.

i. Pronouns bearing a possessive agreement morpheme agreeing with the person and number of the pronominal stem are reflexive pronouns functioning either as anaphors or as referentially independent strong pronouns. In Proto-Ugric, 1st and 2nd person pronominal objects were barred from topic position by the Inverse Topicality Constraint, i.e., they were necessarily focal, hence they were consistently represented by strong pronouns. In Northern Khanty and Northern Mansi, the consistent possessive marking of object pronouns has been extended to 3rd person pronouns analogically.

ii. Oblique pronouns could not be topicalized in Proto-Ugric, and still cannot be topicalized in various Ob-Ugric languages; therefore, they also appear in their strong forms.

iii. Subject pronouns are inherently topical, hence they always occur in their weak forms.

iv. Since subject pronouns, restricted to topic position, the domain of given information, have been represented by the weak (i.e., base) forms, and since 1st and 2nd person (and in some languages, 3rd person) object pronouns, restricted to the domain of new information, have been represented by the possessive-marked strong forms, the possessive morphemes of the latter have come to be interpreted as object markers.

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[12]   In the Samoyedic languages, e.g., in Tundra Nenets, the possessive agreement suffix also appears on some nominative pronouns, and this is the case also with the Hungarian dialectal nominative form *mi-nk* 'we-1PL'. These must be analogical developments; *mink* is obviously abstracted from *mi-nk-et* 'we-1PL-ACC'.

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