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Contrasts in the Spanish and Korean external possession constructions

A Construction Grammar approach

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In many languages, an argument external to a nominal can be interpreted as a possessor of that nominal. Korean and Spanish both have such constructions, but the external possessors contrast in their case features, grammatical functions, distribution, and semantic properties (e.g. alienability). This paper develops a Construction Grammar account that treats external possessors as unselected arguments licensed through a conventional implicature.

Keywords: Possession, Construction Grammar, Alienability, Conventional implicature, Korean/Spanish

1. Introduction

Korean and Spanish, although genetically unrelated and typologically different, share with each other the ability to realize a possessor in an external position, not as a dependent of the possessum, but as that of the main predicate of the clause. This External Possessor Construction (EPC), which is found in several languages, shows interesting contrastive properties in Korean and in Spanish. In this paper, we offer a construction-based analysis for the grammar of the EPC in these two languages, taking into account the grammatical functions of possessor and possessum, their case marking and distributional properties, and the role of inalienability and other semantic factors. Our results show that the Korean EPC has much stricter requirements than the Spanish EPC, generally speaking, but that the requirements in Korean are similar to those of the Spanish alienable EPC.

To explain the differences between the EPC in Korean and Spanish, we develop an account of the phenomenon in the framework of Construction Grammar (Goldberg, 1995, 2005, 2013). This framework is particularly apt at including

unselected arguments, of which external possessors are an instance, into a theory of syntax. Most work on Construction Grammar focuses on English, which is notorious for lacking a true EPC (Haspelmath, 1999).[1] Our work, then, adds to the small but expanding body of work on constructions that are not instantiated in English. Fried (1999) already develops an account of the EPC in Czech within Construction Grammar. We present a contrastive analysis within the same framework, and one that does not take English as its base language, therefore contributing to overcome some of the empirical limitations of the theory noticed in Boas (2010).

Our paper is structured as follows: Section 2 presents basic data about the EPC in Korean and Spanish, comparing the External to Internal Possessors. We describe how the Spanish and Korean EPCs are manifested through contrastive case marking patterns, and grammatical relations, and we show how inalienability conditions different distributional patterns. Section 3 reviews previous analyses of the EPC, including transformational analyses based on the notion that the external possessor is raised from a base-generated position internal to the possessum. We also introduce the integrative analysis of Shibatani (1994), which will play a key role in our Construction Grammar account, as do the insights from the Predicate Union account in Rosen (1990) and Gerdts (1992). Our construction grammar analysis is developed in Section 4. Section 5 discusses consequences for linguistic typology, and for the application of Contrastive Grammar to contrastive analysis. Our conclusions are presented in Section 6.

2.   The EPC in Korean and Spanish

2.1   Two case realization patterns in the EPC

In many languages, possessors can be realized in at least two different ways. One is as a dependent of the possessed noun. Typically, this is a genitive-marked nominal, or the complement of a proposition inside a noun.[2]

(1)   a.   Toqué   la nariz *de Pinocho.*
            touched.1SG the nose of Pinocchio
            "I touched Pinocchio's nose."

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1. Horn (2013), however, analyzes sentences such as *I've only got me one shirt left* as having instances of a Personal Dative (*me* in this case), which he claims is similar to the external possessor constructions we discuss in this paper.

2. In glossing Korean examples, the Yale Romanization system is adopted in this paper.

b. Na-nun *phinokhio-uy*   kho-lul   manci-ess-ta.
    I-TOP   Pinnochio-GEN nose-ACC touch-PST-DECL
    "I touched Pinocchio's nose."

But possessors can also be realized externally, as a co-constituent of the possessed noun. Payne and Barshi (1999:3) show that in many languages "a semantic possessor-possessum relation is expressed by coding the possessor (PR) as a core grammatical relation of the verb and in a constituent separate from that which contains the possessum (PM)", a cluster of properties that characterize the EPC crosslinguistically. However, languages may differ from each other in the way possessor and possessum are coded or realized in the EPC, resulting in language-specific instantiations of the construction.[3] In Spanish, for instance, the external possessor is typically realized as a dative-marked dependent of the verb.[4] The possessed noun is, in this case, a direct object. Korean also has an EPC, but the realization of the possessor and the possessum follows a different pattern. Typically, these constructions give rise to a double accusative case pattern.

(2) a. Le   toqué   la nariz (*a Pinocho*).
         him.DAT touched.1SG the nose (to Pinocchio)
         "I touched his/Pinocchio's nose."
     b. Na-nun *phinokhio-lul* kho-lul   manci-ess-ta.
         I-TOP   Pinocchio-ACC nose-ACC touch-PST-DECL
         "I touched Pinocchio's nose softly."

The EPC can also be observed with some intransitive predicates. In that case, the Spanish EPC has a nominative possessum and a dative possessor. The Korean EPC, on the other hand, shows a double nominative pattern.

(3) a. Los pies *me*   caben perfectamente en tus   zapatos.
         the feet 3S.DAT.CL fit   perfectly   in your shoes
         "My feet fit perfectly in your shoes."

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3. We are using the term "construction" here in an informal sense, as in "grammatical construction" or sentence type. The term will be used, too, to refer to a linguistic representation that specifies a form-meaning pairing and that may be larger than a word or morpheme. This is the more technical or formal sense of the term within the theory of Construction Grammar. We will disambiguate the term explicitly only when the context of use is not enough to do so.

4. Spanish case is overtly marked on third person clitic pronouns: *lo(s)/la(s)* 'accusative', *le(s)* 'dative'. Indirect objects, and some direct object, are also marked by the preposition *a*. A clitic pronoun can double a direct or indirect object in some circumstances, with a great degree of dialectal variation. Korean adopts a Nominative-Accusative case marking system with morphological case markers. For the case system of Korean, see Chapter 3 of Kim (2016) and references therein.

b. *Mimi-ka*   son-i   yeppu-ta.
    Mimi-NOM hand-NOM pretty-DECL
    "Mimi's hand is pretty."

Thus, while both Korean and Spanish have constructions in which the possessor of a nominal is realized externally to it, they illustrate two different realization patterns for the external possessor and the possessum. In Korean, we find a double accusative or a double nominative pattern, depending on whether the verb is transitive or intransitive. In Spanish, on the other hand, while the possessum can be accusative or nominative, the possessor remains a dative argument. In the next section, we will show that the contrast in the EPC between the two languages goes farther than mere superficial facts about case marking.

2.2   Grammatical relations in the EPC

The Spanish external possessor is an indirect object. It is characteristically expressed as or marked by a dative clitic pronoun, like *le* in (2a) or *me* in (3a). The clitic pronoun can double an overt nominal marked by the preposition *a*, also a mark of an indirect pronoun. The external possessor must obligatorily be doubled by a clitic, however, a feature that not all indirect objects in Spanish have. The possessum, on the other hand, is a direct object or a subject. As an object, it may be replaced (or doubled, in some cases) by an accusative clitic, as in (4a).[5] It can also be turned into the subject of a passive, as in (4b).

(4) a. Se   *la*   toqué   a Pinocho.
       him.DAT FEM.SG.ACC touched.1SG to Pinocchio
       "I touched Pinocchio's"
   b. Recién les   fueron afeitadas   *las piernas* a los caniches.
       Just.now DAT.PL were   shaved.FEM.PL the legs   to the poodles
       "The poodles' legs were shaved just now."

In Korean, the possessor is a direct (primary) object or a subject, while the possessum is an oblique (copying the case of the possessor).[6] As in (5a) and (5b), the possessor and possessum are both marked ACC or NOM.

(5) a. Ai-ka   kangaci-lul *tali-lul* cap-ass-ta
       child-NOM pet-ACC   leg-ACC hold-PST-DECL
       "The child hold the pet's leg."

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5. When the third person dative clitic precedes an accusative clitic, the accusative clitic is realized as a reflexive clitic.

6. On the grammatical function of the possessum in the Korean EPC, see O'Grady (1991: 73).

b. Kangaci-ka *tali-ka* kil-ta
pet-NOM   leg-NOM long-DECL
"The pet's leg is long."

Evidence that the possessor is the primary object in a double accusative sentence comes from relativization and passivization. As shown in (6), the possessor can undergo relativization and passivization. However, as shown in (7), the possessum alone can neither be relativized nor passivized:

(6) a. Ai-ka   *tali-lul* cap-un   kangaci   (relativization of the PR)
child-NOM leg-ACC hold-MOD pet
"The pet whose leg the child hold"
b. Kangaci-ka *tali-ka*   cap-hi-ess-ta   (passivization of the PR)
pet-NOM   leg-NOM hold-PASS-PST-DECL
"The pet's leg was held."

(7) a. *Ai-ka   kangaci-lul cap-un   *tali*   (relativization of the PM)
child-NOM pet-ACC   hold-MOD leg
"The pet whose leg the child held"
b. *Kangaci-ka *tali-lul* cap-hi-ess-ta   (passivization of the PM)
pet-NOM   leg-ACC hold-PASS-PST-DECL
"The pet's leg was held."

2.3   Inalienable possession and the EPC

Another way in which the Korean and the Spanish EPCs contrast with each other is with respect to alienability. The examples we presented above are of inalienable possession. Alienable possession is disallowed for the Korean transitive example (8b), but it is allowed in Spanish, as (8a) shows. This is also the case for the subjects of unaccusative intransitives, illustrated by the Spanish example in (9a). There are Korean examples like (9b) which seemingly have double nominatives with alienable possession, but according to O'Grady (1991: 79) these are not true instances of the EPC.[7]

(8) a. Me   lavaron   *el carro.*
DAT.1SG washed.3PL the car
"They washed my car."

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7. Example (9b) can be analyzed as a type of focus construction, different from the EPC. Evidence for this analysis is that the first NOM bears an exhaustive reading. See Kim (2016: 274) for further discussion.

b. *Mimi-ka   Momo-lul   catongcha-lul ssis-ess-ta
   Mimi-NOM Momo-ACC car-ACC   wash-PST-DECL
   'Mimi washed Momo's car.'

(9) a. Al   niño le   han   desaparecido *las canicas.*
       To-the child 3SG.DAT have.PL disappeared   the marbles
       "The child's marbles have disappeared."
    b. #Mimi-ka   cacenke-ka salaci-ess-ta
       Mimi-NOM bike-NOM   disappear-PST-DECL
       "It's Mimi whose bike disappeared."

A different pattern emerges when unergative verbs are considered. All instances of the EPC in Korean, whether alienable or inalienable, are ruled out with unergative verbs. That is, as shown in (10b), there can be no double nominative EPC in Korean with unergatives. The same is true of transitive verbs: no double nominatives are allowed, as (10a) illustrates.

(10) a. *Mimi-ka   *son-i*   Momo-lul   chy-ess-ta
        Mimi-NOM hand-NOM Momo-ACC hit-PST-DECL
        "Mimi's hand hit Momo."
     b. *Mimi-ka   *atul-i*   talli-n-ta
        Mimi-NOM son-NOM   run-PRES-DECL
        "Mimi's son is running."

In Spanish on the other hand, when the possessum is the subject of either a transitive verb or an unergative, a dative external possessor can be licensed if the possessive relationship is inalienable (see also Conti, 2011).[8] If alienable, then both cases are ruled out. The examples in (11) illustrate this point.

(11) a. *Los codos/*cubiertos*   le   tocan   los de su vecino.
        The elbows/silverware 3S.DAT.CL touch.3PL the of his neighbor
        "His elbows/silverware touch(es) his neighbor's."
     b. Nos   temblaban *las rodillas/*los enemigos*
        1.PLDAT.CL shook.3PL the knees/the   enemies
        "Our knees/enemies were shaking."

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8. Conti (2011) shows that the possessum in the Spanish EPC can be the subject of a transitive/ unergative predicate although the dative possessor in her examples can also be interpreted as an "ethical" or adversative dative.

2.4   Summary

To summarize, there are systematic differences in the distribution of the EPC in Korean and Spanish. The Korean external possessor can be a direct object or a subject, while the Spanish external possessor is an indirect object. We have also found contrasts in the distribution and nature of the EPC. In Korean, the possessum must always be inalienable, and the EPC is excluded from cases in which the possessor is the subject of a transitive verb or an unergative verb. In Spanish, on the other hand, inalienable possessums have the broadest distribution, being able to occur even as subjects of transitive or unergative verbs. Alienable possessums, however, have a narrower distribution, being limited to occur as direct objects or subjects of unaccusative verbs. The results are summarized in Table (1):

Table 1. Distribution of the EPC in Korean (K) and Spanish (S)

	Alienable	Inalienable
Direct Object	*K / S	K / S
Subj. of Unacc.	*K / S	K / S
Subj. of unerg./trans.	*K / *S	*K / S

A quick examination of Table 1 reveals two interesting generalizations: (A) If a cell shows a grammatical structure for Korean, it also shows a grammatical structure for Spanish, but not vice-versa; (B) The Korean inalienable EPC has the same distribution as the Spanish alienable EPC. An explanatory analysis of the contrast between Spanish and Korean will have to account for these generalizations concerning the realization of the EPC across these languages.

3.   Additional facts, previous accounts

3.1   Syntactic accounts

The EPC has been studied extensively, in different languages and from different theoretical perspectives. Limitations of space and scope of the present work prevent us from offering an exhaustive review of previous work, so we will concentrate on the most relevant publications. We are not concerned with accounts that try to explain why the possessor is sometimes expressed as a nominal modifier (internal), and sometimes as a dependent of the main predicate (external). Rather, we deal with two intertwined questions about the EPC: how an element external to the possessum receives a semantic role as a possessor, and how the external possessor is licensed as a dependent of the main predicate.

One mechanism proposed in generative theories of grammar is possessor raising, also known as possessor ascension (Aissen, 1979; Allen *et al.*, 1990; Landau, 1999; Lee-Schoenfeld, 2006; Deal, 2013, 2017). In this approach, a possessor is licensed first as a dependent of another noun (the possessum), which is an underlying dependent of a predicate. A transformational rule raises the possessor out of its host NP, where it gets its semantic role, landing it in a position in the matrix clause that does not have a semantic role. A variant of the syntactic analysis is based on the idea that the external possessor is a semantic dependent of the main predicate: an affected argument. This affected argument is the antecedent of an anaphoric expression inside the possessed nominal, which bears the possessor role. Instead of analyzing the external possessor as the head of a chain created by movement, then, the alternative syntactic analysis treats the EPC as a type of control structure (Borer and Grodzinsky, 1986).

Previous work on Korean EPC have focused on how to license case markings on the possessor and possessum and what the grammatical status of the two are. As for assigning the same case marking on the two, Yoon (1990), Maling and Kim (1992), and Cho (1998) offer a configuration-based case assignment system to the possessor and the possessum. As for the grammatical status of the two, most agree that the possessor is the primary subject or object, while the possessum serves as an oblique (or secondary object).

Demonte (1988, 1995) has applied the anaphoric control analysis to the Spanish EPC. Cuervo (2003) proposes an alternative syntactic analysis of possessive datives in Spanish, within a projectionist model of generative syntax. Like the raising-based accounts, she claims that external possessors are not selected by the main predicate. But like the control-based accounts, she suggests that external possessors are base-generated outside of the nominal headed by the possessum. Cuervo argues that external possessors are the specifier of a low applicative phrase (a functional projection that occurs as the complement of the verbal root). She claims that applicative heads introduce other dative-marked arguments, therefore offering a general explanation for the dative-marking of external possessors in Spanish.[9] One prediction this analysis makes is that the possessum will always be an internal argument of the predicate. However, as the examples in (11a) and (11b) showed, possessors in the Spanish EPC can be subjects of unergative and transitive verbs. A non-configurational constructionist analysis like the one we are proposing in this paper can be extended to these cases without stipulations, and it is therefore to be preferred on the grounds of it being more explanatory.

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9. For a usage-based, constructionist account of Spanish dative clitic constructions and their alternation with preposition-only datives, see Reali (2017).

3.2 The Union (Multipredicate) account

Our constructionist analysis of the EPC will borrow some insights from the multipredicate analysis of possessor ascension (Rosen, 1990; Gerdts, 1992), a syntactic account developed in the framework of Relational Grammar. One of the insights in Rosen's analysis is that the EPC is a kind of Union. In a Union structure, the dependents of an "inner" predicate are merged with the dependents of an "outer" predicate. In the multipredicate account, Union is the result of a monoclausal serialization of two or more predicates (Davies and Rosen, 1988). All the dependents of the inner predicate keep the relation they have with the inner predicate when they merge. Terms can change their relation, but only if the rules of the grammar motivate that. One such rule states that, if the outer predicate already has a subject, the subject of the lower predicate must take another relation after Union, usually a direct object or an indirect object, depending on the language. Causative constructions, for instance, involve a type of Union structure, with the subject of an inner transitive predicate realized as an indirect object in the Romance languages (12a), but as a direct object in a language like Hebrew (12b).

(12) a. Maria fa   scrivere la lettera *a Gianni.*
        Maria makes to.write the letter   to Johnny
        "Maria makes Johnny write the letter."
      b. Hirkadeti   *et hatalmidim* et   harikud   haxadas.
        (I) caused.to.dance ACC the.students ACC the.dance the.new
        "I made the students dance the new dance."

In the Italian example in (12a), the complements are arranged in an accusative-dative pattern, with the "causee" (the AGENT of the simple predicate) realized as the indirect object. In the Hebrew causative in (12b), on the other hand, the pattern is a double accusative one, with the causee as a direct object and the PATIENT as a "chômeur". Using the formalism of Relational Grammar, the structures of the examples in (12a) and (12b) can be represented as in (13a) and (13b), respectively.[10]

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10. In these representations, each line is a stratum. Terms are assigned relations at each stratum according to these conventions: 1: Subject, 2: Direct Object, 3: Indirect Object, Chô: 2-chômeur, P: Predicate, U: Union predicate. Relations can be re-evaluated from one stratum to the next, following universal and language-specific constraints. A chômeur is an oblique-like relation, unavailable for further reevaluation

(13) a.   P   1   2
          P   1   Chô   3   2
          Make Maria write Gianni Letter
      b.   P   1   2
          P   1 Chô   2   Chô
          Make I dance students dance

Rosen (1990) extends this idea to possessors. Working with data from Southern Tiwa, she suggests that a noun phrase with a possessor has a clause-like organization, with the possessum functioning as a direct object and predicate, and the possessor as an indirect object.[11] In the Southern Tiwa EPC, as in Spanish, the external possessor is realized as an indirect object, keeping the relation it bears to the possessum in the underlying nominal. The Spanish EPC in (2a) would then be represented as in (14)

(14)   3   P/2
          P   1 3   2
          touch I Pinocchio nose

Gerdts (1992) applies Rosen's Union analysis to the Korean EPC. In Korean, as we have already observed, the external possessor is not an indirect object, but a direct object (or subject). Gerdts accounts for this contrast by analyzing the possessor in Korean as an inner object (instead of as an inner indirect object, as Rosen does for Southern Tiwa). The possessor, then, can only be an outer direct object. This restriction also accounts for the fact that external possessors can only occur as unaccusative subjects (which, in the Relational Grammar framework, are analyzed as underlying objects). Because there cannot be more than one term bearing a given grammatical relation in a stratum, the possessum cannot be a direct object. It is therefore realized as a chômeur, as a result of the external possessor taking on the role of the direct object in the outer level. This is shown in (15), which corresponds to our example in (2b).

(15)   2   P
          P   1 2   Chô
          touch I Pinocchio nose

Now, as we have explained, the Korean EPC is only allowed if the possessive relationship is inalienable. To account for this, Gerdts (1992) suggests that the posses-

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11. The possessum is also the predicate in the nominal structure, in a configuration referred to in the Relational Grammar literature as "multiattachment".

sor is an inner direct object if inalienable, but an inner indirect object (like the Southern Tiwa case) if alienable. Alienable possessors cannot be realized as outer direct objects, then, because it would involve an unmotivated reevaluation of an indirect object to a direct object, contrary to the Union rule and general principles of Relational Grammar. Gerdt's insight is that, in Korean, the possessor is always licensed as a direct object after Union. Thus, only inalienable possession is allowed in the Korean EPC, because only inalienable possessors are inner direct objects.

The Union analysis of the EPC contributes some useful observations to the discussion. It shows that, besides a rule determining how the external possessor (as an unselected argument) is realized, the status of the possessum with respect to the possessor (expressed in the RG analysis as grammatical relations assigned to possessor and possessum in the inner stratum, i.e. inside the nominal) is also important. The third factor that has an effect on the overall distribution of the EPC is alienability, and it works in such a way that alienable possessums may have different conditions from inalienable ones. We will incorporate these insights into our constructional analysis of the EPC.

3.3   Semantic/pragmatic accounts

An alternative to purely syntactic (i.e. generative-transformational) analyses of the EPC is developed in Shibatani (1994), who argues that the EPC has more in common with constructions like ethical datives (as observed in French, German, and Modern Hebrew), adversative passives (from Japanese, Korean, Chinese, and Even) and double subjects, or topic constructions (with data gathered in Japanese, Chinese, Cebuano, and Indonesian). A common mechanism for assigning an interpretation to an extra-thematic argument must be postulated for all three constructions, which rules out a construction-specific rule of possessor raising for the EPC. Shibatani proposes to account for the interpretation of extra-thematic arguments (like the external possessor) "in terms of semantically integrating them into the propositions stated by the rest of the sentences such that the referents of these extra-thematic arguments are integrated into the scenes evoked by the propositions." (Shibatani, 1994: 468). The key to integration in Shibatani's model is the pragmatic notion of relevance: the more relevant an extra-thematic argument is to the scene, the easier it is to integrate it. An inalienable relationship between the external possessor and the possessum is sufficient to guarantee relevance, but when it is absent additional semantic factors (e.g. adversative affectedness) must obtain.

The fact that the external possessor, even though not semantically selected by the predicate, functions as an 'affected' syntactic argument, is well attested across

languages. Haspelmath (1999) claims it is one of the defining characteristics of the Standard European EPC (see Section 5 for further discussion). Yeon (1999) discusses the affected condition of the external possessor in Korean, as well as its inalienability. In addition, as the example in (16) shows, the possessor functions as a reference point so that the possessor needs to be definite.[12]

(16)   Mimi-ka   ku/*han ai-lul   pha-ul   kkocip-ess-ta.
        Mimi-NOM the/one child-ACC arm-ACC pinch-PST-DECL
        "Mimi pinched the/a child's arm."

Anticipating Shibatani's (1994) integrative approach, Kliffer (1983) offers a pragmatic account of the Spanish EPC, suggesting that an [associative] feature is added to an unselected argument when there is another nominal in the clause with which it can enter into a contextually salient possessive relationship. This feature can be pragmatically cancelled when, for instance, there is another possessor explicitly defined for the potential possessum.[13] On the other hand, Cuervo (2003) is sceptical about general claims regarding the affected nature of the external possessor: "The affectedness interpretation depends on the individual verb and pragmatic factors; that is, affectedness is not a core meaning of the construction. Affectedness can arise as an indirect consequence of the dative being the possessor of an affected object, particularly if possession is inalienable." (p. 64) She also notices that, unlike the EPC in other Standard European languages, the Spanish EPC is not limited to inalienable possession or dynamic predicates.[14]

Following Kliffer (1983), Conti (2011) claims "that the study of external possession in Spanish should be faced from a multilevel approach accounting for at least two interrelated factors: the saliency of the possessive relation (as noticed by Kliffer, 1983) and the parallelism of possessors with semantic controllers in dative." She shows that the Spanish EPC diverges somehow from the average Standard European prototype discussed by Haspelmath (1999), and that "it is

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12. Yeon (2019) and Shin (2022) note that pragmatic factors such as the physical contiguity of the possessum, affectedness or salience of the possessor play key roles in licensing the EPC in Korean.

13. As Kliffer's (1983) main concern is with the status of inalienability in the grammar of Spanish, the scope of his investigation is both wider and narrower than ours. He does not consider cases in which the dative possessor's relationship to the possessum is alienable, and he includes cases in which the possessor is a subject (or where it receives a thematic role from the predicate)

14. Cuervo recognizes a special class of external possessors that occur with causative/inchoative predicates like *romper* 'break', *quemar* 'burn', etc. She calls them affected applicatives. Cuervo analyzes these applicatives as involving a relationship between an affected argument (the dative) and an event (the resulting state of the PATIENT).

necessary to invoke other factors apart from affectedness, to explain why dative marking merges to express the possessor in contemporary Spanish." (p. 177).[15]

In the next section, we develop our contrastive analysis of the EPC in Korean and Spanish, within the framework of Construction Grammar. Our analysis will borrow insights from Shibatani's (1994) integrational approach, and also from the Predicate Union account of Rosen (1990) and Gerdts (1992).

4.   Unselected arguments, the EPC, and Construction Grammar

4.1   Unselected arguments in Construction Grammar and external possessors

Constructions are "conventional, learned form-function pairings at varying levels of complexity and abstraction," ranging from the word to larger phrasal units (Goldberg, 2013:17). A construction may specify syntactic information (in the form of phrase structure and constituency), lexical information, and semantic information, in addition to pragmatic conditions on the use of the construction (Fillmore, 1988; Fillmore *et al.*, 1988; Kay and Fillmore, 1999). Instances of the construction are known as constructs. Because the meaning of a construction is not necessarily a function of the meaning of its parts (i.e. it is noncompositional), constructions may be highly idiomatic, as illustrated by the examples in (17) (Kim and Michaelis, 2020:20):

(17)   a.   The criminal is still at large.
      b.   I tried jogging his memory.
      c.   Nobody's guaranteed the next two minutes, let alone the next two years.

Constructional approaches differ from mainstream generative approaches in that the structure of the phrase does not need to be a projection from the head. In particular, the dependents of a predicate need not be semantic arguments of that predicate. Constructions may have semantically unselected arguments. For instance, the direct object in the caused motion (18a) and resultative (18b) construction is not a semantic argument of the predicate (Goldberg, 1995, 2005):

(18)   a.   Sandy sneezed *the napkin* off the table.
      b.   The teacher shouted *himself* hoarse.

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15. Conti's goal is to account for the defining factor that motivates the choice between internal and external possessives (i.e. Kliffer's notion of salience), not to explain how the external possessor is licensed when it is not a thematic argument of the verb.

One thing that becomes clear from the examples discussed above, both in Spanish and in Korean, is that the external possessor is not a semantic argument of the main predicate. A transitive verb like Spanish *tocar* 'touch' or Korean *manci-ess-ta* 'touch' in (1a) and (1b) require only a subject and an object. The external possessors that are added as dependents of the verb in (2a) and (2b), then, expand the number of complements beyond what the valence of the predicate requires, adding a dependent that is not semantically selected by the predicate. The EPC, we will argue, belongs to a class of constructions with unselected arguments.

Fried (1999) offers a Construction Grammar analysis of the EPC in Czech. She identifies the construction's syntactic, semantic, and pragmatic properties, some of which are inherited from a family of related constructions while the others are constructionally defined. Like in other Standard European languages, the Czech external possessor is dative-marked, and it has a strong affectedness condition. According to Fried (1999), the dative possessor is also introduced as an extra valence element of the predicate that selects the PM as a primary element. Her approach thus takes the licensing of the EPC to be dependent upon its constructional constraints on the affectedness of the PR, the possessive relation, the valence specification, and the pragmatic condition (of introducing an interested party linked to the PR).

Generally speaking, a construction with an unselected argument will have more sentential arguments than those in the valence of the predicate. This is indicated in Figure 1. Here, GF-1 is linked to (and projected from) an argument of the predicate, but GF-2 is unselected (GF stands for "grammatical function", e.g. Subject, Object, Oblique, etc.).

Figure 1. Construction with unselected argument

One of the key assumptions of our analysis is that the external possessor is an unselected argument. But another equally important assumption is that the possessum is an argument of the main predicate. The possessum bears a semantic role whether its function is that of a subject, an object, or an oblique. In the Spanish example in (8a), for instance, the possessum is a direct object, and it receives

a semantic role of PATIENT from the predicate *lavar* 'wash'.[16] Following the pattern for the expression of unselected arguments in Spanish, the external possessor, as an unselected argument, is realized as a dative argument. This is shown in Figure 2. If the predicate is intransitive, the possessum is still linked to a semantic role of the verb. In a Spanish sentence like (3a), the unselected argument is also projected as an indirect object. The predicate's argument, also a PATIENT, is the subject, as there is no licensed direct object. This is shown in Figure 3.

$$
\boxed{\begin{array}{c}
\text{PRED, OBJ-1}_{\text{ACC}}\text{, OBJ-2}_{\text{DAT}}\text{, ...} \\
\big| \qquad \big| \\
\text{V <... TH ...>}
\end{array}}
$$
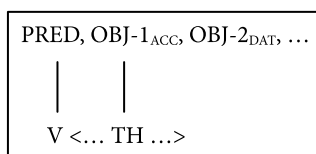
Figure 2. Spanish EPC construction, transitive

$$
\boxed{\begin{array}{c}
\text{PRED, SUBJ}_{\text{NOM}}\text{, OBJ-2}_{\text{DAT}}\text{, ...} \\
\big| \qquad \big| \\
\text{V <... TH ...>}
\end{array}}
$$
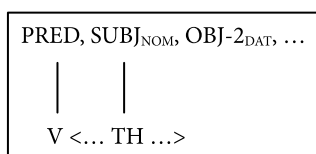
Figure 3. Spanish EPC construction, intransitive

In the Korean EPC, on the other hand, the unselected argument is realized as either a subject or an object, competing with the verbal argument that would be assigned to those functions under normal circumstances. If the verb is transitive, as in (2b), the unselected argument is a primary object, forcing the PATIENT to be realized as an oblique instead. This is what Figure 4 shows. If the verb is intransitive, as in (3b), on the other hand, the unselected argument and the verb's argument (also a PATIENT) are both competing for the function of the subject, since there is no object. The Korean construction, shown in Figure 5, assigns the verbal semantic role to an oblique, leaving the unselected argument as the subject.

---

16. In Construction Grammar, minimal lexical entries are associated with a set of semantic roles, which are not assigned a grammatical function. This is the role of linking constructions, which play a similar role in this theory as the Linking Theory in LFG and other unification-based formalisms (Goldberg, 2005). At a more concrete level, Construction Grammar describes the argument structures of lexical items in terms of roles associated with specific conceptual structures or "frames", but the roles on which linking constructions operate (such as AGENT, PATIENT, THEME, EXPERIENCER, etc.) are typically "blends" of more basic frame elements (Baker *et al.*, 1998: 87).
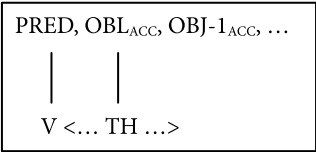
$$\boxed{\begin{array}{c} \text{PRED, OBL}_{\text{ACC}}\text{, OBJ-1}_{\text{ACC}}\text{, ...} \\[4pt] \mid \qquad \mid \\[4pt] \text{V <... TH ...>} \end{array}}$$

Figure 4. Korean EPC construction, transitive

$$\boxed{\begin{array}{c} \text{PRED, OBL}_{\text{NOM}}\text{, OBJ-1}_{\text{NOM}}\text{, ...} \\[4pt] \mid \qquad \mid \\[4pt] \text{V <... TH ...>} \end{array}}$$
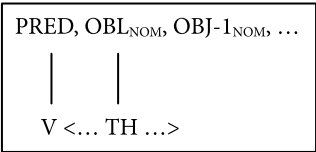
Figure 5. Korean EPC construction, intransitive

The patterns of argument realization in the Korean and Spanish EPCs are not arbitrary, and may follow from more general grammatical principles governing the realization of unselected arguments. The effect of these principles has been observed in causative constructions (Cole and Sridhar, 1977; Gibson and Raposo, 1986). As discussed in Section 3.2, a causative construction expands the arguments of a simple predicate (transitive or intransitive) by adding an external cause as a grammatical subject. The arguments of the simple predicate get expressed as complements. If the simple predicate is transitive, two patterns are observed across languages: an accusative-dative pattern, as in the Italian example in (12a), or a double accusative one, as in the Hebrew causative in (12b). It is not hard to see the parallel between the EPC in Spanish and the Italian causative, and the EPC in Korean and the Hebrew causative. The parallel is so suggestive that it motivated the Predicate Union analysis of the EPC in Rosen (1990) and Gerdts (1992).

4.2   Assigning an interpretation to unselected arguments

The unselected argument must receive an interpretation somehow. The mechanism by which this happens has been the subject of much debate (see Section 3). Here we follow Shibatani's (1994) integrational approach, and we attribute the interpretation of the unselected argument as a possessor to an implicature. For us, this is a conventional implicature associated with the EPC (see also Horn, 2013). The phrasal EPC construction, then, implicates a nominal construction in which the unselected argument is a possessor, and another argument of the predicate is the possessum. In Figure 6, the implication relation among constructions is indicated by a double arrow, and the mappings across constructions by dotted lines.
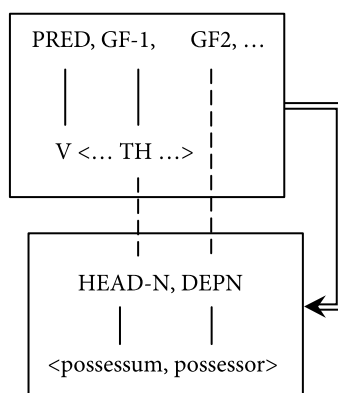
```
┌─────────────────────────────────────┐
│   PRED, GF-1,     GF2, …             │
│                                      │
│       │       │                      │
│                                      │
│   V <… TH …>                         │
│                                      │
└─────────────────────────────────────┘
            │       │
            │       │
┌─────────────────────────────────────┐
│                                      │
│   HEAD-N, DEPN                       │
│                                      │
│       │           │                  │
│                                      │
│   <possessum, possessor>             │
│                                      │
└─────────────────────────────────────┘
```

Figure 6. Possessor entailment constructions

The fine-grained contrastive analysis of the EPC requires further elaboration. As noted, the distribution of the EPC across the two languages is sensitive to the alienable/inalienable contrast in non-trivial ways. After examining the contrastive data from the Korean and Spanish EPCs, one generalization that emerged was that the Korean inalienable and the Spanish alienable EPCs were distributed in similar ways: The Korean double-nominative EPC was excluded from clauses with transitive and unergative verbs, and the Spanish EPC was also excluded from those contexts if the possessum was the subject. Here we will argue that, once the two patterns of unselected argument realization discussed above are taken into account, a deeper generalization emerges: the possessum must be linked to a PATIENT-like semantic role. We will develop this aspect of the analysis first, explaining in more detail the effect of alienability.

Starting with Spanish, we noticed that both *alienable and inalienable* possessums can be linked to a direct object or to the subject of an unaccusative. What these cases have in common is that the argument to which the possessum is linked is a patient (or a patient-like semantic role). This is shown in Figure 7.

Next, we will examine what happens when the possessum is linked to an AGENT-like role instead. We will argue that this is where the contrast based on alienability between Korean and Spanish emerges.

AGENT-like arguments are normally projected as subjects of transitive verbs, or as subjects of unergative intransitives. In Spanish, the EPC can have a possessum with these functions *only if the possession is inalienable*, as in Examples (11a) and (11b). This, however, is ruled out for Spanish *alienable* possession, and for Korean *inalienable* possession, as the examples in (10a) and (10b) show. The contrasting distribution of EPCs in Korean and Spanish, we suggest, can be modeled with the help of a feature [± ALIENABLE], as a condition on the linking of a possessum to a semantic role. In Spanish, a possessum can be linked to an AGENT role
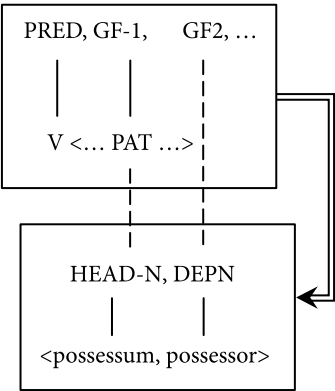
Figure 7. Spanish possessor entailment constructions

if it has the [−ALIENABLE] feature. This is shown in Figure 8. In Korean, there is no construction that allows for the linking of a possessum to an AGENT role, and the linking to a PATIENT role is only possible if the possessum is also marked [−ALIENABLE], as shown in Figure 9.
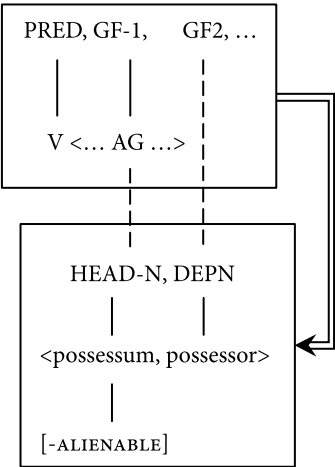

Figure 8. Spanish possessor entailment constructions, inalienable

The remaining case concerns the prohibition against having Korean alienable possessives in the EPC construction, regardless of the semantic role of the possessum. A simple solution is to say that the grammar of Korean only includes a construction for the linking of inalienable possessums. Without a construction for the linking of alienable possessums, there could be no constructs, and hence the
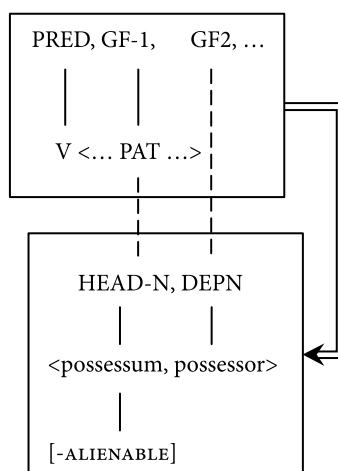
Figure 9. Korean possessor entailment constructions, inalienable

only grammatical instances of the EPC in Korean are reduced to inalienable pos-
sessums linked to PATIENT-like roles.

5.   Consequences for typology

In the preceding sections, we developed a detailed analysis of the grammatical
differences between the EPC in Korean and Spanish, within the framework of
Construction Grammar. The use of this framework for detailed comparisons of
language pairs, however, is not common. As Boas (2010: 1) acknowledges, "most
constructional research focuses primarily on the analysis of constructions in sin-
gle languages." Construction Grammar does not pursue the use of grammatical
constructions (in the technical sense) to capture crosslinguistic generalizations, to
the point that some have argued that constructions are always language-specific.[17]
Be as it may, Boas suggests that detailed comparisons between pairs of languages
(of the type that constitutes the foundation of contrastive analysis) can reveal
empirical generalizations that support the cross-linguistic usefulness of grammat-
ical constructions. That is, constructions that are well-motivated for one language
can be extended to another language, once all the similarities and exceptions have
been taken into account. This approach can expand typological work in construc-
tion grammar beyond the broadest generalizations about a representation sys-

17. In particular, Croft's Radical Construction Grammar develops with the key assumptions
that constructions are the primitive units of syntactic representation and language-specific. See
Croft (2001).

tem that needs to match content to form. The extensive research done on English constructions means that this language has often been used as the point of comparison for other languages. This body of research has yielded several insights, summarized by Boas: (A) Constructions can successfully capture language-specific properties and crosslinguistic generalizations, (B) Constructions allow for the statement of generalizations at different levels of granularity, (C) Typological differences between languages may constrain the relationship between form and content, even within Construction Grammar, (D) Constructions, as they relate all levels of representation within a language, can be used to capture crosslinguistic generalizations that escape other frameworks.

There is, however, one obvious limitation of a framework that takes English constructions as the foundation for comparison with other languages: the research will be limited to those constructions found in English alone. One contribution of our paper is to extend the scope of comparative work within Construction Grammar to a phenomenon which is all but absent in English. In so doing we are also gaining insights into a more general (and abstract) phenomenon that is central to the development of Construction Grammar: the expression (and function) of unselected arguments across languages.

König (2012) addresses the issue of the status of contrastive analysis with respect to other branches of linguistics that deal with language comparison: historical comparative linguistics, language typology, microvariation (comparative dialectology) and intercultural communication. One difference between historical comparative linguistics and contrastive analysis, König says, is the synchronic nature of the latter. Moreover, the languages compared in contrastive analysis need not be genetically or historically related. These are aspects that contrastive analysis shares with linguistic typology. These two sub-fields differ in terms of scope, and depth. While typology looks at a vast sample of languages to find a few parameters of variation, contrastive analysis develops detailed descriptions of the linguistic differences between language pairs. Contrastive linguistics may use the insights from typology to inform the analysis. In our research, we have exploited known typological differences between primary object languages and indirect object languages, and from large crosslinguistic surveys about causative constructions, for instance. Typological research on the cognitive and formal representation of inalienability is relevant for our contrastive analysis of external possession as well.

König, however, places too much weight on the orientation of contrastive analysis towards second language learning research. Even if it is true that linguistic typology can inform, to some extent, our understanding of some features of learner grammars, contrastive analysis goes beyond that. In addition, the detailed results of contrastive studies of language pairs, whether or not they are grounded

in a significant volume of output from language learners, can have a meaningful impact on typological studies. Thus, our investigation of the contrastive effects of inalienable possession on the distribution of the EPC in Spanish and Korean suggests an implicational hierarchy of constructional constraints that can be extended to other languages. There is at least one known case of a language in which the EPC shows a difference in distribution according to alienability. In Kinyarwanda (Davies, 1997), an external possessor is realized as a primary object if the possession is alienable, with the possessum exhibiting no object properties. If the possession is inalienable, on the other hand, both the possessor and possessum exhibit the full range of object properties. Detailed crosslinguistic research on external possessors should uncover more such cases. There are some typological studies of the EPC, notably Haspelmath (1999), Gerdts (1999), and O'Connor (2007). Haspelmath makes some inaccurate claims about the Spanish EPC, but this may be inherent in the kind of broad coverage study that typological research requires. Haspelmath's study uses one source for his Spanish data, i.e. Roldán (1972), and whatever shortcomings her study had are inherited by Haspelmath's. Contrastive studies, on the other hand, do not suffer from this problem, since they are focused on detailed comparisons of language pairs or small language samples, for which there is often contact output (in the form of translations or learner data).[18]

Other typological matters concern the grammatical constraints on the EPC and its distribution across languages. Haspelmath (1999) argues that the dative EPC is a European areal linguistic feature, rarely found in other language families. He suggests that "the two most important characteristics of the European EP prototype are (i) the marking of the EPR by the dative case, and (ii) the strict affectedness condition, i.e., external possessors are only possible if the possessor is thought of as being mentally affected by the described situation." (Haspelmath, 1999:111) From the affectedness condition, Haspelmath derives the constraint excluding possessors from being subjects of transitives and unergatives in the Standard European EPC: the functions of object, oblique, and unaccusative subject "normally express affected semantic roles such as PATIENT, THEME or GOAL, whereas unergative and transitive subjects normally express non-affected semantic roles such as INITIATOR or AGENT" (Haspelmath, 1999:111). Regarding affectedness, it is clear that Spanish does not fit with the prototype of the Standard

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18. Gast (2012) argues that contrastive analysis should not be limited to comparing only two languages, but that it is necessary for the languages under comparison to have sociolinguistic contact. The object of analysis, then, is the result of this contact, which could come in the form of language learner output, translations from one language into the other, or the utterances of a bi-/multi-lingual population.

European EPC, as the affectedness condition is neither necessary nor sufficient for the realization of the possessor as a dative argument (Cuervo, 2003, Conti, 2011). We have also discussed examples of possessums with the functions of transitive and unergative subject in the Spanish EPC, against what Haspelmath claims is a key constraint on the Standard European EPC. Spanish is also outside of the Standard European prototype proposed by Haspelmath in several other dimensions. He claims that Standard European languages are fairly restricted in their EPCs: they are limited to animate possessors, and to inalienable possessums. Again, we have already seen that Spanish falls outside of these limits, allowing for inanimate possessors and alienable possessions in the EPC.

Our comparative analysis of the EPC in Korean and Spanish, then, has found that alienability is an important factor in the understanding of the EPC. We have found that EPCs with alienable possessums have a more restricted distribution than those with inalienable ones, but the condition is implicational and not categorical: only inalienables are allowed in Korean, and while Spanish allows for alienables, they have the same distribution as the Korean inalienables. The Spanish inalienables have a wider distribution. We have also discovered a new generalization for Spanish, showing that alienable possessums have a narrower distribution than inalienable possessums. Even though there have been discussions in the literature regarding the semantic conditions on the EPC in Spanish, we have found no previous reference to this language-internal distinction regarding the EPC. Only the study of the Kinyarwanda external possessors mentioned earlier contains similar facts. Further studies of these kind of languages will add to our typological understanding of the EPC.

6.   Conclusions

In this paper, we have examined the status of the unselected argument that realizes an external possessor in two unrelated languages: Korean and Spanish. We developed an analysis of this phenomenon in the framework of Construction Grammar. This linguistic theory has proven to be adept at explaining unselected arguments in English given its built-in ability to integrate lexical and semantic information directly with syntactic frames. We have shown that the same principles can be applied to the analysis of unselected arguments in languages other than English. Moreover, by applying the constructional approach to a phenomenon not found in English, we are expanding our understanding of the nature of unselected arguments. The mechanism we proposed for the semantic interpretation (and syntactic licensing) of external possessors is based on the notion of

conventional implicature. Future work should be able to determine if the same approach can be extended to other constructions with unselected arguments.

Our paper has also shown the value for Construction Grammar of conducting detailed contrastive analyses of similar phenomena in two languages, even if they are historically unrelated. It is possible to find formally equivalent constructions in two or more languages, even if their external manifestations in the grammar are radically different. This is the foundation of contrastive analysis. The architecture of Construction Grammar (like that of other constraint-based frameworks) allows for a representation of grammatical knowledge at different levels of abstraction, in an inheritance network. Two languages may share a very abstract representation of a phenomenon, with contrasts between them represented as diverging elaborations within the inheritance hierarchy. Thus, while both Korean and Spanish may share a schematic construction like the one in Figure 6, the more elaborate constructions in Figures 7 to 9 can be used to capture language-specific realizations of the same general phenomenon. We believe that this is a promising approach to conducting future research in contrastive analysis.

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