

Getting Together a POSSe

The Primacy of Predication in ASL Possessives

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Patterns of Possession in American Sign Language

Attributive Possession

- (1) *Bruno's book*
- a. Attributive POSS
 ${}_i$ BRUNO POSS $_i$ BOOK
 - b. APOSTROPHE-S
 BRUNO APOSTROPHE-S BOOK
 - c. Juxtaposition
 BRUNO BOOK

Predicative Possession

- (2)
- a. Verbs of Possession (HAVE, OWN, BELONG, ...)
 BRUNO HAVE BOOK
Bruno has a/the book.
 - b. Predicative POSS
 IX_i ${}_i$ BOOK POSS $_j$ $_j$ BRUNO
This book is Bruno's/belongs to Bruno.

Focus: POSS Possessives

Attributive Possession

(3) *Bruno's book*

a. Attributive **POSS**

_iBRUNO **POSS_i** BOOK

b. APOSTROPHE-S

BRUNO APOSTROPHE-S BOOK

c. Juxtaposition

BRUNO BOOK

Predicative Possession

(4) a. Verbs of Possession (HAVE, OWN, BELONG, ...)

BRUNO HAVE BOOK

Bruno has a/the book.

b. Predicative **POSS**

IX_i _iBOOK **POSS_j** _jBRUNO

This book is Bruno's/belongs to Bruno.

Analysis/Description: Traditionally vs. Today

Traditionally (e.g., Baker-Shenk and Cokely 1981; MacLaughlin 1997; Chen Pichler et al. 2008; Chen Pichler and Hochgesang 2008):

- POSS is some kind of possessive **pronoun/determiner**, whatever you think the relation between these notions is.
- As such, POSS is **part of nominal structure**, whatever you think nominal structure is like.
- Analysis must derive Predicative POSS **from this nominal structure** — i.e., from Attributive POSS — through a process like **predicate nominal** formation.

Today:

- POSS is some kind of **verb of possession**.
- As such, POSS is **part of verbal structure**, and the behavior of POSS tells us a bit about what verbal structure is like.
- Analysis must derive Attributive POSS **from this verbal structure** — i.e., from Predicative POSS — through **relative clause** formation.

Patterns of Possession, Updated

Attributive Possession

(5) *Bruno's book*

a. Attributive POSS

_iBRUNO POSS_i BOOK

b. APOSTROPHE-S

BRUNO APOSTROPHE-S BOOK

c. Juxtaposition

BRUNO BOOK

Predicative Possession

(6) Verbs of Possession (HAVE, OWN, BELONG, POSS, ...)

a. BRUNO HAVE BOOK

Bruno has a/the book.

b. IX_i _iBOOK POSS_j _jBRUNO

This book is Bruno's/belongs to Bruno.



Roadmap & Take-Aways



- 1 Predicative POSS cannot/should not be derived from Attributive POSS.
- 2 POSS is a verb of possession with *belong*-type argument structure.
- 3 Attributive POSS can and should be derived from Predicative POSS.
- 4 POSS cannot/should not be analyzed as a pronoun or determiner, definite or otherwise.
- 5 Clausal locative structure embeds verbal POSS, giving rise to alternations in word order and interpretation that are sensitive to (in)definiteness and the nature of the possessive relation.

Rejecting Predicate Nominal Analyses

An exclusively DP-internal analysis (of POSS) entails that Predicate POSS constructions (7-a) are derived from predicate nominal constructions (7-b), as schematized in schematized in (8-b).

- (7) a. BOOK [Pred-POSS POSS_i BRUNO]
 b. BOOK [Pred-Nominal POSS_i BRUNO BOOK]
- (8) a. BOOK ∈ “is” [Pred-Nominal POSS_i _iBRUNO ~~BOOK~~]
 b. BOOK ∈ “is” [Pred-Nominal POSS_i _iBRUNO BOOK]

Rejecting Predicate Nominal Analyses [cont.]

PROS

- ☺ ASL is a null copula language.
- ☺ Attributive POSS sometimes has the POSS POSSESSOR order common in the Predicative POSS construction.
- ☺ Uncontroversial (unelided) predicate nominal constructions are found in the language.

CONS

- ☹ Predicative POSS is **syntactically** distinct from Attributive POSS and its predicate nominal usages.
- ☹ Predicative POSS is **morphologically** distinct from Attributive POSS and its predicate nominal usages.
- ☹ Predicative POSS is **semantically** distinct from Attributive POSS and its predicate nominal usages.

Syntactic Differences: Word Order

Predicative POSS allows POSS-POSSESSOR order with indefinite possessors. Attributive POSS does not (cf. a similar observation noted by MacLaughlin 1997).

(9) **Context:** A teacher's edition copy of a Wisconsin history textbook was left in the library.

a. *Predicative POSS*

BOOK [POSS_i ;TEACHER] (BUT NOT-KNOW WHO)
The book belongs to some teacher (but I don't know which one).

b. *Attributive POSS*

- (i) IX_i FIND [;TEACHER POSS_i BOOK]
He_i found some teacher's book.
- (ii) *IX_i FIND [POSS_i ;TEACHER BOOK]
He_i found some teacher's book.

Syntactic Differences: WH-POSSESSORS

Predicative POSS allows WH-POSSESSORS, with both POSS-POSSESSOR and POSSESSOR-POSS order, albeit with correlating semantic differences in the definiteness of the WH-POSSESSOR.

- (10) a. IX_i ${}_i$ BOOK [POSS $_j$ $_j$ WHO]
Who (in general) does that book belong to?
- b. IX_i ${}_i$ BOOK [$_j$ WHO POSS $_j$]
Who (out of a specific group of people) does that book belong to?

Attributive POSS does not, regardless of the relative ordering of POSS and the POSSESSOR.

- (11) a. * IX_i [$_j$ WHO POSS $_j$ ${}_i$ BOOK]
Whose book is that?
- b. * IX_i [POSS $_j$ $_j$ WHO ${}_i$ BOOK]
Whose book is that?

Morphological Differences: Agreement Properties

Predicative POSS can move in space to indicate agreement with the POSSESSEE.

- (12) $IX_i \text{ } _i\text{BOOK CL:}B_i, \text{“stack-of-books” } [\text{ } _i\text{POSS}_j \text{ } _j\text{CRAIG }]$
That stack of books belongs to Craig.

POSSESSEE agreement is disallowed in Attributive POSS and, consequently, Predicate Nominal POSS constructions.

- (13) a. $*[\text{ } _j\text{CRAIG } _i\text{POSS}_j \text{ } _i\text{BOOK }] \text{ ON TABLE}$
Craig's books are on the table.
 b. $[\text{ } _j\text{CRAIG } \text{POSS}_j \text{ } _i\text{BOOK }] \text{ ON TABLE}$
Craig's books are on the table.
 c. $*IX_i \text{ } _i\text{BOOK } [\text{ } _j\text{CRAIG } _i\text{POSS}_j \text{ CHEMISTRY BOOK }]$
That book is Craig's chemistry book.

Interpretive Differences: Possessive Relation

Predicative POSS is subject to a more restricted notion of possession than Attributive POSS, paralleling cross-linguistically attested patterns (cf. English).

- (14) a. (i) [_jMONSTER POSS_j TWO _{fs}LEGS] COLOR GREEN
 ✓ *Two legs of the monster are green*
 ✓ *Two legs in the monster's pile of legs are green*
- (ii) TWO GREEN _{fs}LEGS [POSS_j _jMONSTER]
 # *Two legs of the monster are green*
 ✓ *Two legs in the monster's pile of legs are green*
- b. (i) POSS₁ BOOK FOR CLASS [POSS_i _iCRAIG]
My book for class belongs to Craig.
- (ii) #POSS₁ BOOK FOR CLASS [POSS_i _iM-TWAIN]
My book for class belongs to Mark Twain.
- (15) a. [The monster's legs] are green.
 b. Those green legs are [the monster's].
 c. [Those legs [of the monster's]] are green.

Untenability of Predicate Nominal Analyses

ASL clearly allows predicate nominal usage of Attributive POSS
... but this cannot be the only source of Predicative POSS.

- There are **syntactic** differences between them.
- There are **morphological** differences between them.
- There are **semantic** differences between them.

Two alternative hypothesis might explain these differences.

- HYPOTHESIS 1: Attributive POSS and Predicative POSS behave differently because they are not derivationally related.
- HYPOTHESIS 2: Attributive POSS and Predicative POSS are derivationally related — we just got the direction wrong.

Untenability of Predicate Nominal Analyses [cont.]

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Two alternative hypothesis might explain these differences.

- ~~HYPOTHESIS 1: Attributive POSS and Predicative POSS behave differently because they are not derivationally related.~~
- HYPOTHESIS 2: Attributive POSS and Predicative POSS are derivationally related — we just got the direction wrong.

Q: But what kind of predicative structure underlies POSS?

Predicative Origins: The Verbal Hunch



The POSSESSEE-POSSESSOR agreement exhibited with on
 Predicative POSS is strongly reminiscent of verbal agreement.

(16) IX_i iHELP₁ NOT-YET START
He hasn't started helping me yet.

(17) IX_i iBOOK CL:B_i "stack-of-books" [iPOSS_j jCRAIG]
That stack of books belongs to Craig.

Moreover, such patterns seem to uniquely characterize verbs.

Syntactic Distribution: ✓Verb

POSS exhibits syntactic characteristics comparable to those of verbs in ASL.

- ASL is (typically) an SVO language with verbs appearing in sentence-medial position.

(18) BOY TEASE_j IX_j _jGIRL
 The boy teased the girl.

- This is (typically) where we find POSS in the Predicative construction.

(19) IX_i _iPICTURE [POSS_j _jCRAIG]
 This picture is Craig's/belongs to Craig.

Syntactic Distribution: ✓Verb

POSS exhibits syntactic characteristics comparable to those of verbs in ASL.

- POSS can be modified by an array of adverbials, including non-manual manner mouth adverbials.

(20)

adv-mm

_iDOG [_iPOSS_j _jBRUNO]
The dog enjoys belonging to Bruno.

(21)

_iDOG OFTEN/ALWAYS [_iPOSS_j _jBRUNO]
The dog is often Bruno's — the dog is usually his responsibility.

(22)

_iDOG REAL [_iPOSS_j _jBRUNO]
The dog is actually Bruno's — the dog is usually his responsibility/he's the actual owner of the dog.

Syntactic Distribution: ✓Verb

POSS exhibits syntactic characteristics comparable to those of verbs in ASL.

- Predicative POSS easily combines with modals, tense markers, and other predicate embedding constructions.

- (23)
- BOOK WILL [POSS_i _iJOHN]
The book will belong to John.
 - BOOK [POSS_i _iJOHN] CAN
The book could belong to John.
 - _jDOG WANT [_jPOSS_i _iJOHN]
The dog wants to belong to John.
 - IX_i THINK BOOK [POSS_i _iJOHN]
He thinks the book belongs to John.

Morphological Distribution: ✓Verb

POSS exhibits morphological characteristics of verbs in ASL — beyond its ability to host transitive spatial agreement.

- Verbs in ASL can host path reduplication morphology to indicate aspectual properties of the event (Fischer 1973).

(26) IX_i INFORM_{j,iter} ABOUT PRESIDENT PLAN
 He keeps informing the media about the president's plans.

- POSS can host path reduplication morphology, yielding an idiomatic “characteristic of” interpretation (observed also in Baker-Shenk and Cokely 1981).

(27) TEASE_{pl-dist} [POSS_{j,iter} jCRAIG]
 Teasing everyone is Craig's nature.

Morphological Distribution: ✓ Verb

- Verbs in ASL can be nominalized via tense reduplication (Supalla and Newport 1978).

(28) FLY-TO.RED → AIRPLANE

- POSS can be nominalized via tense reduplication.

(29) POSS.RED → POSSESSION

- Moreover, POSS.RED exhibits interpretive patterns parallel to those exhibited by other reduplicated nominals (Abner 2012).

(30)

a.	PUT-IN-JAIL.RED → JAIL	✓ participant
b.	DEVELOP.RED → DEVELOPMENT	✓ result
c.	VOTE-FOR.RED → VOTE	✓ participant,
	ELECTION	✓ result
d.	POSS.RED → POSSESSION	✓ participant
		✓ result

Predicative Origins of POSS: Verbal Argument Structure

Predicative POSS is the 'base case' of a POSS possessive.

Neutral word order in
Predicative POSS
constructions is POSSESSEE
POSS POSSESSOR.



Verbal POSS lexicalizes a verb
of possession with
be-at/belong-alignment.

(31)

POSSESSEE

Subject

external/higher argument

POSS

≈ *belong*

verb!

POSSESSOR

Object

internal/lower argument

Syntactic Evidence for *Belong* Alignment

The POSSESSEE displays subject-like distributional properties..

- POSSESSEE can be controlled and undergo subject raising.

(32) _iDOG WANT [_iPOSS_j _jBRUNO]
The dog wants to belong to Bruno.

(33) VEGETABLE TEND-TO [POSS_{i,redup} _iCRAIG]
Vegetables tend to belong to Craig.

- POSSESSEE can precede modals, tense markers, and pre-verbal adverbs.

(34) _iDOG CAN/WILL/OFTEN [_iPOSS_j _jBRUNO]
The dog could/will/often belong(s) to Craig.

- Moreover, animate POSSESSEES may be interpreted volitionally (cf. also (32)).

(35) _iDOG NEVER [_iPOSS_j _jBRUNO]
The dog would never belong to Craig.

Morphological Evidence for *Belong* Alignment

POSSESSEE-POSSESSOR agreement patterns parallel attested verbal agreement patterns.

- Like subject/object agreement (Padden 1988), agreement with the POSSESSEE is “optional”, while agreement with the POSSESSOR is obligatory.

(36) IX_i _iBOOK CL:B^{“stack-of-books”} [(i)POSS_j _jCRAIG]

(37) IX_i _iBOOK CL:B^{“stack-of-books”} [POSS*(j) _jCRAIG]

- Like object agreement, POSSESSOR agreement can encode distributive and collective plurality (cf. e.g., Benedicto and Brentari 2004; Padden 1988; Mathur 2000; Supalla 1996).

(38) a. EACH _iBOY POSS_{dist,i} HAT PURPLE

Each boy's hat is purple.

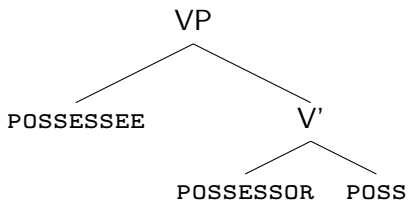
b. ALL-CIR _iBOY POSS_{pl-arc,i} HAT PURPLE

All of the boys' hats are purple.

Predicative Origins of POSS: Summary

Therefore! There's good reason to consider POSS a verbal predicate and, moreover, to consider it a verbal predicate with argument structure comparable to *be-at/belong*.

(39)

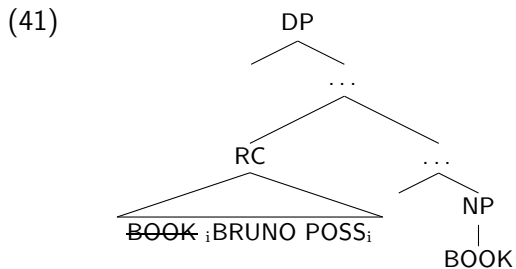


As Promised: Deriving Attributive POSS

Attributive POSS can be straightforwardly accounted for as an instance of nominal modification by the verbal POSS structure.

- (40) [[_{Modifier} _iBRUNO POSS_i] BOOK] ARRIVE
 A/the book of Bruno's arrived.

Relative clause formation can straightforwardly account for how this verbal POSS structure becomes a nominal modifier.



Relative Clauses, In support of

Other modifiers with verbal origins can also be found pre-nominally.

- (42) THE-TWO-OF-THEM_i [[KISS_{activity}]_i COUPLE]
 THE-TWO-OF-THEM_i IN TABLE KISS_{activity}
The kissing couple/couple that's kissing is in a booth kissing.
- (43) [[DANCE] BOY] GIRL PUNCH
The girl punched the dancing boy/boy that's dancing.

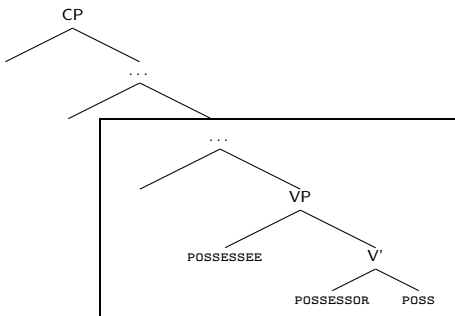
If you're a human language, relative clauses are just kind of like the default option for turning verbal structures into nominal modifiers.

Capturing the Patterns: Agreement Properties

Relative clauses need not contain full sentential structure and the absence of full sentential structure can account for the absence of possessee agreement in Attributive POSS.

(44) *_jCRAIG _iPOSS_j _iBOOK ON TABLE

(45)



⇒ Subject Agreement

⇒ Reduced Relative
(Object/POSSESSOR agreement only)

Capturing the Patterns: WH-Possessors [cont.]

In the absence of a relative clause analysis, the ungrammaticality of WH-POSSESSORS with Attributive POSS is rather mysterious.

- (46) *IX_k [_jWHO POSS_j _kBOOK]
Whose book is that?

This ungrammaticality falls out naturally from the island status of relative clauses, in general and, specifically, in ASL.

- (47) [RC _iBOY WITH CHICKEN / *WHO KICK_i] _jGIRL
_jGIVE_i HEADPHONES
 ≈ *The girl gave headphones to the boy with the chicken/who kicking him*



- (48) *IX_k [RC _jWHO POSS_j] _kBOOK75
Whose book is that?

Capturing the Patterns: WH-Possessors [cont.]

In the absence of a relative clause analysis, the ungrammaticality of WH-POSSESSORS with Attributive POSS is rather mysterious.

(49) *IX_k [RC_j WHO POSS_j]_k BOOK75
Whose book is that?

- It cannot be a selectional restriction, Predicative POSS allows WH-POSSESSORS.

(50) IX_i ;BOOK [POSS WHO
Who does the book belong to?

- It cannot be a generalized island effect — ASL is a WH-*in situ* language that allows certain island violations (Abner 2011).

(51) JOHN KISS MARY AND WHO YESTERDAY
Who did John kiss Mary and yesterday?

Capturing the Patterns: WH-Possessors [cont.]

- It cannot be a specific DP island effect — ASL allows left branch extraction.

(52) JOHN KISS GIRL YESTERDAY WHICH
Which girl is it that John kissed yesterday?

- It cannot be a(n even more) specific Possessive-DP island effect — ASL allows other attributive WH-POSSESSORS.

(53) a. IX₂ TAKE-CARE BABY TODAY WHO 'S
Whose baby is it that you are babysitting today?
 b. WHO _iPENCIL IX_i
Whose pencil is that?

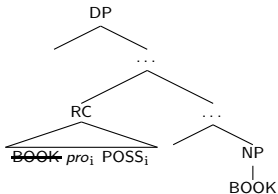
- But it can be a relative clause island effect.**

(54) *IX_k [[RC _jWHO POSS_j] _kBOOK]
Whose book is that?

Re-Evaluating Tradition: POSS ≠ Pronoun/D

The relative clause analysis can also provide a satisfactory explanation for ‘pronominal’ POSS construction — this is simply a case of *pro*-drop licensed by verb agreement (Lillo-Martin 1986).

- (55) a. [POSS_i BOOK] ARRIVE
 b. [[*pro*_i POSS_i] BOOK] ARRIVE
A/the book of his_i arrived.
 c.



There are additional properties that further preference this approach over a pronominal/determiner analysis of POSS.

Re-Evaluating Tradition: POSS ≠ Pronoun/D [cont].

Agreement with quantified/plural possessors patterns with object agreement, not pronouns.

- IX hosts a variety distributive/collective inflections.

(56) IX_{pl-dist} IX_{pl-arc} IX_{pl-cir}

- POSS can host only a subset of these.

(57) POSS_{pl-dist} POSS_{pl-arc} *POSS_{pl-cir}

- This restriction is also attested in object inflection.

(58) GIFT_{pl-dist} GIFT_{pl-arc} *GIFT_{pl-cir}

Re-Evaluating Tradition: POSS ≠ Pronoun/D [cont].

Unlike overt pronouns, but like null arguments, ‘pronominal’ POSS allows sloppy readings under ellipsis (Abner and Graf 2012).

- (59) Bruno and Craig have both said that they want to win their own (different) elections, but Bruno, who hates Craig, also let it slip that he wants Craig to lose.

${}_i$ CRAIG SAY WANT (#IX $_i$) WIN, BRUNO $_j$ ${}_i$ SAME-AS $_j$

Craig $_i$ said he wants (#him $_{Craig}$) to win, and Bruno did too.

- (60) ONLY ${}_i$ CRAIG KISS $_j$ POSS $_i$ $_j$ WIFE, $_k$ BRUNO $_k$ SAME-AS $_i$
Only Craig kisses his $_{Craig}$ wife, and Bruno does too.

Re-Evaluating Tradition: POSS ≠ Pronoun/D [cont].

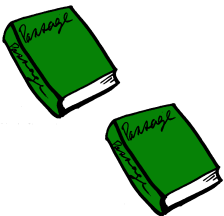
Attributive POSS does not exhibit the interpretive effects associated with pronouns/determiners.

- Attributive POSS does not exhibit maximality effects.

(61) [; JOHN POSS_i TWO BOOK] COLOR GREEN

✓ *John's two books are green.*

✓ *Two of John's books are green.*



Re-Evaluating Tradition: POSS ≠ Pronoun/D [cont].

Attributive POSS does not exhibit the interpretive effects associated with pronouns/determiners.

- Attributive POSS also fails to exhibit definiteness effects (and definiteness “inheritance” / “spread”).

- (62)
- IX_i _iGARDEN HAVE FLOWER
 - *IX_i _iGARDEN HAVE EACH GIRL
 - IX_i _iGARDEN HAVE EACH _iGIRL POSS_{i,dist} SHOE

Re-Evaluating Tradition: POSS ≠ Pronoun/D [cont].

These patterns are unexpected under a pronoun/determiner analysis because determining quantificational force is (usually!) what pronouns and determiners do.

- (63) John's two books are green.
✓ *John has two books total.*
John has more than two books.
- (64) a. There are flowers in the garden.
b. *There is each girl in the garden.
c. *There is each girl's shoes in the garden.

Re-Evaluating Tradition: POSS ≠ Pronoun/D [cont].

These patterns are expected under a relative clause analysis because determining quantificational force is not what relative clauses do.

(65) $[[_{RC} \text{ }_i \text{CRAIG POSS}_i \text{ }] \text{ THREE COMPUTER }] \text{ BREAK}$

- ✓ *The three computers that belong to Craig broke.*
- ✓ *Three computers that belong to Craig broke.*

- (66)
- a. (The) three computers that belong to him broke.
 - b. (The) two books that belong to John are green.
 - c. There are shoes that belong to each girl in the garden.

Re-Evaluating Tradition: POSS ≠ Pronoun/D [cont].

Functional structure (\approx D) introduced outside the relative clause determines quantificational force — and happens to be null in ASL.

(67) $[\approx_{DP} \epsilon [\dots [RC \text{ } _i \text{ CRAIG POSS}_i] \text{ THREE COMPUTER}]] \text{ BREAK}$

- ✓ *The three computers that belong to Craig broke.*
- ✓ *Three computers that belong to Craig broke.*

(68) a. EACH COUNTRY HAVE [ϵ AIRPLANE]

There's an airplane in every country.

b. IX₂ KNOW ABOUT [ϵ AIRPLANE]

Do you know about (\approx did you hear about) the airplane?

Wrap Up #1

Conclusions:

A verbal predicate analysis of POSS is independently motivated and straightforwardly captures the behavior of POSS in Predicative and Nominal POSS constructions.

- Predicative POSS is a verbal predication structure.
 - POSS has the distributional, morphosyntactic, and semantic properties of a verb.
 - POSS agreement parallels regular transitive verb agreement because POSS is a verb.
- Attributive POSS is a relative clause modifier.
 - Human languages use relative clauses to form verbal modifiers.
 - The reduced relative clause analysis captures the properties exhibited by Attributive POSS.
- Alternations in Attributive and Predicative POSS interpretation and word order arise as a consequence of the components of verbal structure present and the exact locus of relativization.

Attributive v. Predicative POSS: High(er) Res Version

Thus far, various arguments have been presented to establish that:

- Properties of POSS are best accounted for by a verbal analysis.
- Relativization can derive Attributive POSS.
- Relativization captures patterns of Attributive POSS.

However, two aforementioned behaviors of POSS constructions remain unaccounted for:

ONE: Word order variation between POSS and POSSESSOR.

TWO: Interpretive differences between Predicative and Attributive POSS

POSS Paradigms: Full & Distilled

Universality of word order (in)definiteness effects.

- In Predicative POSS, the all-together unremarkable pattern emerges: higher positions are associated with definiteness.

(69) Predicative POSS

a. $IX_i \text{ } _i\text{BOOK [POSS}_j \text{ } _j\text{WHO]}$

Who (in general) does that book belong to?

b. $IX_i \text{ } _i\text{BOOK [} _j\text{WHO POSS}_j \text{]}$

Who (out of a specific group of people) does that book belong to?

- In Attributive POSS, the (slightly remarkable) opposite pattern emerges: lower positions are associated with definiteness.

(70) a. $IX_i \text{ FIND [} _i\text{TEACHER POSS}_i \text{ BOOK]}$

He_i found some teacher's book.

b. $*IX_i \text{ FIND [POSS}_i \text{ } _i\text{TEACHER BOOK]}$

He_i found some teacher's book.

POSS Paradigms: Full & Distilled [cont.]

Universality of word order (in)definiteness effects.

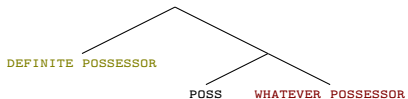
(71) a. Predicative POSS

DEFINITE POSSESSOR POSS WHATEVER POSSESSOR

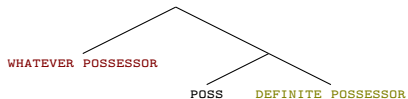
b. Attributive POSS

WHATEVER POSSESSOR POSS DEFINITE POSSESSOR

(72) Predicative POSS



(73) Attributive POSS



POSS Paradigms: Full & Distilled [cont.]

Universality of interpretive restrictions on the possessive relation.

- In Predicative POSS, interpretive restrictions are present independent of word order.

- (74)
- #POSS₁ BOOK POSS_i _iMARK TWAIN
 - #POSS₁ BOOK _iMARK TWAIN POSS_i

- In Attributive POSS, interpretive restrictions are present dependent on the word order of POSS and the POSSESSOR.

- (75)
- ✓FOR CLASS IX₁ READ _iMARK TWAIN POSS_i BOOK
 - #FOR CLASS IX₁ READ POSS_i _iMARK TWAIN BOOK

POSS Paradigms: Full & Distilled [cont.]

Universality of interpretive restrictions on the possessive relation.

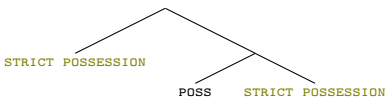
(76) a. Predicative POSS

STRICT POSSESSION POSS STRICT POSSESSION

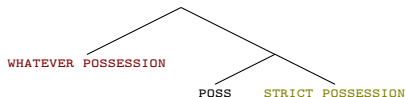
b. Attributive POSS

WHATEVER POSSESSION POSS STRICT POSSESSION

(77) Predicative POSS



(78) Attributive POSS



poss Paradigms: Full & Distilled [cont.]

Universality of word order (in)definiteness effects and interpretive restrictions on the possessive relation.

(79) a. Predicative POSS

DEFINITE POSSESSOR POSS WHATEVER POSSESSOR

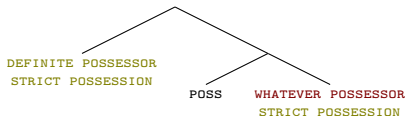
STRICT POSSESSION POSS STRICT POSSESSION

b. Attributive POSS

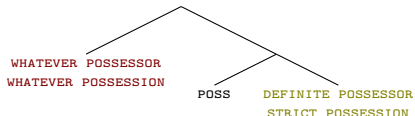
WHATEVER POSSESSOR POSS DEFINITE POSSESSOR

WHATEVER POSSESSION POSS STRICT POSSESSION

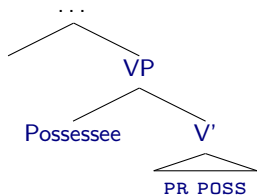
(80) Predicative POSS



(81) Attributive POSS

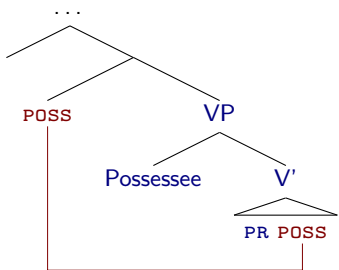


Taking Stock of the What We Need



The basic verbal structure
of POSSESSION.

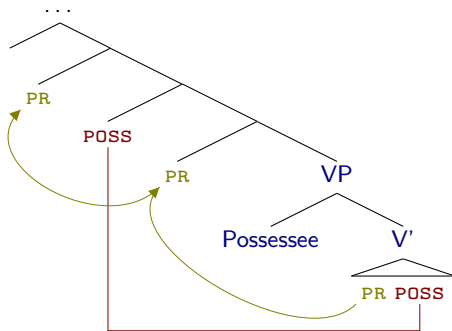
Taking Stock of the What We Need [cont.]



Additional component of possession: (i) encodes "strict possession" (ii) obligatory in Predicative **POSS**, (iii) "optional" in Attributive **POSS**

The basic verbal structure of possession.

Taking Stock of the What We Need [cont.]



Distinct structural targets for **POSSESSOR** objects, with higher targets reserved for definites.

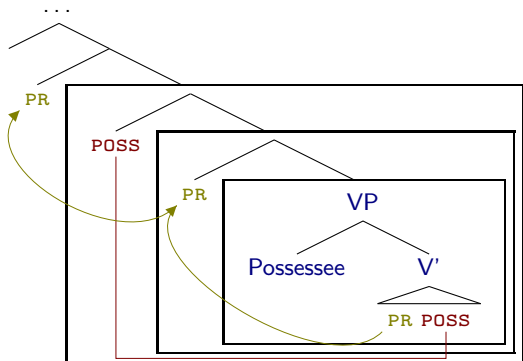
Additional component of possession: (i) encodes "strict possession" (ii) obligatory in Predicative **POSS**, (iii) "optional" in Attributive **POSS**

The basic verbal structure of **POSSESSION**.

Taking Stock of the What We Need [cont.]

Different sites for relativization.

Distinct structural targets for **POSSESSOR** objects, with higher targets reserved for definites.

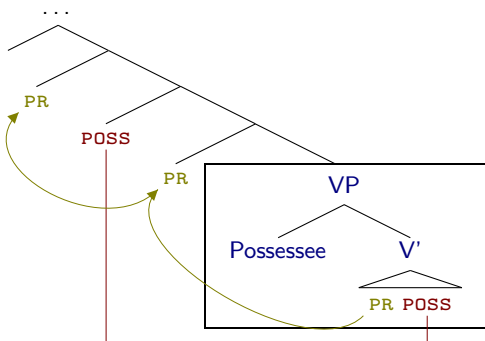


Additional component of **possession**: (i) encodes "strict possession" (ii) obligatory in **Predicative POSS**, (iii) "optional" in **Attributive POSS**

The basic verbal structure of **possession**.

Variability in Relative Clause Size

Different sites for relativization.



(82)

[_{DP} _iTEACHER POSS_i BOOK]

Some/the teacher's book (that s/he wrote/owns/etc.)

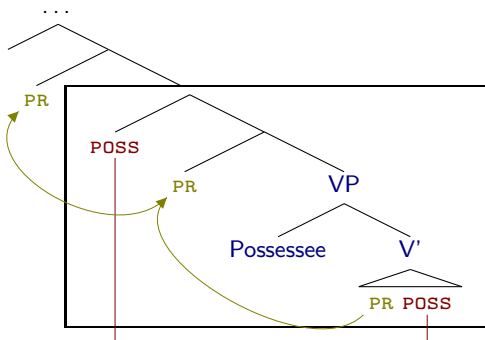
✓ POSSESSOR POSS

✓ WHATEVER POSSESSION

✓ WHATEVER POSSESSOR

Variability in Relative Clause Size [cont.]

Different sites for relativization.



(83)

[_{DP} _iTEACHER POSS_i BOOK]

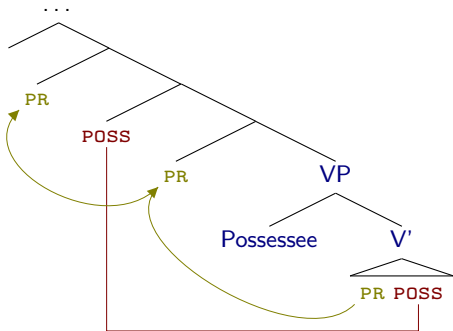
The teacher's book (that s/he owns)

✓POSS POSSESSOR

✓STRICT POSSESSION

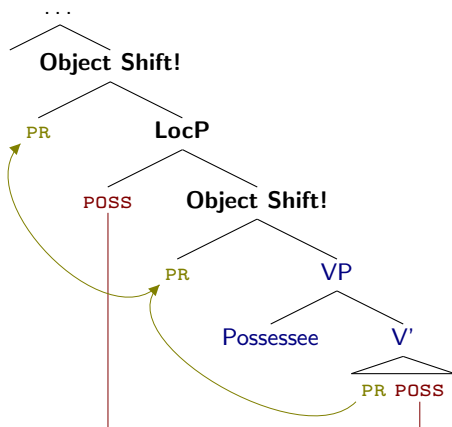
✓DEFINITE POSSESSOR

But ...???



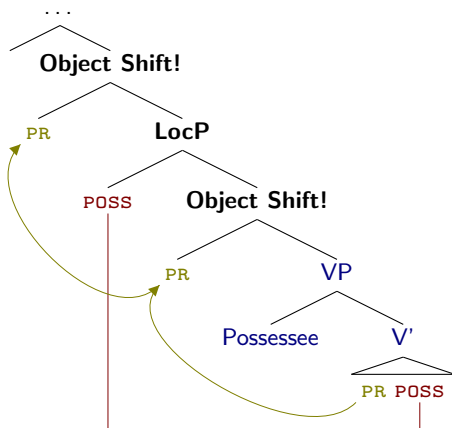
?

Locative Proposal [cont.]



- Something like this has to be happening if we want a principled explanation of the structural patterns.
- Cross-linguistically, possessives are related to locatives.
- There is ample cross-linguistic evidence that definiteness affects the position in which arguments surface and that “words” mask significant syntactic structure.

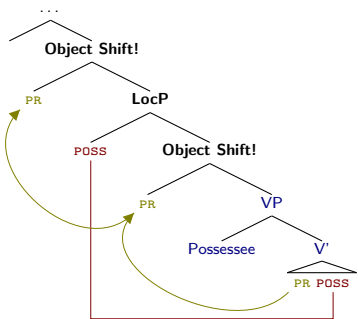
Locative Proposal [cont.]



- Definiteness affects the position in which arguments surface in ASL (cf. e.g., Fischer 1987).
- Verbal ("word") meaning is composed of semantic parts in ASL (cf. e.g., Benedicto and Brentari 2004).
- In ASL, **locative predicates have additional structural components and license object shift** (Liddell and Johnson 1986; Chen Pichler 2001).

Locative Proposal [cont.]

There is evidence that Predicative poss has both this locative and a possessive component.



- (84) a. AIRPLANE WHERE
Where is the airplane?
b. POSS_i _iBOY
It's the boy's/with the
boy/at the boy.

- (85) I have just written a novel and
Oprah has agreed to read it
and consider it as her next
book club suggestion.
#POSS₁ BOOK POSS_i _iOPRAH
My book belongs to Oprah.

Wrap Up #2

Conclusions:

A verbal predicate analysis of POSS is independently motivated and straightforwardly captures the behavior of POSS in Predicative and Nominal POSS constructions.

- Predicative POSS is a verbal predication structure.
 - POSS has the distributional, morphosyntactic, and semantic properties of a verb.
 - POSS agreement parallels regular transitive verb agreement because POSS is a verb.
- Attributive POSS is a relative clause modifier.
 - Human languages use relative clauses to form verbal modifiers.
 - The reduced relative clause analysis captures the properties exhibited by Attributive POSS.
- Alternations in Attributive and Predicative POSS interpretation and word order arise as a consequence of the components of verbal structure present and the exact locus of relativization.

- The signers, for making this research possible.



- Karen Emmorey, Susan Fischer, Hilda Koopman, Edward Stabler, Ronnie Wilbur, and audiences at the UCLA Syntax-Semantics Seminar and UCSD Sign Language Reading Group, and Gallaudet University, for helpful feedback and discussion.
- And you!

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