

Internal and external possession in the diachrony of Greek

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1. The theoretical relevance In many languages both internal and external possession constructions (IPC and EPC respectively) are available: while in IPCs (1a) the possessor is syntactically and semantically an element of DP, in EPCs (1b) the possessor surfaces as a syntactic dependent of the verb, and entertains semantic relations both with the noun phrase and the verb. There are various types of EPCs (Haspelmath 1999, Deal 2013, ms): I focus on the construction, frequent in Indo-European languages, where (i) IPC and EPC are not semantically equivalent: while IPC is typically underspecified with respect to the semantic relation between head and dependent (the dependent can be interpreted as possessor, but also as agent or patient), EPC is subject to stricter semantic constraints and entails possessor affectedness; (ii) evidence for the possessor's syntactic relation with the verb in EPCs is represented by its DP-external surface position and verb-dependent case marking.

- (1) a. der Arm **des Mannes** 'the man's arm' (German)
the arm the:GEN man:GEN
b. Er hat **dem Mann** den Arm gebrochen
he:NOM have:3SG the:DAT man:DAT the:ACC arm:ACC broken:PTCP
'he broke the man's arm'

For this type of EPC I assume a movement-based, control analysis (Lee-Schoenfeld 2006, Deal 2013, ms, following Hornstein's 1999 analysis of control as movement between θ -positions not constrained by the Theta-Criterion): the possessor is base-generated in the DP, receives the possessor θ -role but can escape Case assignment and is attracted to a DP-external Applicative position, where it is assigned dative and an additional affectee θ -role. I argue that the derivational relationship between IPC and EPC can be exploited diachronically and propose a reanalysis process in the history of Greek, with far-reaching consequences on its morphosyntax: in New Testament Greek (NTG, 1st cent. CE) an original IPC with a DP-peripheral genitive possessor is reanalyzed as EPC by assuming a new movement operation. The reanalysis is triggered by semantic, morphosyntactic, and prosodic factors, and the study of the diachronic process may shed light on the building blocks of possession patterns.

2. External possession in Greek In Greek, at all stages, possession can be expressed internally and externally. Up to the Koiné (of which NTG is a variety), there is a distinction in case parallel to e.g. German. In Standard Modern Greek (SMG), instead, dative and genitive are syncretic, and therefore there is no case distinction between IPC and EPC (2).

- (2) a. to daktilo **tu** 'his finger' (SMG)
the finger he:GEN
b. o skilos **tu** dhangose to daktilo 'the dog bit his finger'
the dog he:GEN bit:3SG the:ACC finger:ACC

Nonetheless IPC and EPC are syntactically and semantically distinct in SMG, and EPC obeys constraints that have been observed cross-linguistically (Guéron 2005): EPC (a) is limited to eventive transitive/unaccusative predicates that affect their internal argument and impose a benefactive/malefactive reading on the possessor; (b) obeys locality restrictions:

possessors must be contained in the same minimal clause as the possessed DP; (c) expresses inalienable possession, and the possessum (body parts, kinship terms, familiar objects) must be singular. If the possessor is plural, the interpretation of the possessum is distributive.

3. From DP to VP The origin of the SMG pattern can be traced to NTG, where an old genitive-marked IPC becomes reanalyzed as a new EPC, thus representing a first step in the genitive-dative syncretism. In SMG adnominal genitives are post-N, non-iterable and immediately adjacent to the N head (NG). In Classical Greek (CG) four different DP-internal possessive constructions are available: besides NG, also a post-N genitive with definiteness doubling (DD), a pre-N genitive (GN), and a further pre-N construction where the genitive is DP-peripheral, preceding the overt determiner (PER). While all these constructions are still attested in NTG, the post-N patterns increase substantially in frequency, and realise over 90% of the IPCs in the Gospels (Manolessou 2000, Gianollo 2011). Most of the exceptions to the post-N order are represented by PER constructions like (3).

- (3) kai apekopsen **autou** to ōtarion to dexion (Io 18.10)
 and cut.off:3SG he:GEN the:ACC ear:ACC the:ACC right:ACC
 ‘and he cut off his right ear’

In CG genitives could be displaced to a DP-peripheral position for focus (Manolessou 2000, Horrocks & Stavrou 1987). This interpretation is rarely attested in NTG: much more frequently the PER genitives are backgrounded pronominal clitic forms. Moreover, PER genitives systematically show the semantics of EPCs: they denote affected animate possessors of body parts or kinship terms; of the 59 instances in the Gospel of John, 48 belong to objects of transitive Vs or post-V subjects of passive and unaccusative predicates. Most frequently the verb precedes the object, and the genitive clitic occurs in between (4); the clitic can also be discontinuous with respect to the DP and surface in clitic clusters at the left periphery.

- (4) kai eutheōs ekatharisthē **autou** ē lepra (Mt 8.4)
 and immediately was.cleansed:3SG he:GEN the:NOM leprosy:NOM
 ‘and immediately his leprosy was cleansed’

4. The reanalysis Given the new grammar for adnominal genitives, pre-N genitives ‘stand out’ in NTG. I propose that, under neutral information-structure conditions, the PER configuration becomes available only to clitic elements. These are reanalyzed as being moved to a DP-external position, the thematic specifier of either a Low Applicative, specialized for transfer-of-possession relations (Pylkkänen 2002, Cuervo 2003) or a High (= pre-V) Applicative position (Lee-Schoenfeld 2006), where differences in the interpretation of datives are derived contextually. Given the independent availability of V-to-C in NTG (and SMG, cf. Horrocks 1990 and Condoravdi & Kiparsky 2001), either analysis is compatible with the data. Three local syntactic conditions are singled out favoring the reanalysis in NTG: besides (i) the different grammar for internal possession, also (ii) an ongoing change in the positioning of clitics (from clausal second position to TP-clitics, Condoravdi & Kiparsky 2001) and (iii) a more rigid verb order, and thus a more consistent post-V positioning of objects (Taylor 1994, Horrocks 1997). DP-peripheral genitive clitics end up being adjacent to the verb, and the phrasing with the verb is strengthened by encliticization and consequent stress readjustment. A new EPC arises: the genitive clitic occupies a ‘dative’ position in the clause, being reanalyzed as an argument of the verb.