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by Maura Velazquez

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Guarani Possessive Constructions
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1. Introduction

In this paper, I will discuss the different ways in which the concept of Possession is encoded in Guarani. I will characterize the conceptual basis of each of the different possessive constructions, and will argue that the formal distinctions reflect underlying semantic differences. I will show that even though Guarani does not have special morphology to distinguish alienable and inalienable nouns, such a distinction plays a crucial role in explaining the formal differences between possessive constructions. The paper will also show that apart from the alienable/inalienable distinction, there are finer semantic differences (such as those involving different inalienable noun classes) that have an import on the overt grammatical properties of linguistic forms.

I will start by discussing the general characterization of the concept of possession as it is understood in Cognitive Grammar (CG) (Langacker in preparation). In section 3, I will discuss the formal ramifications of the semantics of the inalienable/alienable distinction as well as of other finer semantic distinctions. Section 4 deals with the semantics of each possessive structure.

2. A Schematic Characterization of Possession

In general, possessive relations contain two entities that are related: one is usually called the possessor (PSR) and the other is called the possessum (PSM). The relationship that holds between these two entities, however, is much more diverse than their labels imply. Namely, there are several kinds of relations that hold between them in addition to "possession" and "ownership". Characterizing the meaning of what is linguistically encoded as possession obviously requires a more general concept than that of ownership.

According to Seiler (p.90), "linguistic possession consists of the relationship between a substance and another substance" in which the PSR is prototypically "+animate, +human and +EGO or close to speaker" and the PSM is "+ or -animate". An abstract characterization such as Seiler's is general enough to include all the different senses of possession but it could be criticized as too extreme. According to Langacker (in preparation), a characterization of possession that allows eithe participant to have either role in the relation, is so abstract that it fails to capture certain asymmetries between the PSR and the PSM. This characterization, gives no principled explanation of why the whole in part/whole relations is generally encoded as the PSR and the part as the PSM instead of the reverse. Similar asymmetries can be observed when the two nominals that enter the relationship are a person and an object.

In the same work, Langacker gives a schematic characterization of possession which is also very abstract but more specific than Seiler's. According to him, possession is a relationship in which the speaker "locates" one entity in relation to another, that is, establishes mental contact. One of the two participants in the relation is taken as a reference point to establish this contact with the other participant. Langacker proposes what he calls the reference-point model (RP) to characterize possession.

Underlying the RP model is the conception of a world which is populated by a variety of objects, some of which are relatively more noticeable or salient than others. For example, a whole is salient in relation to its parts; a physical object has more salience than an abstract entity, and similarly, a person is salient with respect to an object. The essential idea of the RP model is that non-salient objects are more easily located in terms of

salient ones than vice versa. A viewer will locate a non-salient object by directing his attention to the most readily available salient object first, and from there locate the non-salient object. The essentials of this model are diagrammed in Figure 1 below:

  Figure 1

The RP model includes the following elements: i) the Reference Point (RP), which is the salient object in the World (W) in whose "vicinity" a non-salient object is "located"; ii) the Target (T), which is the non-salient object that is being located; and the Dominion (D) of an RP, which is defined as the set of objects that can be located in terms of the RP. The dashed arrow represents the path through which the viewer (V) establishes mental contact with the target. An abstract characterization of possession in terms of the RP model equates the PSR with the reference point, and the PSM with the T. Langacker's characterization is abstract enough to accommodate the large variety of senses that are encoded with possessive constructions and, at the same time, accounts for the asymmetry between PSR and PSM.

Having explained the conceptual framework assumed in my analysis, I will now turn to the data. I will begin by discussing formal ramifications of the inalienable/alienable distinction as well as of other finer semantic distinctions in Guarani in section 3.

3. Inalienable vs. Alienable Possession

Even though Guarani does not have special morphology to distinguish alienable and inalienable nouns, some formal aspects indicate that there is such a distinction. First, in the case of body-part and kinship terms, the inherent character of inalienable possession is reflected in the fact that these nouns do not generally occur without a specified possessor. The same is true for other nouns that designate objects or concepts intimately associated with human beings, such as *tera* 'name', and *ao* 'clothes'. Two examples follow:[1]

  1) Maria o-hupi cheve i-po/*po.
       Maria 3s-lift to:me 3s-hand
     'Maria waved her hand at me'.

  2) Maria memby/*0 memby o-mano vare'a-gui.
     Maria offspring   3s-die hunger-from
     'Maria's offspring died of hunger'.

As can be seen in the starred forms of (1) and (2), the nouns for "hand" and "offspring" cannot be used without a specified PSR. Alienable nouns, on the other hand, are generally used without a possessor unless the speaker wants to point specifically to a possessive relationship.

Another formal manifestation of the inalienable/alienable distinction is the fact that inalienable possession cannot be expressed with a verb of possession while alienable possession can. The verb *reko* 'have' is one possible way of encoding alienable possession at the clausal level. Contrast 3b and 4b, which represent normal expressions of alienable possession with the ungrammatical sentences in 3a and 4a, in which inalienable possession is encoded with a verb of possession. I will come back to this issue in section 4.4, where I discuss verbal possession.

Inalienable

  3a) *Che a-reko petei memby
       I   1s-have one offspring
      'I have a son'.

  4a) ?Che a-reko petei aka.
        I 1s-have one   head
       'I have a head'.

Alienable

  3b) Che a-reko petei mesa.

I 1s-have one   table
'I have a table'.

4b) Che a-reko petei ajaka.
I   1s-have one basket
'I have a basket'.

In the case of the inalienable examples, a kinship term cannot be encoded with a verb of possession under any circumstances. Body-part terms, as in example (4a), can be used only in very unlikely situations, for example, when one is physically holding a head. Of course, in such a case, the type of possession expressed is no longer an inalienable one.

Still another formal manifestation of the inalienable/alienable distinction can be seen in the restrictions to which "possessor ascension" is subject. In this case only body-part terms are affected. I will discuss this issue at length in section 3.2.

So far we have seen that there are some interesting formal indications that the alienable/inalienable distinction has an important status in the language. I will now discuss basic differences in senses of possession resulting from the different inalienable noun classes involved.

3.1. **Possession and Different Inalienable Noun Classes**

Before I discuss the grammatical import of the semantics of the different classes of inalienable nouns, a few words are in order about their semantic differences.

In a possessive expression containing a kinship term, both nominals designate human beings. The kinship term is understood as the PSM and the other as the PSR. Kinship terms are inherently relational; that is, they must be understood in relation to another human being. Their relational nature makes them natural candidates to be encoded as PSMs since they have to be "located" or identified in relation to another person.

The meaning of possession involving kinship terms designates an interpersonal relation. Thus, *che-sy* 'my mother' is not someone who is owned by me, but rather someone who stands to me in a certain relation within the network of kinship relations. One difference between the possession involving kin relations and that of body-parts is that in the former the PSM is physically separable from the PSR while in the latter it is not.

In the case of body-part nouns in a possessive relation, the relation between PSM and PSR is that of part-whole and is characterized by physical inseparability. According to the RP model, the whole is more salient than the part, and is therefore encoded as the reference point. Possession of a body-part can be diagrammed as follows:

Figure 2

Here, the PSR (i.e., the person) is identified with his/her body, which is encoded as an RP by virtue of its salience with respect to its parts. The Dominion (i.e., the set of objects that can be located in terms of the RP) and the RP are also conceptually undifferentiated. The RP, in this case, is inherently made up of distinctive subparts and the possessive relation results from the T being a subpart of the RP itself.

The question now arises, do the semantic differences among the different subclasses have any import on the grammatical organization of the language? In section 3.2, I discuss a case in which a grammatical structure is clearly based on the semantics of the noun class that it affects.

3.2. **The Semantic Basis of "Possessor Ascension"**.

I will now discuss a phenomenon that is commonly referred to as PSR ascension or PSR promotion. In Guarani, PSR ascension co-occurs with object incorporation. I will start by discussing object incorporation first.

The object of a transitive verb can be "incorporated" into the verb stem (i.e. it appears as a bound morpheme rather than a free form). In this case, there is an alteration in the position of the nominal with respect to the verb: while the object normally follows the verb, it is always preposed to the left of the verbal root when it is incorporated. Corresponding non-incorporated and incorporated structures are shown in 5 (a) and (b) respectively:

    (5a) A-johei che-rova.
        1s-wash I-face
        'I wash my face'.

    (b) A-j-ova-hei.
        1s-REF-face-wash
        (I face-wash myself).
        'I wash my face'.

In general, only unmodified nouns can be incorporated. Thus a noun that is modified by a determiner, possessive or an adjective cannot usually be incorporated. When the object is a body-part term in a possessive relation, however, the head noun of the object NP can be incorporated. In this case the possessor is stranded; that is, the possessor is not incorporated along with the body-part term; instead it is encoded as the direct object of the resulting compound stem:

    (6a) Che a-johei nde-rova.
        I 1s-wash you-face
        'I wash your face'.

    (6b) Che ro-hova-hei.
        I 1s/2o-face-wash
        (I face-wash you).
        'I wash your face'.

    (7a) Maria oi-pete pe-mita po.
        Maria 3s-slap that-kid hand
        'M. slapped that kid's hand'.

    (7b) Maria oi-po-pete pe mita.
        Maria 3s-hand-slap that-kid
        'M. hand-slapped that kid'.

When the PSR in the unincorporated structure is a pronoun, a pronominal object form is prefixed to the derived verb, as shown in (6b). When the PSR of the unincorporated structure is a lexical noun, it fills the object slot in the incorporated structure (i.e. it follows the verb), as shown in (7b).

In formal theories, examples such as (5), (6) and (7) are often treated as originating from a common underlying structure and as being related by a derivational process which involves "possessor ascension" (cf. Baker, 1988 pp. 76-129). A derivational analysis assumes that both types of expressions are semantically equivalent and that therefore, they must share a common underlying form. Since the meaning is said to remain constant, the derivation manipulates only formal categories. According to this account, structures such as the ones in the (a)-examples (which I will call A) serve as the basis for the derivation of structures like the ones in (b) (which I will call B). The derivation then would roughly consist of the following kind of process: i) the direct object of A "becomes" an internal argument of the verb and leaves the place for the object vacant; ii) The PSR of the object in A is "promoted" or "ascends" to the vacant object position of the verb in B.

It has been pointed out that a strictly syntactic account of PSR-ascension-type constructions in languages other than Guarani is inadequate (cf. Tuggy, and Croft, 1985). I will show that the same can be said for the present data. My first objection to the strictly syntactic account of PSR ascension concerns the assumption that the meanings of pairs such as (5),(6) and (7) are the same. The two types of structure in each pair have slightly different meanings. This claim is corroborated by the fact that these two types of structure are functionally different, that is, there are situations in which one can be used, but not the other. The (a)-examples have the connotation that the person is not affected by the action to the same extent as in the (b)-examples. Since one generally is affected by what is done to a part of one's body, the (b)-type structure is most commonly used. The (a)-structure would be appropriate only in very limited, marked circumstances. For example, (6a) would be appropriate to say to someone whose face one washed while he/she was unconscious. Example (7a) is appropriate in situations in which the person who slaps the kid's hand does it accidentally; (7b), on the other hand, implies that the kid whose hands are slapped is being

punished, and thus affected not only physically, but socially as well. In a strictly syntactic account of possessor ascension there would be no principled account of the clear semantic differences between the two types of structures.

Another objection to the strictly syntactic analysis is shown in the following examples. If all that is involved were the promotion of the syntactic category/argument PSR, then we would expect the PSR of (8a) and (9a) to be coded as the clausal object in (8b, 9b), but that is not the case:

(8a) Che a-nami nde-rymba-vaka.
    I 1s-milk you-domestic-cow
    'I milk your cow'.

(b) *Che ro-rymba-vaka-ami.
     I   1s/2o-domestic-cow-milk
    'I cow-milk you'.

(9a) Che ai-nupa ne-memby.
    I 1s-beat you-offspring
    'I beat your son'.

(b) *Che ro-memby-nupa.
     I 1s/2o-offspring-beat
    'I son-beat you'.

In the examples above the PSR cannot be "promoted"; not even in example (9b), where the possessive relationship is of an inalienable nature. Significantly, the only kind of possessor that can be encoded as clausal object in incorporated structures is the possessor of a body-part. Semantically this makes sense since the relationship that exists between the PSR and a body-part term is that of part to whole. It is natural then that the whole be affected whenever the part is. An account of Guarani possessor ascension which is not semantically based will have no way of predicting the different behaviors of the two classes of inalienable nouns, which are shown here to pattern differently with respect to possessor ascension. A strictly syntactic account would need to have arbitrary lexical restrictions, such as +body part, which suspiciously happen to line up with semantic classes.

In this section, I have shown that semantic differences in possession are reflected in the grammatical organization of the language,

and that a strictly syntactic analysis of PSR ascension cannot account for the restrictions to which PSR-ascension structures are subject without arbitrary and otherwise unmotivated lexical specifications. In CG and functional approaches, however, meaning differences are not only spelled out but are also expected, and the grammatical restrictions are given a natural explanation based on the semantics of the structures involved. In the next section, I will analyze the different ways in which possession is encoded in Guarani and the semantic basis of each.

4. **Possession: syntactic and morphological encoding in Guarani**

There is a variety of ways in which possession can be encoded in Guarani. Consider the following sample:

(10a) Maria ajaka   (b) che-ajaka
     Maria basket   I-basket
     'Maria's basket'   'my basket'

(11) Che che-ajaka.
    I   I-basket
    'I have a basket'.

(12) Che a-reko petei ajaka.
    I 1s-have one basket
    'I have a basket'.

I will refer to the structure in (10a) as NN juxtaposition, the one in (11) as predicative-possession, and the one in (12) as verbal possession. Given the assumption of CG that grammar is symbolic, it is expected that these different encodings of possession will have different meanings. In what follows, I will characterize the semantic basis of each one of these structures.

4.1. **N N Juxtaposition**

When the PSR is a lexical noun such as example (10a), nominal possession is regularly indicated by a simple juxtaposition of the two nominals involved: N1 (PSR) N2 (PSM). There is no special morpheme marking the PSR or the PSM. The designated (i.e., profiled) element is the PSM.

Since (10a) is a complex expression, it is reasonable to investigate how each of the ele-

ments contributes to the meaning of the whole nominal expression. In Guarani, we have no overt indication that the relation between the two nominals is a possessive one. Taking the two elements in (10a) separately, "Maria" profiles a person and "basket" profiles a household item. Which element is responsible for the possession sense of the expression? Since there is no morpheme responsible for conveying possession one might speculate that the possessive construction itself is meaningful. In other words, the syntactic arrangement of the two elements is responsible for the interpretation of the first element as possessor, and the second as possessum. This hypothesis accords with the claim of CG that grammatical constructions are meaningful. We can further speculate that the NN construction activates the RP model in the speaker's mind and that, within the model, he/she evokes the potential roles of the entities involved in the relation. It seems, then, that the possessive interpretation of juxtaposed nominals in Guarani is achieved by means of the RP model plus a minimal overt clue in the construction: juxtaposition of the two nominals, where the reference point precedes the target (PSR-PSM).

When the possessor is a pronoun, possessed nouns regularly display possessive prefixes (see example (10b). I will assume that these prefixes have the same conceptual content as the free pronominal forms, and that the Pron-N structures are a special case of nominal juxtaposition. In addition to the phonological identity, or near identity, of the free pronominal forms and the prefixes, the Pron-N form and the N-N structure are clearly parallel since they have identical linear order (i.e. the PSR precedes the PSM). Given this parallelness, it would be unreasonable to assume that the two structures are conceptually different.

Having discussed the meaning of possession when encoded nominally, I will now turn to clausal possession.

4.2. **Predicative Possession**

Before I present the relevant Guarani data for this section, I will briefly discuss the notion of setting-subjects (see Langacker 1987), which will be relevant for my analysis

of this set of data. According to Langacker, part of the speaker's conceptualization of events is that the participants involved are in a given setting. Prototypically, one of the participants is selected as the clausal subject, and the setting is expressed by an adverbial. Languages allow deviations from such a prototypical manner of encoding in order to accommodate the speaker's communicative needs. One such departure is the case of setting-subjects. In such a case, a setting, rather than a participant, is encoded as the clausal subject. The following examples taken from Langacker (1987) illustrate sentences that take a setting for subject:

(15) Near the fire is warm.

(16) There are some llamas in Peru.

(17) My cat is crawling with fleas.

(18) The garden is swarming with bees.

(19) noo=p no-te?   tiiwu-q.   (Luiseno)
    I=3s my-stomach hurt-TNS
    'I have a stomach ache'.

(20) noo=p no-puus konoknis.
    I=3s   my-eye green
    'I have green eyes'.

In (15), the phrase headed by the locative preposition behaves as a noun phrase and is construed as the clausal subject. Sentence (16) contains the English existential "there", which is usually analyzed as a "dummy" subject. Langacker proposes to analyze it instead as a "maximally schematic setting".

In sentences (17) and (18), we have cases in which the settings of the events (i.e., "cat", and "garden") are encoded as the clausal subjects even though they are not doing the crawling or the swarming; "cat" and "garden" are the settings in which the events take place. They are construed as clausal subjects because "cat" and "garden" are conceptually more prominent than the entities doing the "crawling" and the "swarming". We can say that the setting-subjects here are taken as reference points at the clause level in order to locate the process of "crawling" and "swarming".

Similar treatment is given by Langacker to the Luiseno sentences in (19) and (20); the initial pronouns, which function as clause-

level subjects, are said to specify the setting for the relation involving the body part. Again, we can say that the person (specified by the subject pronoun) is encoded as the subject because of its greater conceptual prominence than the body part. Thus, in addition to being a setting, it is the RP for the relation involving the body part. Guarani has a very similar construction involving body-part terms:

(21) che che-py'a-rasy.
     I I-stomach-sick
     'I have a stomach ache'.

(22) che che-resa-rovy.
     I I-eye-blue
     'I have blue eyes'.

As in the Luiseno sentences, the pronouns at the beginning of the sentence are the clausal subjects here, and can be analyzed as the settings for the relation involving the body-parts. In all the examples given above, the settings (which are encoded as subjects) are of varying degrees of abstractness. The Luiseno and Guarani examples are not "locations" in the same physical sense that the subjects in examples (15), (17) and (18) are; a person can only be interpreted as an abstract setting.

Now, consider the following examples:

(23) (Che) che-ajaka.
     I   I-basket
     'I have a basket'.

(24) Che che-memby-ta.
     I   I-offspring-FUT
     'I will have a child'.

(25) Che che-memby-se.
     I I-offspring-DESID
     'I want to have a child'.

The structure of the possessive sentences above is very similar to the ones in (21) and (22). The independent pronominal element is the clausal subject, which as in examples (21) and (22) is not the active participant subject which active verbs usually have. In the possessive sentences, however, the subject can hardly be interpreted as a setting-subject for the possessive relation; there is no sense in

which "I" is a setting for the possessive relation "my offspring", for example. I propose to analyze the subjects of the possessive sentences as reference point subjects with respect to which the possessive relation is to be understood. I have said before that the setting-subjects can also be interpreted as a kind of RP at the clause level. Langacker has suggested (personal communication) that setting-subjects are a special case of RP. That is, setting-type subjects get generalized into reference point-type subjects. This would explain the structural similarities between the Guarani sentences given in (21) and (22) and the possessive ones given in (23)-(25).

Predicative possessive sentences do not have a verb (which in Guarani is marked by a different set of subject agreement markers), but have a predicative nominal as clausal head. A predicative nominal results from the temporalization of a stative relation. In a predicative possessive structure, the possessive relation is clearly stative since it does not designate a process. Its temporalization is attested to by the fact that it can take tense markers (example (24)) as verbs do. Other affixes that they can take and that are usually associated with verbs are modal affixes (example (25)). The predicative PSR-PSM unit profiles a non-verbal possession relation in the same way its nominal counterpart does, with the addition of a temporal profile, by virtue of which the unit functions predicatively.

In order to have a possessive-predicate meaning, the subject must be the same as the nominal possessor. There is a sense in which the clausal subject is a topic.[1] This accords with a suggestion made by Langacker that a PSR is like a "local topic". Since the PSR here is used as a RP at the clause level, it is natural that it is interpreted as a clausal topic.

In the next section, I will discuss a different type of sentential possession, the structures I term verbal possession.

4.4. Verbal Possession

This section deals with the way verbal possession is encoded in Guarani. The PSR is encoded as the clausal subject and the PSM as the object. The meaning of such sentences

is equivalent to the meaning of English sentences of the type:"NP have NP":

(27) Che a-reko petei mita.[1]
    I 1s-have one child
    'I have a child'.

The PSR and the PSM are encoded as participants. The PSR is construed not as a mere RP, but as a participant exerting energy on the PSM, which is encoded as the object. Energy is exerted in the sense that the PSR "holds" the PSM in its dominion. It is important to notice in this regard that the verb *reko* also means 'to physically hold something', as in:

(28) A-reko petei kyse che-po-pe.
    1s-hold one knife I-hand-in
    'I have a knife in my hand'.

The verb 'reko' does not convey intimate possession; it usually designates transient, impermanent control of the PSR on the PSM. Thus (29) below is perfectly appropriate:

(29) A-reko Maria mesa che-roga-pe.
    1s-have Maria table I-house-in
    'I have Maria's table at home'.

In the example above, *reko* refers to temporary control; it does not convey permanent possession since the table belongs to Maria. Given the fact that the verb *reko* does not convey intimate possession, it is natural that possession of kinship and body-part terms is not usually encoded with this type of structure (see examples in section 3 on the inalienable/alienable distinction).

Predicative possessive sentences, as illustrated in (23)-(25), do not mean 'NP have NP' in the same way that verbal possessives do. Predicative possessives express a more intimate and permanent type of possession than does verbal possession. Thus regardless of the class of nouns involved (alienable/inalienable), the two different linguistic structures express a difference in the degree of intimacy or separability between the PSR and PSM. Consider the following examples:

(30) Che che-roga Paraguay-pe.
    I I-house Paraguay-in
    'I have a house in Paraguay'.

(31) Che a-reko petei oga Paraguay-pe.
    I 1s-have one house Paraguay-pe
    'I have a house in Paraguay'.

Example (30) above is used in cases in which the PSR owns a house and lives there permanently. Example (31), however, has the connotation that the person owns the house but does not live there permanently. This difference in meaning between the two types of structure is reflected formally in the fact that the PSR and the PSM are not separated by a verb in predicative possessives, while in verbal possessives the PSR and PSM are separated by a verb.

Having described the meaning of the different ways in which Guarani encodes possession, I will end by discussing the functional complementarity of the different structures. I will use notions such as Seiler's linguistic continuum and Haiman's linguistic iconicity.

5. **The Function and Iconicity of Possessive Structures**

According to Seiler (1983) and Brettschneider and Seiler (1985), the motivation underlying the structural diversity with which possession is encoded is the existence of two properties that play a complementary role: inalienable vs. alienable. Possessive structures, they say, are ordered along a continuum according to the degree of structural complexity. They claim that the more complicated the structure, the more explicit is the type of relation between the PSR and the PSM (the extreme case of explicitness is a verb of possession). "Intimate" possession does not need to be linguistically explicit; therefore, inalienable possession tends to be encoded with less explicit linguistic means. The extreme case of inexplicitness is NN juxtaposition. On the other hand, the less consistently the object belongs to the sphere of intimacy, the stronger is the need to make the relationship explicit. Thus there is a tension between ways of encoding possession due to the presence of two opposite concepts, alienability vs. inalienability, which play a complementary role in the

language in such a way that the increase in participation in one category implies a decrease in the other.

Seiler's findings fit very well with a more general picture of linguistic iconicity developed by Haiman (1983). According to Haiman, linguistic structures are iconic in the sense that they tend to reflect the type of conceptualization they stand for. Haiman's generalizations are as follows: "the linguistic distance between expressions corresponds to the conceptual distance between the ideas they represent", and "the linguistic separatedness of an expression corresponds to the conceptual independence of the object or event which it represents" (pp. 782-783).

Let us return now to some facts about the different possessive structures in Guarani and re-examine them in the light of these generalizations.

First, the claim that verbal possession tends to designate alienable possession holds for Guarani. As we have seen, possession of body-part and kinship cannot be encoded with a verb of possession. Taking the iconicity generalization, the explanation would be as follows: in verbal possession, the PSR and the PSM are separated by a verb. This structure is awkward because it does not reflect the intimate or inseparable nature of the relation between the PSR and the PSM. Also, body parts and kinship terms are not conceptually independent, since they are generally conceived in relation to something else. Encoding them as separate from their PSRs does not reflect their conceptual dependency and the result is strange.

As far as NN juxtaposition and the predicative possessive are concerned, there is no restriction with respect to the class of nouns that can be encoded with these structures. Thus both alienable and inalienable nouns can be encoded as PSMs in juxtaposition and in predicative possessives. If these structures do in fact represent an intimate relation between PSR and PSM, this suggests that alienable nouns, despite their separable nature, are easily construed as being intimately associated with the PSR. Inalienable nouns, however, are more resistant to being encoded as

separable.

Despite the fact that alienable nouns are conceptually separable, they can be construed as more or less intimately associated with the PSR in a possessive relation via the choice of linguistic structure. Thus we saw in section 4.4 that there is a difference in the degree of intimacy of the possessive relation conveyed, depending on whether or not the relation is encoded with a verbal possessive structure (see examples (30)-(31). Thus, a nominal predicative structure conveys a more permanent and close type of relationship by virtue of the fact that it has a less explicit linguistic structure. A verbal possessive structure, which involves a more explicit linguistic encoding, conveys a less intimate type of possession.

6. **Concluding Remarks**

In this paper I have shown that:

i) despite the absence of a specific morphology signaling the distinction inalienable/alienable in Guarani, this distinction does have an important status in the language as indicated by its formal ramifications. I have suggested that these two opposite concepts underlie the complementarity of the different possessive structures in the language.

ii) Apart from the inalienable/alienable distinction there are finer semantic differences (such as those involving different semantically based noun classes) that have an effect on the overt grammatical properties of linguistic forms. In particular, I have shown that the formal restrictions pertaining to possession ascension structures are semantically motivated and that a strictly syntactic analysis does not have a natural way of explaining their formal restrictions because it wrongly assumes semantic identity between PSR ascension paraphrases.

iii) It was shown that while a nominal predicative structure expresses an intimate, permanent type of possession, verbal possession conveys a less intimate or permanent possessive relation. This suggests that linguistic structure alone can convey a difference in the degree of intimacy or permanency of a posses-

sive relation. Thus the claim of CG that linguistic structures are symbolic and meaningful is strongly supported by the present data.

Acknowledgements

Notes

1- The following are some of the abbreviations that will be used in the glosses:
    SUP = superlative
    REF = reflexive
    TOT = totalitative ("completely", "all")
    PASS = passive
    DESID= desiderative

2- I am using the term "topic" here in the functional sense. That is, the element which is the "center of attention" and which "specifies the domain within which the predication holds" or "announces the theme of the discourse" (see Li and Thompson, 1975 p. 464). Used in this sense, of course, there is a great deal of overlap between the notions subject and topic.

3- The word *mita* 'child', unlike *memby* in example (24) above, is not a kinship term. In other words, it is not in opposition to the words for 'mother' or 'father', but to the word for 'adult'.

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