

THE POSSESSOR THAT APPEARS TWICE – POSSESSIVE DOUBING IN GERMAN HELMUT WEISS

In colloquial and dialectal German (as well as in other languages, cf. Koptjevskaja-Tamm 2003), there exists a possessive construction which shows a kind of double marking on the morphological level: the combination of a DP-internal possessor(-DP) with a possessive pronoun, cf. (1). Thus it seems that the possessor is referred to twice: by the possessor-DP and the possessive pronoun. However, it will be argued that only the possessor-DP refers to the possessor, while the possessive pronoun marks the possessive relation (i.e. bears a POSS feature).

- (1) am Sepp sei Haus
the Joe-DAThis house

In the first part of my talk I will present data from various German dialects showing a certain range of variation, first with respect to case marking of the possessor-DP (besides dative, the possessor can be marked with genitive, as in 2a, or with combinations of both, as in 2b), and second with respect to marking the possessive relation. In (some variants of) Bavarian, we find a possessive construction (cf. 2c), where D° is occupied with an indefinite article instead of a possessive pronoun (as in 1, 2a, b), whereas the possessive relation is marked with a possessive adjective.

- (2) a des Teufels sein Gepäck (Goethe, Götz von Berlichingen)
the devil-GEN his luggage
b s fader sim blâts
the-GEN father-DAT his place
c am Schloßbauern a seinige Tochta
the S.-DAT a his daughter

The second part of my presentation will consist of the investigation of double marking. At first glance, it seems that the possessor is referred to twice (as is commonly assumed, cf. Zifonun 2003). Yet my explanation will reveal that the double marking exists only on the morphological level, whilst there is no semantic redundancy (or more precisely, no redundancy with respect to referentiality). The possessive pronoun does not refer to the possessor, but only marks the possessive relation. Evidence comes from the fact that DP-internal possessors are restricted to the third person, as the data contrast in (3) reveals.

- (3) a eam sei Haus
him his house
b *mirmei Haus
me my house
c *dir dei Haus
you yourhouse

Third person (possessive) pronouns are anaphors which do not refer on their own force, but need to be bound by an antecedent to receive a referential interpretation. And it is the DP-internal possessor, an R-expression, which binds the anaphor. First and second person pronouns, in contrast, are referential, so they do not permit an additional DP-internal possessor. This explains the restriction of DP-internal possessors to third person possessive pronouns.

Additionally, this explanation can contribute to our understanding of the structural and functional architecture of human language, since it shows, if correct, that there is much less redundancy on these levels than commonly assumed. In this respect, possessive doubling is

comparable to negative concord, for which one can also propose a sort of analysis that needs no semantically superfluous elements (cf. Weiß 2002 for such an analysis).

REFERENCES

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