**Pseudo Noun Incorporation in Korean Verbal Possessive Constructions**

**Background:** According to one view (Szabolcsi 1994, Tsujioka 2002), which I call ‘the possessor raising analysis’, the Verbal Possessive Constructions (VPC) in (1) have the derivations in (2): the existential verb iss- ‘exist’ in (2) takes a possessive DP complement. The alienable possessor Mary in (2a) is base-generated in spec/PossP and θ-marked by Poss. The inalienable possessor chayksang ‘desk’ in (2b) is base-generated as the complement of the possessee noun and is θ-marked by N. The possessors raise to spec/TP via spec/DP to check off the EPP feature of T.

**Puzzle:** The sentences in (3) are complex VPC where the possessor nominal contains another possessive DP. (4a) is a sentence where the embedded inalienable possessor Mary in (3a) is assigned nominative case. Assuming that there are multiple specifiers available on T (a la Ura 2000), we can infer that the embedded possessor Mary is undergoing further raising to check off another EPP feature on T. However, the same raising cannot apply to the alienable possessor Mary in (4b). The grammatical contrast in (4) is unexpected under the possessor raising analysis.

**Proposal:** I propose that inalienable VPC differ from alienable VPC in terms of their structures and derivations. Specifically, i) (in line with Tsujioka) an inalienable possessor is the internal argument of a possessee, while an alienable possessor behaves like an external argument of the possessee, and ii) θ-role assigning nouns (e.g. inalienable possesshe nouns) project an NP, while non-thematic nouns (e.g. alienable possessse nouns) require a DP layer, and iii) inalienable VPC have an intransitive VP structure, while alienable VPC have a transitive vP-shell structure. (5) illustrates my proposal: in (5a), the existential verb θ-marks and inherently case-marks its NP complement. In order to discharge a θ-role to its argument (the possessor in spec/VP), the NP must form a complex predicate with the existential verb under Pseudo Noun Incorporation (PNI), according to which any [NP+V] sequence behaves as a single syntactic unit (Massam 2001). After being θ-marked by the complex predicate, the possessor chayksang ‘desk’ moves to spec/TP for case/EPP reasons. In contrast, in (5b), the possessor DP and the possessee DP are base-generated in spec/vP and in the complement position of VP, respectively. The nominative case features of the possessor and possessee DP are checked off by T a la Ura (2000).

Regarding the contrast in (4), I propose that the property-denoting possesssee noun maylyek ‘attractiveness’ in (4) is also a θ-role assigner projecting an NP, based on its syntactic similarity with verbal nouns in light verb constructions. (6) illustrates the derivation of (4a): in (6a), maylyek and issa form a complex predicate under PNI which θ-marks and inherently case-marks the embedded possessse NP nwun ‘eyes’. In the next step (6b), the sequence [maylyek-i issa] is reanalyzed as V, creating another syntactic environment for PNI: the embedded possesssee NP nwun forms another complex predicate with the reanalyzed V. The embedded possessor Mary in spec/Vp is θ-marked by the new complex predicate [nwun-i maylyek-i iss-ta] and moves to spec/TP for case/EPP reasons as in (6c). In contrast, the embedded alienable possesssee sensayan ‘teacher’ in (4b) appears inside a DP. The DP, as shown in (7a), is θ-marked by the complex predicate [maylyek-i issa]. In the next step in (7b), however, further complex predicate formation is blocked since the D head intervenes between the NP and the existing complex predicate, making PNI impossible. Without a new complex predicate, the embedded alienable possessor Mary fails to be θ-marked, violating the θ-Criterion. Thus, (7b) is ruled out.

**Further Evidence:** Under my proposal, complex predicate formation feeds triple nominative constructions. Thus, it is expected that the construction is never possible in alienable VPC. This expectation is borne out: in (8b) the embedded possesssee NP emeni ‘mother’ cannot form a complex predicate with the VP since only the [NP+V] sequence is subject to PNI. Therefore, the embedded possessor John fails to be θ-marked and the sentence is ruled out.
1) a. Mary-ka cha-ka iss-ta.
   M-nom car-nom exist-decl(arative).
   ‘Mary has a car’

   b. Chayksang-i selap-i iss-ta.
   desk-nom drawer-nom exist-decl.
   ‘The desk has a drawer’

2) a. [TP Mary]-ka [VP [DP t_i [PossP t_i [NP cha]]]-ka iss-ta]]
   (=1a)

   b. [TP Mary]-ka [VP [DP t_i [NP selap]]]-i iss-ta]
   (=1b)

3) a. [DP Mary-uy nwun]-i maylyek-i iss-ta.
   M-gen eyes-nom attractiveness-nom exist-decl.
   ‘(lit.) Mary’s eyes have attractiveness/Mary’s eyes are attractive’

   b. [DP Mary-uy sensayngnim]-i maylyek-i iss-ta.
   M-gen teacher-nom attractiveness-nom exist-decl.
   ‘(lit.) Mary’s teacher has attractiveness/Mary’s teacher is attractive’

4) a. [TP Mary-ka [TP [DP t_k nwun]-i [VP [DP t_j maylyek]-i iss-ta]]]
   M-nom eyes-nom attractiveness-nom exist-decl

   b. *[TP Mary-ka [TP [DP t_k sensayngnim]-i [VP [DP t_j maylyek]-i iss-ta.]]]
   M-nom teacher-nom attractiveness-nom exist-decl.

5) a. [TP chayksang]-ka [VP t_i [V_i [NP selap]-i iss-ta]]
   Pseudo Noun Incorporation
   (inalienable VPC=1b)

   b. [TP [DP Mary]-ka [VP t_i [VP [DP cha]-ka iss-ta]]]
   (alienable VPC=1a)

6) a. VP (step 1)

   b. VP (step 2)

   c. TP (step 3)

7) a. VP (step 1)

   b. *VP (step 2)

8) a. [TP [DP John-uy [NP emeni]]]-ka [VP t_i [VP [DP cha]-ka iss-ta]]
   J-gen mother-nom car-nom exist-decl.
   ‘John’s mother has a car’

   b. *[TP [vP John-i [NP emeni]]]-ka [vP [DP cha]-ka iss-ta]].
   ‘(same reading)’