

## EVALUATIVE PRENOMINAL POSSESSIVES IN SPANISH

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**ABSTRACT.** In this paper, the properties of Spanish evaluative prenominal possessives (i.e. the affective possessive preceding a proper name, the so-called “emphatic possessive”, and the possessive in the Old and American Spanish doubled possessive construction) are thoroughly described, and compared with those of canonical prenominal possessives. It is mainly proposed that evaluative possessives, in contrast to canonical prenominal possessives, are not base-generated as nominal modifiers and then raise to D<sup>0</sup>, but are directly merged (mostly) within the DP domain, thus capturing the fact that affective, emphatic and doubling possessives just evaluate the relation between the possessum and the possessor, and are not interpreted as complements of the noun. In order to account for their different distribution, it is further argued that the three types of Spanish evaluative prenominal possessives are (basically) inserted in different structural positions in an split-DP.

**Keywords.** prenominal possessive; canonical possessive; affective possessive; emphatic possessive; doubled possessive construction; Spanish.

**RESUMEN.** En este trabajo se describen con detalle las propiedades de los posesivos prenominales evaluativos del español (el posesivo afectivo con nombres propios, el llamado “posesivo enfático” y el posesivo que introduce la construcción de posesivo doblado del español antiguo y del español de América), en comparación con las de los posesivos prenominales canónicos. Se propone fundamentalmente que los posesivos evaluativos, a diferencia de los posesivos prenominales canónicos, no se generan primero como modificadores nominales y ascienden después a D<sup>0</sup>, sino que se ensamblan directamente (por lo general) en el SD, quedando así recogido configuracionalmente el hecho de que estas unidades léxicas evalúan la relación entre el poseedor y lo poseído, pero no se interpretan como complementos del sustantivo. Con el fin de dar cuenta de su distinta distribución, se defiende además la idea de que los tres tipos de posesivos prenominales evaluativos del español se insertan (básicamente) en distintas posiciones dentro de un SD escindido.

**Palabras clave.** posesivo prenominal; posesivo canónico; posesivo afectivo; posesivo enfático; construcción de posesivo doblado; español.

### 1. Introduction

Prenominal possessives in Spanish are canonically interpreted as complements of the noun,<sup>1</sup> on a par with postnominal possessive phrases introduced by preposition *de* ‘of’. In a given context, the third person possessive *su* ‘his/her/their’ in (1a), for instance, may have the same interpretation as the possessive *de*-PPs in (1b):

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- (1) a. su casa  
*his/her/their house*  
 b. la casa de Juan/María/mis padres  
*the house of John/Mary/my parents*  
 ‘John’s/Mary’s/my parents’ house’

There are, however, a number of constructions in Spanish including a “non-canonical” prenominal possessive, which, as opposed to canonical possessives, does not semantically function as a complement of the noun, but just indicates that there is a relation between the noun it combines with and the individual it refers to, and evaluates that relation.

As illustrated in the examples in (2), three different types of evaluative prenominal possessives can be found in Spanish: the affective possessive preceding a proper name (2a), the so-called “emphatic possessive” (2b), and the prenominal possessive in the doubled possessive construction, which co-occurs with either a prepositional possessive phrase with the same reference (2c), or a restrictive relative clause containing a morphological unit or a lexical item that also identifies the possessor (2d).

- (2) a. [Mi Juan] me quiere mucho.  
*my John ME loves a lot*  
 ‘My John loves me a lot’  
 b. Todos los días me tomo [mi cafetito].  
*all the days ME drink-1SG my coffee-DIM*  
 ‘I have my little cup of coffee every day’  
 c. Yo trabajaba aquí con [su mamá de él].  
*I worked-1SG here with his mum of he*  
 ‘I worked here with his mum’

[Mexican Spanish; Huerta Flores 2009: 734]

- d. [Su gol que metió Hugo Sánchez] fue poético.  
*his goal that scored-3SG Hugo Sánchez was poetical*  
 ‘The goal Hugo Sánchez scored was poetical’

[Mexican Spanish; Company 1995: 306]

Both affective possessives with proper names and emphatic possessives are a feature of colloquial Spanish across-the-board, whereas the doubled possessive construction, which originated in Old Spanish, only obtains in certain varieties of American Spanish nowadays.

In this work, I will describe the properties of Spanish non-canonical evaluative prenominal possessives, in comparison to those of canonical possessives, and provide a formal analysis that accounts for them. As represented in the simplified structures in (3), I will propose that evaluative prenominal possessives, unlike canonical possessives, are not first merged in the positions where nominal modifiers are generated, and then raise to D<sup>0</sup> (3a), but are directly inserted (in most cases) in the DP domain instead (3b), thus structurally expressing the fact that they are not interpreted as complements of the noun:

- (3) a. [DP [D POSS<sub>i</sub>] [NP N t<sub>i</sub>]] (canonical possessives)  
 b. [DP POSS [NP N]] (evaluative possessives)

In order to capture their (partially) different syntactic distribution, I will further elaborate the analysis in (3b), and argue, under the split-DP hypothesis (see, e.g., Zamparelli 2000), that affective, emphatic, and doubling possessives (basically) occupy different positions in an articulated system of determiner projections.

The content of the paper is organized as follows. Section 2 outlines the main properties of canonical prenominal possessives in Spanish, and reviews how DPs with a prenominal possessive have been analyzed within the generative framework. In Section 3, I will describe the properties of the three types of Spanish non-canonical possessives, and compare them with those of canonical possessives. In Section 4, I will present a structural analysis of affective, emphatic and doubling possessives that captures their shared and specific distributional properties. Section 5 contains the conclusions of this research.

## 2. Spanish prenominal possessives

Prenominal possessives in current Spanish canonically function like determiners, as shown by the fact that they can license a nominal expression in an argumental position, thus allowing, for instance, for a singular count noun to occur as a preverbal subject:

- (4) a. \*Foto es muy bonita.  
*picture is very nice*  
 b. La/Una foto es muy bonita.  
*the/a picture is very nice*  
 c. Su foto es muy bonita.  
*his/her/their picture is very nice*

As is well-known, Spanish prenominal possessives have, in particular, the semantic and syntactic properties of definite determiners (see, e.g. RAE & ASALE 2009: §18.3b,c). On the semantic side, just like DPs headed by a definite determiner, a nominal expression containing a prenominal possessive identifies an individual that is accessible to the speaker in the context of use. As for their syntactic distribution, prenominal possessives are ruled out in a presentational context (5a), they can follow a universal quantifier (5b), and they can also introduce the DP in the PP-complement in a partitive construction (5c), amongst other combinatorial properties shared with the definite article and demonstratives (6):

- (5) a. \*Hay su foto encima de la mesa.  
*there.is his/her/their picture on of the table*  
 b. Todas sus fotos son muy bonitas.  
*all his/her/their pictures are very nice*  
 c. Algunas de sus fotos son muy bonitas.  
*some of his/her/their pictures are very nice*  
 (6) a. \*Hay la/esa foto encima de la mesa.  
*there.is the/tha picture on of the table*  
 b. Todas las/esas fotos son muy bonitas.  
*all the/those pictures are very nice*  
 c. Algunas de las/esas fotos son muy bonitas.  
*some of the/those pictures are very nice*

Prenominal possessives crucially differ from (definite) determiners, however, in that they are interpreted as complements of the noun. The possessive *su* ‘his/her/theirs’ in (7a), for example, can play the same semantic roles (possessor, agent or theme) as the postnominal possessive *de*-PPs in (7b):

- (7) a. *su*                      *foto*  
           *his/her/their*    *picture*  
       b. *la*    *foto*    *de*    *Juan/María/mis* *padres*  
           *the*    *picture*    *of*    *John/Mary/my* *parents*  
           ‘John’s/Mary’s/my parents’ picture’

The mixed status of Spanish prenominal possessives has been standardly accounted for within the framework of Generative Grammar by arguing that their prenominal and “thematic” positions are transformationally related. A well-known analysis in the generative literature of DPs introduced by a prenominal possessive in Spanish is represented in (8b):

- (8) a. *su*                      *casa*  
           *his/her/their*    *house*  
       b. [DP [D' [D *su*<sub>i</sub>] ] [FP *t*<sub>i</sub> [F' [F *casa*<sub>j</sub>] ] [XP *t*<sub>i</sub> [X' [X *t*<sub>j</sub>] ] [NP [N *t*<sub>j</sub>] ]]]]]]]]

Under the analysis in (8b), first proposed by Picallo (1994), and then adopted in Cardinaletti (1998), Bernstein (2005), and Sáez (2011), among other authors, Spanish prenominal possessives are taken to be clitics that are first merged in the structural positions possessive *de*-PPs are generated ([Spec, XP] for illustration), and then move to D<sup>0</sup>.<sup>2</sup> The core observation that Spanish prenominal possessives surface as determiner-like items, but are interpreted as complements of the noun, is thus structurally expressed.

In the analysis under consideration, it is further claimed that possessive raising in Spanish takes place in two successive steps. First, the (defective) maximal projection containing the clitic possessive moves to the specifier position of a functional phrase (FP) in the extended projection of the noun.<sup>3</sup> In this position, according to Picallo (1994) and Bernstein (2005), Spanish prenominal possessives are endowed with their number and gender features through a Spec-head relationship with the derived noun, which originates as the head of NP and raises to F<sup>0</sup> (Cinque 1994).<sup>4</sup> In this way, the fact that, as illustrated in (9), all prenominal possessives in Spanish agree in number with the possessed noun, and first and second plural possessives also show gender agreement, is syntactically explained.

- (9) a. *mi/tu/su-s*                                      *amig-o/a-s*  
           *my/your/his/her/their-PL*    *friend-MASC/FEM-PL*

<sup>2</sup> On the base position of the different types of possessive *de*-PPs, see, e.g., Ticio (2005) and Alexiadou et al. (2007). Bruccart (1994) presents an analysis of Spanish prenominal possessives along the lines of the one in (8b), but holds that these items are XPs that land in [Spec, DP].

<sup>3</sup> FP in (8b) corresponds to NumP in Picallo (1994), to AGRS<sub>NP</sub> in Cardinaletti (1998), and to AgrP in Bernstein (2005). Picallo (1994) and Cardinaletti (1998) argue that [Espec, FP] in (8b) is also the landing site of prenominal possessives in languages like Catalan or Italian, in which the possessive is consistently preceded by a determiner. This analysis would apply to the Old and American Spanish [Det+Poss+N] pattern as well (on this construction, see, e.g., RAE & ASALE 2009: §18.21-n).

<sup>4</sup> In the analysis in Picallo (1994), the noun first raises to the head of a Gender Phrase to get its gender feature, and then moves to F<sup>0</sup> (=Num<sup>0</sup>).

- b. *nuestr/vuestr-o/a-s*      *amig-o/a-s*  
*our/your-MASC/FEM-PL*    *friend-MASC/FEM-PL*

In the second step in the derivation in (8b), the clitic possessive heading the maximal projection in [Spec, FP] raises to D<sup>0</sup>.<sup>5</sup> As pointed out in (some of) the papers I am reviewing, the idea that prenominal possessives in current Spanish are clitics is consistent with the fact that they are unstressed, (often) morphologically defective forms (9), that cannot be coordinated (10a). Moreover, the claim that these items occupy the D position straightforwardly accounts for the fact that they cannot co-occur with the definite article, which is commonly assumed to be merged under D<sup>0</sup> (10b).<sup>6</sup>

- (10) a. \**mi y tu casa*  
*my and your house*  
 b. \**la mi casa*  
*the my house*

Summing up so far, canonical prenominal possessives have two main properties in current Spanish: on the one hand, like (definite) determiners, they can license a nominal expression in an argumental position, and play a major role in the identification of the referent of the DP they introduce; on the other hand, on a par with possessive *de*-PPs, they are interpreted as complements of the noun, thus restricting the noun's extension.

Alongside these two core features, Spanish prenominal possessives have two other properties that are related to their being both determiner-like items and nominal modifiers: they cannot be omitted in those structural positions in which determiners must be present (11a), and, if replaced by the definite article, the descriptive content of the DP is significantly altered (11b):

- (11) a. (\**La/\*Mi*) *foto es muy bonita.*  
*the/my picture is very nice*  
 b. *La/Mi foto es muy bonita.*  
*the/my picture is very nice*

To end up, another relevant property of Spanish prenominal possessives is that, just like postnominal possessive *de*-PPs (12a), they can be contrastively focalized, thus choosing an alternative in a set of alternatives (12b):

<sup>5</sup> Picallo (1994: 293) states that this second movement “consists of incorporation (or adjunction) of the possessive head to D<sup>0</sup>”. In Cardinaletti (1998: 23)’s view, “the head of the projection [in spec FP] adjoins to D<sup>0</sup>”. As for the motivation for possessive raising to D<sup>0</sup>, Picallo (1994: 295-296) suggests that this movement “is possibly triggered by the requirement that nominal definite descriptions must have the D<sup>0</sup> position filled at some level of representation”, whereas Cardinaletti (1998) and Bernstein (2005) seemingly hold that possessive raising to D<sup>0</sup> is due to its clitic nature. Extending the proposal in Ihsane (2000) for French determiner possessives to the Spanish case, it could also be argued that the prenominal possessive in (8b), which, unlike postnominal possessives, would be endowed with a [+definite] feature, moves to D<sup>0</sup> in order to check this feature.

<sup>6</sup> As is well-known, this combination was possible in Old Spanish and is still attested in some dialectal variants (as Asturian Spanish). For an analysis of this construction see fn. 3.

- (12) a. He visto la foto de JUAN, no la de MARÍA.  
*have-1SG seen the picture of John, not the of Mary*  
 ‘I have seen JOHN’s picture, not MARY’s picture’  
 b. He visto SU foto, no TU foto.  
*have-1SG seen her picture, not your picture*  
 ‘I have seen HER picture, not YOUR picture’

It will next be shown that the properties of Spanish evaluative prenominal possessives are very different from those of canonical prenominal possessives.

### 3. Evaluative prenominal possessives

As mentioned in the introduction, three types of non-canonical evaluative prenominal possessives can be found in Spanish: the affective possessive with proper names, the emphatic possessive and the prenominal possessive in the Old and American Spanish doubled possessive construction. In this section, I will describe the properties of evaluative prenominal possessives in comparison to those of canonical possessives.

#### 3.1. Affective possessives

The prenominal possessive in the examples in (13), taken from RAE & ASALE (2009: 841, 1355), “denotes that there is an affective bond between the person designated by the possessive and the one the proper name refers to” (RAE & ASALE 2009: 1355).<sup>7</sup>

- (13) a. Si te acercas demasiado a mi Sofía, te haré pedazos.  
*if you approach-2SG too much to my Sofía, you will.make-1SG pieces*  
 ‘If you get too close to my Sofía, I will smash you’  
 b. ¡Cobarde será tu Inés!  
*coward will.be your Inés*  
 ‘Coward, your Inés might be!’  
 c. Natalia lo tenía todo preparado cuando su Carlitos despertó.  
*Natalia it had-3SG all ready when her Carlos-DIM woke.up-3SG*  
 ‘Natalia had got it all ready when her Carlitos woke up’

A possessive preceding a proper name can, of course, also identify a particular individual within a group of people with the same name, as in the sentence in (14), uttered by a teacher in a context in which there are two students called Ana García in two different class-rooms, but, in this case, the prenominal possessive is a canonical possessive that combines with a class-denoting noun:

- (14) Mi Ana García aprobó el examen.  
*my Ana García passed the exam*

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<sup>7</sup> On Spanish affective prenominal possessives with proper names, see Fernández Leborans (1999: 123-124) and RAE & ASALE (2009: §12.7q, §18.3v). In interjections and vocatives, affective possessives in Spanish can also follow a proper name (*¡Dios mío!* ‘lit. God mine!’, *Pepe mío, abrázame* ‘lit. Johnny mine, take me in your arms), and can both precede and follow a common noun (*¡Madre mía!* ‘lit. Mother mine!’, *¡Mi madre!* ‘lit. My mother!’) (RAE & ASALE 2009: §18.3o; Picallo and Rigau 1999: 998). As a reviewer points out, there seems to be dialectal variation in this case, as the prenominal position is more frequently attested in American and Meridional European Spanish. I leave the analysis of these constructions for further research.

There is clear evidence that the affective possessive in (13) is not a canonical prenominal possessive. First, in contrast to a canonical possessive like the one in (14), the affective possessive in (13) does not convey a “possession” meaning, but is used by the speaker to evaluate the relation between two individuals, indicating, as said above, that there is an affective bond between them. Second, affective possessives do not contribute to the identification of the referent of the DP they introduce at all: in the examples in (13), the proper name unequivocally identifies its referent in the context of use. Third, they are not interpreted as nominal modifiers: in (13a), for instance, the DP *mi Sofía* ‘my Sofía’ cannot be rephrased as *la Sofía mía* ‘the Sofía of mine’. They are thus non-discriminating items that do not restrict the noun’s extension. Fourth, affective possessives cannot be contrastively focalized: in (15), for example, the focused possessive must be interpreted as a canonical possessive choosing a particular individual from a group of people with the same name (see above), and not as an affective possessive.

- (15) MI Ana García aprobó el examen. La tuya no.  
*my Ana García passed the exam the yours not*  
 ‘My Ana García passed the exam. Yours did not’

Finally, again in contrast to canonical possessives, affective possessives can always be omitted:

- (16) a. Si te acercas demasiado a Sofía, te haré pedazos.  
*if you approach-2SG too much to Sofía, you will.make-1SG pieces*  
 ‘If you get too close to Sofía, I will smash you’  
 b. ¡Cobarde será Inés!  
*coward will.be Inés*  
 ‘Coward, Inés might be!’  
 c. Natalia lo tenía todo preparado cuando Carlitos despertó.  
*Natalia it had-3SG all ready when Carlos-DIM woke.up-3SG*  
 ‘Natalia had got it all ready when Carlitos woke up’

### 3.2. Emphatic possessives

The so-called “emphatic” possessive is mainly used in the description of habitual situations that, in the speaker’s view, characterize an individual (17), or as an indication that the referent of the DP it introduces is a typical part of its antecedent (18) (see RAE & ASALE 2009: §18.6b-d):<sup>8</sup>

- (17) a. Todos los días me tomo mi cafetito.  
*all the days ME drink-1SG my coffee-DIM*  
 b. Se levantaba temprano, se preparaba su desayuno,  
*SE woke.up-3SG early SE made-3SG his breakfast*  
*salía a dar su paseo y se compraba su periódico.*  
*went.out-3SG to give his walk and SE bought-3SG his newspaper*  
 [RAE & ASALE 2009: 1367]

<sup>8</sup> A reviewer is critical with the use of the term “emphatic” as applied to the possessive in these constructions, which he/she takes to be misleading, since the interpretation of the possessive in (17)-(18) could be characterized as prototypical and the one in (19) is basically quantificational. I agree with the reviewer’s observation, but, in the absence of a better option, I will follow RAE & ASALE (2009: §18.6b-d) in using this term to identify all the evaluative possessives in (17)-(19).

- (18) a. El apartamento tiene su cocina y su baño.  
*the flat has its kitchen and its bathroom*  
 b. La casita tenía su tejadito.  
*the house-DIM had its roof-DIM*

[RAE & ASALE 2009: 1367]

As shown in the examples in (19), the emphatic possessive is also often used to express vague quantification:<sup>9</sup>

- (19) a. El coche ya tiene sus años.  
*the car already has its years*  
 b. Yo también tengo mis problemas.  
*I also have my problems*

[RAE & ASALE 2009: 1367]

The properties of emphatic possessives are once again very different from those of canonical prenominal possessives. First, like affective possessives, emphatic possessives do not denote a relation of possession or belonging, but have an evaluative import instead: in (17b), for instance, it cannot be understood that the individual at issue bought a newspaper that he already owned, and, in the examples in (18) and (19), the possession relation is already expressed by means of the verb *tener* ‘to have’. Second, the nominal expression with an emphatic possessive does not correspond to a nominal expression with a possessive nominal modifier: *su periódico* ‘his newspaper’ in (17b), for example, cannot be rephrased as *el periódico suyo/de él* ‘lit. the newspaper his/of he’. Third, the emphatic possessive is inherently non-contrastive (nobody can take somebody else’s walk, and a flat cannot have the kitchen or bathroom of another flat). And fourth, it may be either replaced by an article (20a) or omitted (20b,c) without a significant loss in meaning:<sup>10</sup>

- (20) a. Se preparaba el desayuno, salía a dar un paseo  
*SE made-3SG the breakfast went.out-3SG to give a walk*  
 y se compraba el periódico.  
*and SE bought-3SG the newspaper*  
 b. El apartamento tiene cocina y baño.  
*the flat has kitchen and bathroom*  
 c. El coche ya tiene años.  
*the car already has years*

### 3.3. Doubling possessives

Another type of non-canonical evaluative possessive is the prenominal possessive in the Old and American Spanish doubled possessive construction, which, to my knowledge, has never been related to affective and emphatic possessives before. This

<sup>9</sup> As pointed out in RAE & ASALE (2009: 1368), the construction with an emphatic possessive is also a feature of idiomatic verbal phrases with a reflexive possessive (among other uses): e.g., *Los ingleses se tomaron la/su revancha* ‘lit. The English SE took the/their revenge’.

<sup>10</sup> Moreover, as compared with canonical possessives, the emphatic possessive is a reflexive pronoun that must have its antecedent in the same sentence. As a reviewer indicates, another relevant property to differentiate emphatic possessives from canonical prenominal possessives is that the former are not necessarily definite, as shown by the fact that they can appear in contexts with the definiteness effect, as in the examples in (18) and (19).



construction, in which the possessor is expressed twice within a nominal expression, takes two different forms (Huerta Flores 2009): the [Poss+N+*de*+DP] pattern illustrated in (21a), and the [Poss+N+restrictive relative] pattern in (21b).

- (21) a. Su libro de Lydia Cacho, que es una denuncia muy valiente.  
*her book of Lydia Cacho which is an accusation very valiant*  
 ‘Lydia Cacho’s book, which is a very valiant accusation’  
 [Mexican Spanish; Huerta Flores 2009: 731]
- b. Se puso su vestido más bonito que tenía.  
*SE put on-3SG her dress most beautiful that had-3SG*  
 ‘She put on the most beautiful dress she had’  
 [Mexican Spanish; Huerta Flores 2009: 740]

In the pattern in (21a), a third person prenominal possessive combines with a possessive *de*-PP containing a DP with the same reference, whereas in the pattern in (21b), the prenominal possessive co-occurs with a restrictive relative clause including a possession denoting verb and/or a verbal affix, a pronoun or a proper name that also identifies the individual the possessive refers to.<sup>11</sup>

As is well-known, the [Poss+N+*de*+DP] pattern illustrated in (21a) has its source in Old Spanish, where it is often attested (see, e.g., Company 1993, 1994, 2001; Martínez Alcalde 1996; Huerta Flores 2009; RAE & ASALE 2009: §18.4g). It is commonly assumed that this construction was initially formed as a means to desambiguate the referential polysemy of the Spanish third person possessive *su* ‘his/her/their’, which does not specify the gender or number of the possessor (see Company 1993, Huerta Flores 2009, and the references therein). An instance of desambiguating duplication in Old Spanish is shown in (22): in this sentence, *tu fe* ‘your faith’ could in principle be the referent of the possessive *su*, and, in order to avoid ambiguity, possessor doubling takes place.

- (22) Ten esperanza en tu fe, que su propósito de Laureola  
*have-2SG trust in your faith, that her intention of Laureola*  
 se podrá mudar y tu firmeza nunca.  
*SE could-3SG change and your firmness never*  
 ‘Trust in your faith, since Laureola’s intention could change, but your firmness will never do’  
 [Company 2002: 47]

A good number of examples of non-desambiguating duplication is also documented, however, in Medieval and Old Spanish texts, like the one in (23), in which the doubled possessive construction is not motivated by the need to desambiguate the reference of the third person possessive, since there is only one possessor available in the context of utterance:

<sup>11</sup> A reviewer reminds us that there is another type of doubling in Central American and Mexican Spanish in which a prenominal possessive doubles a postnominal one, as in *mi marido mío* ‘lit. my husband mine’. As suggested in RAE & ASALE (2009: §18.3k), the analysis of the prenominal possessive as a definiteness marker (see Section 4.1) could probably apply here as well.

- (23) ¡O, hermano, qué te contaría de sus gracias de aquella  
*oh, brother, what you would.tell-1SG. of her gracefulness of that*  
 muger, de su habla y hermosura de cuerpo!  
*woman, of her voice and beauty of body*  
 ‘¡Oh, brother, what could I tell you of that woman’s gracefulness, of her voice  
 and her beautiful body’

[Company 1993: 79]

As argued in Company (1994, 2001), in cases of non-desambiguating duplication, the Old Spanish doubled possessive construction is both restructured and reinterpreted. On the one hand, the prenominal possessive now plays the role of the definite article. On the other, the construction gets a new semantic value: by choosing to use it in a non-desambiguating context, instead of the much more common [art<sub>def</sub>+N+possessive phrase] pattern, the speaker indicates that, in her view, the possessum has a close relation with the possessor, constituting a relevant part or feature of it.

The Old Spanish construction was lost in Peninsular Spanish in the XVII<sup>th</sup> century, but has been retained (and reinforced) in certain American Spanish dialects, most plausibly due to linguistic contact with indigenous languages with possessive structures, like the ones in (24), in which the possessor is doubly marked by means of both a full lexical DP and a nominal affix that agrees with it in person and number:<sup>12</sup>

- (24) a. Maduna-q ritratu-n (Southern Quechua, Peru)  
*Madona-GEN picture-3Poss*  
 ‘Madona’s picture’

[Sánchez 1996: 148]

- b. jila-ja-na warmi-pa (Aymara, Peru/Bolivia)  
*brother-1Poss-GEN wife-3Poss*  
 ‘my brother’s wife’

[Huayhua Pari 2001: 284]

- c. i-cal cihuatl (Nahuatl, Mexico)  
*3Poss-house woman*  
 ‘the woman’s house’

[Sullivan 1976: 52]

- d. u-tsimin a’-winik-eh (Itzá Maya, Guatemala)  
*3Poss-horse DET-man-TOP*  
 ‘the man’s horse’

[Hofling 1990: 543]

As illustrated in (25), the [Poss+N+*de*+DP] pattern with an evaluative meaning thus currently obtains, in particular, in wide areas of Mexico and Central America, as

<sup>12</sup> This well-founded view on the origin of the doubled possessive construction in American Spanish is known as the “multiple causation hypothesis”. On this hypothesis, see de Granda (1997) and Fernández (2013) for Andean Spanish, Company (1995) for Mexican Spanish, and Klee & Linch (2009) for Spanish in contact with Mayan languages, amongst many other authors.

well as in Andean countries like Peru or Bolivia (RAE & ASALE 2009: §18.4h), where these languages were (or are still) used.<sup>13</sup>

- (25) a. ¿Sabes cuál fue su error de Villoro?  
*know-2SG which was his mistake of Villoro*  
 ‘Do you know which was Villoro’s mistake?’  
 [Mexican Spanish; Company 2004: 118]
- b. Su pareja del niño Bobby luce más hermosa.  
*his couple of.the boy Bobby looks more beautiful*  
 ‘Bobby boy’s couple looks more beautiful’  
 [Peruvian Spanish; Martínez Alcalde 1996: 81]
- c. Fui con su ahijado de mi mamá a los Yungas.  
*went-1SG with his godson of my mom to the Yungas*  
 ‘I went with my mom’s godson to the Yungas’  
 [Bolivian Spanish; Fernández 2013: 83]

As for the [Poss+N+restrictive relative] pattern, this variant of the doubled possessive construction is also documented in Old Spanish (see the examples in (26)), and can be found nowadays just in those dialects of American Spanish where the [Poss+N+*de*+DP] doubled possessive pattern is used, as shown in (27), which supports the idea that there is a strong correlation between the two patterns (see Huerta Flores 2009).

- (26) a. Seremos y yo e su muger e sus hijas que él á.  
*will.be-1PL there I and his wife and his daughters that he has*  
 ‘Me and his wife and the daughters that he has will be there’ [CORDE]
- b. E ella ronpio su porpola que vistie.  
*and she tore-3SG her purple dress that worn-3SG*  
 ‘And she tore the purple dress that she worn’ [CORDE]
- c. Receló que avía de dexar su estudio que avía començado.  
*feared-3SG that had of give up his study that had begun*  
 ‘He feared that he had to give up the study he had begun’ [CORDE]

<sup>13</sup> The properties of the construction in (25) are, however, quite different from those of the one in (24). In the possessor-agreement construction in (24), the possessor triggers person-number agreement on the possessed noun for all singular and plural persons, and the possessive affix is obligatory (see, e.g., Sánchez 1996 on Southern Quechua and Szabolcsi 1994 on Hungarian), whereas the possessive in the construction in (25) is restricted to third person, and its use is optional, alternating with the definite article (see below in the text). Moreover, the American Spanish doubled possessive construction has an evaluative meaning that is lacking in the possessor-agreement construction. In the light of these facts, the analysis of the possessive affix in the possessor-agreement construction as an agreement marker heading a DP-internal AgrP/IP (see Sánchez 1996 for Southern Quechua and Zibri-Hertz 2003 for Hungarian) cannot apply to the possessive in the American Spanish construction in (25). Nevertheless, as claimed in Sánchez (1996), this analysis might well work in the case of doubled possessives in the speech of bilingual speakers of Spanish and Southern Quechua (a different previous analysis of this particular construction, which arguably has the properties of the possessor-agreement construction, is offered in Camacho, Paredes & Sánchez 1995).

- (27) a. Su cámara digital que se compró es muy cara.  
*his camera digital that SE bought-3SG is very expensive*  
 ‘The digital camera that he bought is very expensive’  
 [Mexican Spanish; Huerta Flores 2009: 741]
- b. El hotel solo le va a cobrar el cuarenta por ciento  
*the hotel only him goes to charge the forty per cent*  
 de toda su deuda que tiene con nosotros.  
*of all his debt that has with we*  
 ‘The hotel will only charge him forty per cent of the debt he has with us’  
 [Peruvian Spanish; CREA]
- c. Intentará gobernar el país con su carisma  
*will.try-3SG rule the country with his charisma*  
 que lo caracteriza.  
*that him characterizes*  
 ‘He will try to rule the country with the charisma that characterizes him’  
 [Bolivian Spanish; CREA]

As pointed out by Huerta Flores (2009: 742-43), the possessive in the examples in (26) and (27), just like the prenominal possessive in the [Poss+N+*de*+DP] pattern, is used instead of the definite article “in contexts in which the speaker perceives the relation established between the possessor and the possessum as an intrinsic or inalienable link... Or the possessive is used when the possessum is an important or close entity for the possessor.”

Like affective and emphatic possessives, the prenominal possessive in the Old and American Spanish doubled possessive construction has a number of properties (both in the [Poss+N+*de*+DP] pattern and in the [Poss+N+restrictive relative] construction) that sets it apart from canonical possessives. First, it does not properly express possession (since reference to the possessor is already made in the postnominal *de*-PP or within the relative clause). Second, in comparison with the corresponding standard construction introduced by the definite article, the prenominal possessive in the doubled possessive construction evaluates the relation between the possessor and the possessum, indicating, in particular, that there is, in the speaker’s view, an inherent or close relation between the possessor and the possessum (cf. Company 1993, 1994, 1995, 2001, and Huerta Flores 2009 for Old and Mexican Spanish; Risco 2013 for Peruvian Spanish; and Fernández 2013 for Bolivian Spanish).<sup>14</sup> Third, it is a non-discriminating and non-contrastive item that cannot be rephrased as a postnominal possessive *de*-PP. And fourth, it alternates with the definite article within the speech of a single speaker, as in the following examples with the [Poss+N+*de*+DP] pattern:

- (28) a. Le gusta a la mayoría de los parientes de mis empleadores.  
*him likes to the majority of the relatives of my employers*  
 ‘The majority of my employers’ relatives like him’  
 [Bolivian Spanish; Fernández 2013: 86]

<sup>14</sup> The semantic import of the prenominal possessive in the Spanish doubled possessives construction is thus similar to that of the emphatic possessive in some of its core uses (see the previous subsection).

- b. Estuvo una de sus parientes de Evo Morales.  
*was one of his relatives of Evo Morales*  
 ‘One of Evo Morales’ relatives was there’  
 [Bolivian Spanish; Fernández 2013: 84]
- (29) a. Su país de uno es el país de uno, siempre.  
*his country of one is the country of one, always*  
 ‘A man’s country is always a man’s country’  
 [Peruvian Spanish; Risco 2013: 44]
- b. Ahora, el 18 así es su santo de mi hija... Sí, pero  
*now the 18 so is her birthday of my daughter yes but*  
 las primas de mi yerno son también alegres.  
*the cousins of my son-in-law are also cheerful*  
 ‘Now, my daughter’s birthday is on the 18<sup>th</sup> or so... Yes, but my son-in-law’s cousins are also cheerful’  
 [Peruvian Spanish; Risco 2013]
- (30) a. También es una plataforma desde la cual la hija  
*also is a platform from the which the daughter*  
 de Elba Esther Gordillo se publicita.  
*of Elba Esther Gordillo SE publicizes*  
 ‘It is also a platform from which Elba Esther Gordillo’s daughter publicizes’  
 [Mexican Spanish; Huerta Flores 2009: 736]
- b. Es su abuelito de Edgar el de la foto.  
*is his granddad of Edgar the of the picture*  
 ‘The one in the picture is Edgar’s granddad’  
 [Mexican Spanish; Huerta Flores 2009: 738]

As illustrated in these examples, the American Spanish doubled possessive construction is therefore optionally used, and the speaker chooses it, instead of the possessive construction with the definite article, depending on what she wants to express. In (28a), for instance, the standard [art<sub>def</sub>+N+possessive phrase] (*los parientes de mis empleadores* ‘my employers’ relatives’) just denotes that a “possession” relation holds between the employers and their relatives. However, in (28b), by resorting to the doubled possessive construction (*sus parientes de Evo Morales* ‘lit. his relatives of Evo Morales’), the speaker further estimates that there is a close relation between Evo Morales and his relatives.

#### 4. A formal analysis of evaluative prenominal possessives in Spanish

In the light of the discussion in the previous section on the syntax and semantics of the three types of evaluative prenominal possessives in Spanish, it can be concluded that affective, emphatic and doubling possessives have two main properties in common: they do not convey a “possession” meaning, but evaluate the relation between the entity denoted by the noun they combine with and the individual they refer to, and they are not interpreted as complements of the noun (affective and emphatic possessives do not correspond to possessive *de*-PPs, the prenominal possessive in the [Poss+N+relative clause] pattern cannot be rephrased as a postnominal possessive phrase either, and the [Poss+N+*de*+DP] doubled possessive

construction includes it). Together with these two core properties, affective, emphatic and doubling possessives are also non-discriminating items, and their use is always optional (i.e. the speaker is free to choose whether to use them or not).

The properties of Spanish affective, emphatic and doubling possessives are therefore significantly different from those of canonical prenominal possessives (see Section 2), which strongly suggests that canonical and evaluative prenominal possessives must have a different structural analysis. As represented in (31), I would like to argue, in this respect, that evaluative possessives, unlike canonical prenominal possessives, are not base-generated as complements of the noun (see the standard analysis of Spanish canonical prenominal possessives in (8b), reproduced in (31a)), but are all directly merged (in most cases) in the DP domain instead (31b).<sup>15</sup> This proposal captures the fact that, in contrast to canonical prenominal possessives, evaluative possessives are not interpreted as nominal modifiers (and are thus non-discriminating items that lack a true “possession” meaning).

- (31) a. [DP [D POSS<sub>i</sub>] [FP t<sub>i</sub> [F' [F N<sub>j</sub>] [XP t<sub>i</sub> [X' [X t<sub>j</sub>] [NP [N t<sub>j</sub>] ]]]]]]]  
 b. [DP POSS ... [NP N ]]]

The analysis in (31b) has to be further elaborated, however, taking into consideration the different distribution of the three types of evaluative prenominal possessives in Spanish: as mentioned in Section 3, the affective possessive precedes a proper name (32a); the emphatic possessive combines with a singular or plural bare count noun (32b,c), and it can also replace a definite or an indefinite article (32d); and the prenominal possessive in the doubled possessive construction consistently alternates with the definite article (32e,f).

- (32) a. Mi Juan está muy contento con su nuevo trabajo.  
*My John is very happy with his new job*  
 b. El apartamento tiene su cocina y su baño.  
*the flat has its kitchen and its bathroom*  
 c. El coche ya tiene sus años.  
*the car already has its years*  
 d. Todas las mañanas me compro mi/el periódico  
*all the mornings ME buy-1SG my/the newspaper*  
*y me tomo mi/un cafetito.*  
*and ME have-1SG my/a coffee-DIM*  
 e. ¿Sabes cuál fue su/el error de Villoro?  
*know-2SG which was his/the error of Villoro*  
 f. Su/La cámara digital que se compró es muy cara.  
*his/the camera digital that SE bought-3SG is very expensive*

To account for the paradigm in (32), I will propose that affective, emphatic and doubling possessives are merged (mostly) in different structural positions within the DP domain. I will next work out this idea in detail, starting with the analysis of the

<sup>15</sup> As indicated in Section 2, under the analyses of Spanish canonical prenominal possessives in Picallo (1994) and Bernstein (2005), in the derivation in (31a), the possessive gets its number and gender features in [Spec, FP] under a Spec-head agreement relation with the (displaced) noun in F<sup>0</sup>. This raises the question of how agreement between the evaluative possessive and the noun obtains in the (simplified) structure in (31b). I will address this issue in the last part of this section.

evaluative prenominal possessive in the Old and American Spanish doubled possessive construction.

#### 4.1. Doubling possessives

Following Company (2001), RAE & ASALE (2009: §18.3k), and Eguren (2016, 2017), I take the prenominal possessive in the Spanish doubled possessive construction to be a definiteness marker (both in the [Poss+N+*de*+DP] pattern and in the [Poss+N+restrictive relative] construction), which straightforwardly explains the fact that it always alternates with the definite article. As represented in (33) and (34), like the definite article, non-canonical possessives of this sort will thus be inserted under D<sup>0</sup>,<sup>16</sup> conveying, in contrast to the definite article, an additional evaluative meaning, and indicating, in particular, that there is, in the speaker's view, a close relation between the possessum and the possessor:<sup>17</sup>

- (33) a. el/su error de Villoro  
           *the/his mistake of Villoro*  
           ‘Villoro’s mistake’  
       b. [DP [D’ [D el/su ] [FP [F’ [F error<sub>i</sub> ] [XP de Villoro [X’ [ t<sub>i</sub> ] [NP [N t<sub>i</sub> ]]]]]]]]]]
- (34) a. la/su cámara digital que se compró  
           *the/his camera digital that SE bought-3SG*  
           ‘the digital camera that he bought’  
       b. [DP [D’ [ D la/su ] [NP cámara digital que se compró]]]

In the rest of this section, I will provide a structural analysis of affective and emphatic possessives, but before taking up this task, let me first discuss (and reject) a conceivable alternative analysis to the one proposed in (33b) for the Old and American Spanish [Poss+N+*de*+DP] doubled possessive pattern, which would be founded on the (apparent) paralellism between this nominal construction and Spanish clitic doubling in the sentential domain.

As illustrated below, the [Poss+N+*de*+DP] construction in (35a) and the clitic doubling construction in (35b) both contain a third person clitic and a coreferent DP:

- (35) a. su mamá de él  
           *his mum of he*  
           ‘his mum’

<sup>16</sup> It is commonly assumed in the literature that the definite article is directly merged in the head position of the highest (DP) layer within the “system of determiners” (see below in the text). For various reasons, a number of authors have argued, however, that the definite article is base-generated as the head of a functional projection between DP and NP, and consequently moves to the DP (see Julien 2002, Borer 2005, and Roehrs 2006). Under these analyses, the prenominal possessive in (33a)-(34a), like the definite article, would first head a lower functional projection, and then raise to D<sup>0</sup>.

<sup>17</sup> As a reviewer indicates, the analysis in (34b) explains the compatibility of the possessive with restrictive relative clauses in this case. In his/her words, “according to Brucart (1999: 7.2.5), the incompatibility of prenominal possessives and restrictive relative clauses [<sup>?</sup>*su libro que he leído* ‘his book that I have read’, see Brucart (1994)] is due to the double nature of the possessive, which on the one hand must be part of the antecedent of the relative (as the relative clause has to modify all the restrictive complements of the noun), but on the other hand cannot be part of the antecedent, as a determiner. If the possessive is not a restrictive complement of the noun, the problem is solved”. In Eguren (2017), I adhere to this view, and provide a formal analysis of the incompatibility of prenominal possessives and restrictive relative clauses building on the insights in Brucart (1999).

- b. Lo vi a él  
*him saw.ISG to he*  
 ‘I saw him’

On the basis of these formal similarities between the patterns in (35), it might be tempting to analyze the doubled possessive construction in (35a) in terms of the clitic doubling construction in (35b). An influential analysis of clitic doubling in sentences like the one in (35b) is presented in Uriagereka (1995), who claims that Spanish third person clitics are determiners that underlyingly head a “big” DP containing the doubled phrase in [Spec, DP] (36), and then move to a verbal functional projection leaving the double in its base position:

- (36) [DP (double) [D' [D clitic [NP pro ]]] (Uriagereka 1995: 81)

Extending the analysis in (36) to the doubled possessive construction in (35a), it could be argued that the third person possessive also underlyingly heads a “big” XP that includes the possessive *de*-PP in [Spec, XP], as in (37), and then raises to D<sup>0</sup>, stranding the *de*-PP nominal complement in its “argumental” position:

- (37) [XP *de*-PP [X' [X su ]]]

Note that the analysis in (37) is at odds with the claim in this paper that evaluative possessives in Spanish do not originate as nominal modifiers, but are directly generated (mostly) in the DP domain. There are, however, a number of relevant facts showing that the [Poss+N+*de*+DP] pattern in (35a) and the clitic doubling construction in (35b) are two different constructions that have to be analyzed in a different way. First, in the clitic doubling structure, the presence of the clitic is obligatory when the double is a pronoun (38a), whereas the possessive in the [Poss+N+*de*+DP] pattern is always optionally used, and consistently takes the place of the definite article (38b):

- (38) a. \*Vi a él  
           *saw.ISG to he*  
       b. su/la mamá de él  
           *his/the mum of he*

A second difference between the two constructions in (35) is that the doubled phrase in clitic doubling can be absent without altering the clitic’s denotation. However, when the *de*-PP complement in the doubled possessive construction is omitted, the evaluative import of the possessive is lost:

- (39) a. Lo vi  
           *him saw.ISG*  
       b. su mamá (non-evaluative)  
           *his mum*

Third, the doubled phrase in the clitic doubling structure has a contrastive interpretation (40), whereas the possessive *de*-PP in the [Poss+N+*de*+DP] pattern needs not be interpreted as contrastive focus: the sentence in (41), for example, can



perfectly be uttered in a context in which *de Juan* ‘of John’ is not contrasted with other alternatives in a contextually given set of alternatives.

- (40) a. #Lo vi, a ella no  
           *him saw.ISG to she not*  
       b. Lo vi a él, a ella no  
           *him saw.ISG to he to she not*
- (41) Vimos a su mamá de Juan.  
       *saw-IPL to his mum of John*  
       ‘We saw John’s mum’

Finally, the Spanish doubled possessive construction has an evaluative import, most plausibly due to its being optional, which is lacking in clitic doubling. All the observations above lead me to conclude that the [Poss+N+*de*+DP] pattern in (35a) cannot be analyzed as in (37): under the clitic climbing-like analysis of doubled possessives in (37), it is expected that the possessive, being the head of the “big” XP, should always be present, and it is also predicted that the *de*-PP constituent, which is located in [Spec, XP], could be omitted without changing the basic (evaluative) denotation of the construction, contrary to facts. The analysis of the Spanish doubled possessive construction I am proposing in (33b) can express instead both that the possessive (optionally) replaces the definite article, and that the *de*-PP complement must be present in order to obtain the evaluative meaning inherent to this construction.

#### 4.2. Affective possessives

As shown in Section 3.1, Spanish affective possessives preceding a proper name, like doubling and emphatic possessives, are not interpreted as complements of the noun. Two structural analyses of affective possessives that capture this fact, represented in (42b) and (42c), could, in principle, be envisaged:

- (42) a. [Mi Juan] me quiere mucho.  
           *my John ME loves a lot*  
           ‘My John loves me a lot’  
       b. [DP [D' [D mi<sub>expl</sub>] [NP Juan]]]  
       c. [DP mi [DP [D' [D Juan<sub>i</sub>] [NP [N t<sub>i</sub>]]]]]

In (42b), the possessive would be analyzed as an expletive determiner, on a par with instances of the definite article employed to introduce unmodified proper names in Romance languages like Italian, Catalan or Portuguese. Under this analysis, just like the expletive article with proper names in these languages (see Longobardi 1994), the possessive is inserted under D<sup>0</sup>, and forms an interpretive chain with the proper name, which incorporates to D<sup>0</sup> at LF. In (42c), the affective possessive preceding a proper name is base-generated as a DP-adjunct. In this case, again following Longobardi (1994), the proper name originates in N<sup>0</sup> as a class-denoting noun, and raises to D<sup>0</sup>, where it gets its referential value.

In my view, the analysis of affective possessives as expletive determiners in (42b) has to be discarded given the nature of expletive forms. Expletives are standardly viewed as semantically empty, obligatory formal grammatical elements that are syntactically required for a construction to be well-formed in a particular language. However, the Spanish affective possessive is always optional, and does convey a

meaning (it evaluates the relation between two individuals). As depicted in (42c), I will thus claim that affective possessives with proper names are DP-adjuncts. This analysis captures the fact that affective possessives are non-discriminating items that play no role in the identification of the referent of the DP they introduce, but do have a semantic import, and can always be omitted.

In support of the analysis of affective possessives with proper names as DP-adjuncts in (42c), it can also be argued that an analysis along these lines also applies to the colloquial Spanish construction with a non-canonical evaluative demonstrative and a proper name illustrated in (43):

- (43) ¡Qué tipo, Dios mío, este Ezequiel Mosácula!  
*what fellow, God mine, this Ezequiel Mosácula*  
 [RAE & ASALE 2009: 841]

In (43), the demonstrative is optionally used by the speaker to make a positive or negative judgement on the attributes of an individual based on a previous known event in which the individual at issue has been involved (see Fernández Leborans 1999: 122, and the references therein), and, like the affective possessive, it does not identify a particular individual in contrast to other people with the same name, as it is the case in the example in (44):<sup>18</sup>

- (44) Este Ezequiel es más listo que ese.  
*this Ezequiel is more clever than that*

#### 4.3. *Emphatic possessives*

In contrast to both doubling possessives and affective possessives with proper names, which have been shown to occupy a single position in the DP domain, Spanish emphatic possessives have a much wider distribution: as indicated at the beginning of this section, they either replace the definite or the indefinite article, or combine with bare singular and plural count nouns. To capture these facts, I will put forward the idea that emphatic possessives, unlike the prenominal possessive in the doubled possessive construction (see above), are underspecified with respect to the content of its D-feature, and can thus be directly generated (in most cases) in different layers within an articulated system of determiner projections, like the one proposed in Zamparelli (2000).

As represented in (45), Zamparelli (2000) divides the system of determiners into two layers: a Strong Determiner Phrase (SDP) denoting individuals, in which strong determiners (i.e., universal quantifiers, demonstratives, and the definite article) are located, and a Predicative Determiner Phrase (PDP) expressing a property, which contains weak determiners (like cardinals, vague quantifiers or the indefinite article):<sup>19</sup>

- (45) [SDP [PDP ... [NP ]]]

<sup>18</sup> On evaluative demonstratives with proper names in Spanish, see Fernández Leborans (1999: 122-123) and RAE & ASALE (2009: §12.7q, §17.4q).

<sup>19</sup> For similar proposals on the complex structure of the DP, see Vangsnes (2001), Borer (2005), and Heycock & Zamparelli (2005). In Zamparelli (2000), weak determiners with a specific reading raise to SDP.

Under Zamparelli's split-DP hypothesis, the argumental DPs in (46) would be analyzed as in the simplified representations in (47):<sup>20</sup>

(46) I have read {the book/a book/books}.

- (47) a. [SDP [SD the] [ ... [NP book ]]]  
 b. [SDP SD<sup>0</sup> [PDP [PD a] [ ... [NP book ]]]]  
 c. [SDP SD<sup>0</sup> [PDP PD<sup>0</sup> [ ... [NP books ]]]]

Adopting Zamparelli's proposal on the complex structure of DPs, it can be argued that Spanish emphatic possessives are inserted under the head position of the two DP layers in the structure in (45): they can be merged under the head of the highest SDP projection, replacing the definite article, as in (48), and they can also head the lower PDP projection, alternating with the indefinite article or a null quantifier, as in (49) and (50):<sup>21</sup>

- (48) a. Todas las mañanas me compro el/mi periódico.  
*all the mornings ME buy-1SG the/my newspaper*  
 b. [SDP [SD el/mi] [ ... [NP periódico ]]]  
 (49) a. Después de comer me tomo un/mi cafetito.  
*after of lunch ME have-1SG a/my coffee.DIM*  
 b. [SDP [SD SD<sup>0</sup>] [PDP [PD un/mi] [ ... [NP cafetito ]]]]  
 (50) a. El coche ya tiene (sus) años.  
*the car already has its years*  
 b. [SDP SD<sup>0</sup> [PDP [PD Ø/SUS] [ ... [NP años ]]]]

Not all emphatic possessives in Spanish are, however, inserted within the DP domain. As we know (see Section 3.2), the emphatic possessive also (optionally) combines with a bare singular count noun (BN) in object position, as in the examples in (18), repeated in (51):

- (51) a. El apartamento tiene (su) cocina y (su) baño.  
*the flat has its kitchen and its bathroom*  
 b. La casita tenía (su) tejadito.  
*the house-DIM had its roof-DIM*

It has been commonly proposed in the literature that Spanish BNs lack a DP projection (see Espinal 2010 and the references therein). As pointed out in Espinal (2010), two main arguments support this idea: "they cannot occur neither in subject position nor as indirect objects [...], and cannot be assumed to move to a strong D<sup>0</sup> position [...] because BNs are not associated with a marker of determined atomic reference" (Espinal 2010: 987). Given these facts, Espinal (2010) claims that bare singular count nouns in object position in Spanish (and Catalan) are NPs, which is in

<sup>20</sup> Zamparelli (2000), building on the insights in Longobardi (1994), claims that only SDPs can appear in argumental position, which implies that the SDP layer must be projected in (47b). This author also holds that the intermediate PDP layer, headed by an empty quantifier, is projected in the case of argumental bare plurals, as in (47c).

<sup>21</sup> The Spanish emphatic possessive can also precede a vague quantifier or a cardinal: e.g., *El coche ya tiene (sus) muchos/diez años* 'lit. 'the car already has (its) many/ten years'. In this case, the possessive may occupy the head position of SDP, which, in Zamparelli's view, is always projected in argumental nominals (see the previous footnote): [SDP [SD Ø/SUS] [PDP muchos/diez [ ... [NP años ]]]].

accordance with the shared view that BNs are not canonical arguments, but form a complex predicate with the verb (see the references in Espinal 2010).<sup>22</sup> Under Espinal’s syntactic analysis of BNs as NPs, the Spanish emphatic possessive preceding a bare singular count noun in examples like the ones in (51) would be merged as an NP-adjunct:

- (52) a.  $su_{emph}$     *cocina*  
           *its*        *kitchen*  
       b.  $[_{NP} su [_{NP} cocina]]$

#### 4.4. Possessive-noun agreement

To conclude my analysis of evaluative pronominal possessives in Spanish, I will finally address a topic I have not yet discussed. As illustrated in (9), repeated in (53), all pronominal possessives in Spanish agree in number with the possessed noun, and first and second plural possessives show gender agreement as well:

- (53) a.  $mi/tu/su-s$                              $amig-o/a-s$   
           *my/your/his/her/their/-PL* *friend-MASC/FEM-PL*  
       b.  $nuestr/vuestr-o/a-s$              $amig-o/a-s$   
           *our/your-MASC/FEM-PL*    *friend-MASC/FEM-PL*

The pattern in (53) also obtains with evaluative pronominal possessives, as expected. The question I will next try to give an answer to is how number and gender agreement between evaluative possessives and the noun they combine with can be accounted for, an issue that, as will become apparent below, ultimately has to do with the nature of the phenomenon known as “nominal concord” holding between a noun and its “modifiers” (e.g., adjectives and determiners).

As pointed out in Section 2, under the standard analysis of Spanish canonical pronominal possessives in (8b), reproduced in (54a), the possessive, which has moved to  $[_{Spec}, FP]$  in its way to  $D^0$ , gets its number and gender features in this position by means of a Spec-head relationship with the noun, which originates as the head of NP and raises to  $F^0$  (see Picallo 1994 and Bernstein 2005). Adopting this syntactic analysis of possessive-noun agreement, it could be argued that evaluative pronominal possessives are base-generated in  $[_{Spec}, FP]$  in (54b), where they also establish an agreement relation with the noun, and then raise to the DP-domain. Given that  $[_{Spec}, FP]$  in the derivations in (54) is a “non-argumental” position, the analysis in (54b) would certainly comply with the view in this paper that evaluative possessives are not merged as complements of the noun.

- (54) a.  $[_{DP} [_{D} POSS_i] [_{FP} t_i [_{F'} [_{F} N_j] [_{XP} t_i [_{X'} [X t_j] ] [_{NP} [N t_j] ]]]]]]]]$   
       b.  $[_{DP} POSS_i [_{FP} t_i [_{F'} [_{F} N_j] ] [ \dots [_{NP} [N t_j] ]]]]]]$

<sup>22</sup> Espinal (2010) further claims that Spanish (and Catalan) BNs in object position are unmarked for number, since they can have either a singularity or a plurality interpretation in appropriate contexts:

(i) Tengo    *pisos*.  
       *have-1SG apartment*  
       ‘I am an apartment owner’ (of one or more apartments)

In Espinal’s view, bare singular count nouns in object position do not therefore project a Number Phrase either, and are just NPs, as indicated in the text.

The conceivable account of agreement between evaluative possessives and nouns in (54b) seems to me, however, to be just an ad hoc proposal,<sup>23</sup> and, more importantly, it is framed within an approach to nominal concord based on Spec-head relationships, which does not work. As illustrated in (55), the noun agrees in number and gender with all sorts of determiners and adjectives in Spanish, and it is clear that this cannot be the outcome of Spec-head agreement between a (derived) noun successively heading different functional projections and agreeing items located in the specifier position of those projections, unless we substantially change our view on the architecture of DPs (remember that both the definite and the indefinite article, for example, are standardly taken to be heads), and also allow for the inflected noun to raise to head positions at LF in a number of cases, thus avoiding ungrammatical linearizations.<sup>24</sup>

(55) es-o-s            much-o-s            bonit-o-s            gat-o-s            pequeñ-o-s  
       *those(masc)*    *many(masc)*    *nice(masc.pl)*    *cat(masc.pl)*    *small (masc.pl)*

A different syntactic analysis of nominal concord, which does not meet the aforementioned problems with the Spec-head analysis, is developed in Carstens (2001) and Danon (2011), among other authors. Making use of the analytical tools in Chomsky (2000, 2001), in these papers, number and gender nominal concord in Spanish-like languages is taken to be the result of a (multiple) Agree operation, whereby the unvalued  $\phi$ -features of determiners and adjectives probe for the features of the noun, and Agree values and deletes the (uninterpretable) features on all agreeing elements.<sup>25</sup>

All the accounts of nominal concord I have reviewed so far extend the syntactic analyses of subject-verb agreement in the sentential domain to DP-internal agreement. In sheer contrast to this approach, Norris (2014) has recently argued that nominal concord must be formally distinguished from subject-verb agreement. Norris grounds this insight on the observation that, unlike subject-verb agreement, concord appears on many elements on the DP, which occupy a variety of syntactic positions (heads, specifiers, and adjuncts), among other core differences between these two types of agreement. In his study on nominal concord in case and number in Estonian, this author shows, in particular, that concord does not look like the kind of agreement analyzed as an Agree relationship: in his words, in nominal concord, “c-command between target and controller does not matter, nor does intervening specific material” (Norris 2014: 123).<sup>26</sup> Under these considerations, Norris (2014) claims that nominal

<sup>23</sup> Note, furthermore, that this analysis cannot apply to evaluative possessives preceding bare singular count nouns in object position (BNs) if we adopt Espinal (2010)’s idea that BNs do not project a NumP (see the previous footnote).

<sup>24</sup> These general observations on the shortcomings of a Spec-head approach to nominal concord, of course, also question the analysis of agreement between Spanish canonical prenominal possessives and nouns in Picallo (1994) and Bernstein (2005). For a different implementation of the idea that nominal concord obtains from Spec-head relationships, see, however, Koopman (2006), who argues that NP raises through the specifiers of all the elements that agree with it.

<sup>25</sup> Previous syntactic accounts of nominal concord in a similar line, which employ the Feature Checking mechanisms in Chomsky (1995), can be found in Mallén (1997) and Carstens (2000): in these works, concord results from the checking of uninterpretable features on adjectives, determiners, etc. with the corresponding interpretable features in the relevant head within the DP.

<sup>26</sup> Norris (2014: 123) acknowledges that “to be sure, there are ways that such facts could be incorporated into an Agree-based account”, but adds that “it comes at a cost: Agree must be needlessly complicated to analyze what I believe to be a fundamentally morphological phenomenon” (see below in the text).

concord is a morphological phenomenon that is to be viewed as a requirement that certain categories within the DP in a particular language must express a certain set of features to be well-formed words.<sup>27</sup> With this leading idea in mind, he gives an account of the agreement patterns found in nominal concord within the framework of Distributed Morphology (see, e.g., Halle & Marantz 1993, Noyer 1997, Embick & Noyer 2007), resorting to two post-syntactic operations that take place in the morphological component at the PF branch of grammar: the insertion of Agr<sup>0</sup> nodes, which he assumes to be “dissociated morphemes” (Embick 1997, Embick & Noyer 2007), i.e. morphemes with no syntactic effects and no semantic import that are added in order to satisfy morphological requirements of the language, and an operation of Feature Copying (Embick & Noyer 2001, 2007; Noyer 1997), whereby the relevant feature values are copied into the Agr<sup>0</sup> nodes.

I take the arguments against the syntactic approach to nominal concord in Norris (2014) to be well-founded, and I thus share his idea that this phenomenon is morphological. Applying his analysis of concord to the Spanish case, the expression of number and gender morphemes in determiners and adjectives in Spanish would obtain by first post-syntactically adjoining dissociated Agr<sup>0</sup> nodes to all agreeing D<sup>0</sup> and A<sup>0</sup> nodes, and then copying the number and gender feature values of the noun into these nodes. In my view, this morphological analysis of DP-internal agreement in Spanish also holds for possessives (including evaluative prenominal possessives).

## 5. Conclusions

In this paper, I have presented a formal analysis of evaluative prenominal possessives in Spanish. I have first shown that evaluative possessives (i.e. the affective possessive preceding a proper name, the so-called “emphatic possessive”, and the possessive in the Old and American Spanish doubled possessive construction) have in common a number of properties that are very different from those of canonical prenominal possessives: they do not properly express possession, but evaluate the relation between two entities, they are not interpreted as complements of the noun, they are also non-discriminating and non-contrastive items, and their use is always optional. To capture the fact that they do not underlyingly function as complements of the noun, I have further argued that, in contrast to canonical prenominal possessives, evaluative possessives do not originate in the positions where nominal modifiers are generated, and then raise to D<sup>0</sup>, but are directly merged (in most cases) in the DP domain. Finally, in order to account for their particular distribution, I have proposed that affective, emphatic and doubling possessives occupy different structural positions in the extended projection of the noun: the affective possessive is generated as a DP-adjunct, the prenominal possessive in the doubled possessive construction is inserted under D<sup>0</sup>, replacing the definite article, and the emphatic possessive can either be located in different projections in an split DP, or be merged as an NP adjunct.

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<sup>27</sup> On the antecedents of the idea that nominal concord is purely morphological, see Norris (2014: 239).

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