

Middle formation and inalienability in Asturian

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Abstract

This chapter shows that Asturian middle-passive contexts containing certain activity verbs, such as ‘*lleer*’ (to read), as well as a relational or body-part noun as their grammatical subject allow for the insertion of a non-selected dative argument necessarily interpreted as the inalienable possessor of such noun. Moreover, two configurations can yield these structures: one where the dative phrase raises to preverbal subject position from inside TP, and another where the dative DP is left-dislocated and the theme in subject position. Interestingly, an analysis relying on the notion of low applicative heads relating the possessor and the possessee cannot successfully account for these configurations due to intervention effects when both the dative DP and the grammatical subject occur preverbally. Instead, an approach whereby the inalienable possession construal arises inside the DP–theme and subsequently spreads to the applicative head that introduces the dative possessor successfully overcomes this shortcoming.

Keywords

Asturian middle-passives, Possessor datives, Inalienable possession,
Applicatives

1. Introduction

Middle-passive constructions are generic unaccusative predicates denoting intrinsic properties of a notional object, which is promoted to grammatical subject, and whose unmarked position in the sentence tends to be preverbal in most Iberian Romance languages. The transitive verbs entering these configurations appear conjugated in imperfective tenses –either present or

imperfect– which favor a non-episodic reading. Additionally, in Asturian, as well as in other Romance languages, the presence of a third person reflexive clitic pronoun is mandatory,¹ and the possibility of introducing an explicit agent by means of a prepositional phrase is ruled out.

(1) *¿Qué asocede?*

- a. **Les noveles romántiques lléense fácil (*por Xuan).**
 the novels romantic read.3.REFL easy by John
 ‘Romantic novels read easily’
- b. **#Lléense fácil les noveles romántiques.**

Interestingly, when the notional object in these structures is a relational or body-part noun co-occurring with certain stative verbs, such as *ver* (‘to see’) or *oyer* (‘to hear’), or activity verbs involving perception, like *lleer* (‘to read’) (2a), it is possible to insert a non-selected dative argument which must necessarily be interpreted as the inalienable possessor of such noun, i.e. the notional object (2c).

- (2) a. **La lletra de Guillermo lléese fácil.**
 the handwriting of Guillermo reads.REFL easy
 ‘Guillermo’s handwriting reads easily’
- b. **La so lletra lléese fácil.**
 the his handwriting reads.REFL easy
 ‘His handwriting reads easily’

- c. A Guillermo_i, la (#so_i/*mio) lletra lléese-y_i
 to Guillermo.DAT the his my handwriting reads.REFL-3.DAT
 fácil.
 easy
 ‘Guillermo’s handwriting reads easily’

The noun *lletra* (‘handwriting’) in (2) is intimately related with its possessor and can be considered a defining personal trait or item, which appears to favor the emergence of the relationship of inalienable possession between it and the dative argument. Note that the type of noun plays a determining role in this relationship, more so than the verb, since a non-relational noun such as *poemes* (‘poems’) in the same context would prevent for this construal to obtain, as shown in (3).

- (3) a. Los sos poemas lléense rápido.
 the his poems read.REFL fast
 ‘His poems read quickly’
 b. A Enol_i, los (sos_{#i/j}/mios_k) poemas lléense-y_i rápido.
 to Enol.DAT the his my poems read.REFL-3.DAT fast
 ‘Enol’s poems read quickly’
 ‘The/his/my poems are easy to read to Enol’

While (2) conveys a relationship of static inalienable possession between the dative and the grammatical subject, in (3), the dative can also be interpreted as a goal, i.e. the recipient of the theme, in addition to its alienable possessor, although not necessarily.

Suárez-Palma (2019) examines the interaction between middle-passive constructions and dative arguments in Spanish; however, not enough descriptive work has assessed this understudied phenomenon in Asturian –

including the *Gramática de la Llingua Asturiana* (ALLA 2001)– or in other minority Iberian Romance languages. Thus, the goal of this chapter is to provide an analysis for the structures in (2) and (3), henceforth *inalienable* and *transfer middles*, respectively.

The chapter is structured as follows: Section 2 summarizes the main structural properties of middle-passives, and Section 3 shows that two possible configurations can yield these structures: (i) one where both the dative DP and the theme occur preverbally, in which case I assume that the former is left-dislocated and the latter occupies the preverbal subject position; and (ii) one where only the dative DP occurs preverbally in subject position, and the theme remains in the verbal domain. Section 4 presents an analysis of transfer and inalienable middles based on the notion of low applicatives (Pylkkänen 2002, 2008; Cuervo 2003), i.e. argument-introducing functional heads able to apply an entity –the possessor, source or goal– to an object; crucially, such an account faces intervention effects when dealing with the left-dislocated configuration of inalienable middles; a possible solution to this shortcoming is provided. Finally, Section 5 concludes the chapter.

2. Structural properties of middle-passives

Despite being a crosslinguistic phenomenon, the way in which the different languages encode the middle voice in their grammars differs. As a consequence, this construal has received much attention, which has resulted in analyses of diverse nature, including syntactic (Keyser & Roeper 1984; Hale & Keyser 1986; Roberts 1987; Stroik 1992; Schäfer 2008; Suárez-Palma 2019, 2020a), semantic (Dixon 1982; Chierchia 2003) and lexicalist (Fagan 1992; Ackema & Schoorlemmer 1994, 1995), to name a few. Nonetheless, despite such variation, a series of properties associated with middles remain constant, namely the notional object’s promotion to grammatical subject, the suppression of the notional subject, its generic and modal interpretation, and

the mandatory modification by a PP or AdvP. This section provides a summary of such characteristics in Asturian middle-passive constructions.

First of all, the grammatical subject in these structures, which corresponds semantically to the verb's notional object, must necessarily be a definite DP; in this regard, middle-passives (3a) pattern with inchoative sentences (3b) rather than reflexively marked passives (3c). To some scholars (Fernández Soriano 1999; Mendikoetxea 1999; Sánchez López 2002), this restriction is indicative of the externalization of the verb's internal argument outside the VP, following the Naked Noun Phrase Constraint (Suñer 1982).²

- (3) a. *(L')hoxaldre esmigáyase fácil.³

the-puff pastry crumbles.REFL easy

'Puff pastry crumbles easily'

- b. Esmigayó *(l')hoxaldre.⁴

crumbled the-puff pastry

'The puff pastry crumbled'

- c. Esmigayóse (l')hoxaldre.

crumbled.REFL the-puff pastry

'(The) puff pastry was crumbled'

Along with the notional object's promotion to grammatical subject, another salient property of middle-passives crosslinguistically is the demotion of the verb's external argument (cf. Ackema & Schoorlemmer 2006, and references therein). In spite of its apparent lack of syntactic projection,⁵ these sentences denote the participation of an implicit generic agent in the event, which can be rephrased as *anybody*: *anybody can read romantic novels easily*. Support for this claim is the impossibility of adjoining a PP denoting lack of agency, such as *por sí mesmu* (by itself) (4a); additionally, middle passives license the adjunction of a purpose clause (4b), which is generally taken as evidence for

the presence of an implicit agent in other structures, such as passives (4c) (cf. Bhatt & Pancheva 2006, *inter alia*).

- (4) a. *Les romans romantiques se lisent facilement *por sí mesmas*.
 the novels romantic read.REFL easy by REFL self
 ‘Romantic novels read easily by themselves’
- b. La madera de carbayu quémase fácilmente *pa faer carbón*.
 the wood of oak burn.REFL easy for make coal
 ‘Oak wood burns easily (in order to make coal)’
- c. La maera de carbayu foi quemado *pa faer carbón*.
 the wood of oak was burned for make coal
 ‘The oak wood was burned in order to make coal’

The generic interpretation of these constructions is enhanced by means of the aforementioned imperfective tenses, which can suspend the temporal properties of perfective predicates denoting achievements and render them stative (5a). On the contrary, perfective (5b) and progressive (5c) tenses make these configurations lose their middle reading and can only be interpreted as reflexively marked passives.⁶

- (5) a. Esta lavadora íguase/íguábase fácilmente.
 this washing-machine mends/mended.IPFV easy
 ‘This washing-machine mends easily’
- b. Esta lavadora íguóse fácilmente.
 this washing-machine mended easy
 ‘This washing-machine was mended easily’

c. Esta lavadora ta iguándose fácil.

this washing-machine is mending easy

‘This washing-machine is being mended easily’

The non-episodic nature of middle-passive sentences contributes to the interpretation of the event as denoting a property rather than an actual punctual event. Thus, it is important that these structures lack a specific temporal reference instantiated by an adverbial or prepositional phrase, which would turn them into reflexively marked passives (6a). In fact, when the verb in these contexts is conjugated in imperfective tenses, and in the absence of any concrete timeframe, structural ambiguity arises (6b).

(6) a. *Reflexively marked passive/*Middle-passive*

Les pataques asturianos tuéstense rápido güei.

the potatoes Asturian fry.REFL fast today

‘Asturian potatoes are fried quickly today’

b. *Reflexively marked passive/Middle-passive*

Les pataques asturianos tuéstense rápido.

the potatoes Asturian fry.REFL fast

‘Asturian potatoes fry quickly’

‘Asturian potatoes are fried quickly.’

Finally, another feature generally attributed to the middle voice is its modal interpretation, since it expresses possibility and potentiality by means of combining imperfective tenses, its property reading and the obligatory modification by an adverbial or prepositional phrase (7a). Sánchez López (2002) points out that, in Spanish, only when the middle passive refers to an element representing a particular class is it possible to omit the modifier; (7b), which could be rephrased as *esti tipu de siella ye plegable* (‘this kind of chair

is foldable’), shows that the same applies to Asturian. Furthermore, in the presence of negation (7c), modification is not required, for in such cases, a generic interpretation obtains by portraying the absence of a given trait as a property: *esta siella nun ye plegable* (‘this chair is not foldable’).

- (7)
- a. Esta siella pliégase fácil.
 this chair folds.REFL easy
 ‘This chair folds easily’
 - b. Esta siella pliégase.
 this chair folds.REFL
 ‘This chair folds/is foldable’
 - c. Esta siella nun se pliega.
 this chair not REFL folds
 ‘This chair does not fold/is not foldable’

Next, I propose that preverbal dative DPs in middle-passive contexts can enter two possible configurations: one in which the dative is left-dislocated and the theme is in subject position, and another where it is the dative that is the sentential subject, and the theme remains inside VP.

3. Two positions for preverbal datives in middle-passive contexts

Numerous studies have discussed the subjecthood status of preverbal datives in Spanish (Masullo 1992; Fernández Soriano 1999; Tubino Blanco 2007; Fernández Soriano & Mendikoetxea 2013; Fábregas et al. 2017, among others). In his study of Spanish dative experiencers, Masullo (1992) demonstrates that the preverbal dative quantifier DP *a nadie* (‘to nobody’) is ungrammatical when left-dislocated and must therefore sit in an A-position. Fernández Rubiera (2009) arrives at the same conclusion for Asturian.

Assuming such premise, Suárez-Palma (2019; 2020a) shows that the same holds for preverbal dative DPs in Spanish middle-passives, and proposes these phrases can occupy two possible positions: on the one hand, when both the dative DP and the DP theme occur preverbally, the dative merges left-dislocated outside the sentence, while the theme sits in the canonical preverbal subject position, presumably SpecTP;⁷ on the other, when only the dative DP is realized preverbally and the theme remains inside VP, it is the former that merges in SpecTP. The data from Asturian middle-passive contexts seem to uphold this proposal, as shown in (8), where the dative DP becomes ungrammatical in middle-passive contexts if the DP theme also occurs preverbally.

- (8) a. *A naide, la so lletra lléese-y fácil.
 to nobody.DAT the her handwriting reads.REFL.3DAT easy
 ‘Naide’s handwriting reads easily’
- b. A naide se-y llea la so lletra fácil.⁸
 to nobody.DAT REFL.3DAT reads the her handwriting easy
 ‘Nobody’s handwriting reads easily’

What (8a) illustrates is that the negative dative quantifier *a naide* is unable to acquire a quantificational interpretation since it is not sitting in an argumental position, i.e. the preverbal subject position, and it is therefore interpreted referentially. However, when only the dative DP precedes the verb, the desired reading obtains (8b).⁹ In other words, the dative DP and the theme compete for the preverbal subject position in these contexts. The two possible configurations for Asturian middle-passives with preverbal dative DPs are shown in (9).

- (9) a. *Left-dislocated Dative DP*
 A Guillermo [TP la so lletra lléese-y con facilidá]

b. *Dative DP in preverbal subject position*

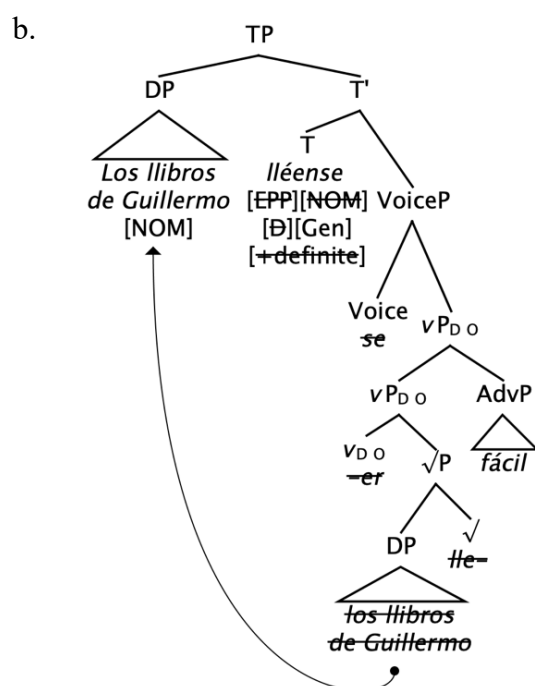
[_{TP} A Guillermo lléese–y la so lletra con facilitá]

The following section presents the analysis for the structures under consideration (cf. (2) above).

4. The analysis

At this point, an analysis of inalienable and transfer middles is in order. Let us begin by discussing the derivation of a dative-less middle-passive such as the one in (10).

- (10) a. Los llibros de Guillermo lléense fácil.
 the books of Guillermo read.REFL easy
 ‘Guillermo’s books read easily’



What (10b) shows is the root *lle-* merging with its complement,¹⁰ the DP *los llibros de Guillermo*, and projecting a √P which, at the same time, is

complement to an activity verbalizing head v_{DO} , following Cuervo's (2003) terminology. A Voice head sitting atop the event introducer would introduce the verb's external argument in the structure (Marantz 1984; Kratzer 1996); however, in this case it is passivized and spelled-out by the reflexive clitic *se*, therefore denoting the participation of an implicit agent in the event, and preventing it from checking accusative case against the verb's internal argument.¹¹ The root undergoes head movement until reaching T^0 , and incorporates any clitics it finds on its way, following Roberts' (2010) assumption that these are defective heads. Finally, the presence of a generic operator (Gen) in combination with the [D] and [+definite] features in T^0 probes the only DP available in the derivation, i.e. the internal argument, to its specifier, thus satisfying the EPP and licensing nominative case.¹²

Having explained the derivation of a middle-passive construction, it is timely to address the insertion of non-subcategorized dative arguments in these contexts. Cuervo (2003) develops a theory of datives in Spanish based on the notion of applicatives (cf. Pylkkänen 2002, 2008), i.e. argument-introducing functional heads that apply an entity to an event, an object, or a result. Specifically, this linguist accounts for double object constructions in Spanish by resorting to low applicatives, which merge as the complement to the verb and whose semantics –shown in (11)– denote an entity gaining possession or being deprived of a particular object.

(11) *Pylkkänen (2002: 22)*

a. Low-APPL-TO (Recipient applicative):

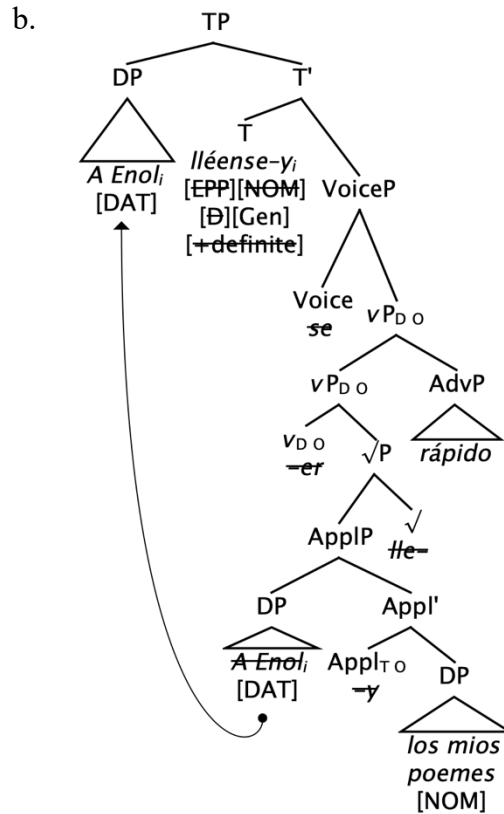
$$\lambda x. \lambda y. \lambda f_{\langle e, s, t \rangle}. \lambda e. f(e, x) \ \& \ \text{theme}(e, x) \ \& \ \text{to-the-possession}(x, y)$$

b. Low-APPL-FROM (Source applicative):

$$\lambda x. \lambda y. \lambda f_{\langle e, s, t \rangle}. \lambda e. f(e, x) \ \& \ \text{theme}(e, x) \ \& \ \text{from-the-possession}(x, y)$$

Note that a transfer middle containing a dative argument, like the one in (12a), qualifies as a passivized generic double object construction, in which *Enol* receives the reading of the poems. Thus, its derivation is shown in (12b).

- (12) a. A *Enol*_i, lléense-*y*_i los (sos_{#i/j}/mios_k) poemas rápido.
to *Enol*.DAT read.REFL-3.DAT the his my poems fast
‘*Enol*’s poems read quickly’
‘The/his/my poems are easy to read to *Enol*’



In (12b), a recipient applicative head spelled out as the third person dative clitic pronoun *-y* relates the dative argument *a Enol* in its specifier to *los mios poemas*; this whole projection merges as the complement to the root *lle-* to which the dative clitic incorporates, along with the reflexive one in Voice. T° probes the first DP it finds to its specifier, i.e. the dative DP; since this phrase

is inherently case marked, T° checks its nominative case feature against the possessee via Agree.

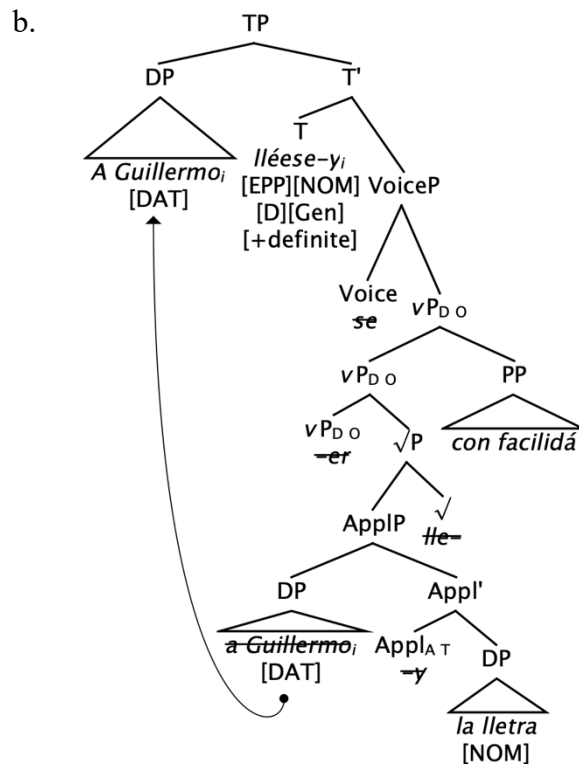
Cuervo (2003) also proposed a third type of low applicative in order to account for a static relationship of possession, which at times can be inalienable;¹³ its semantics are shown in (13). As in the other two cases, this head relates a possessor in its specifier and a possessee in its complement position.

(13) Low-APPL-AT (Possessor Applicative):

$$\lambda x.\lambda y.\lambda f_{\langle e,s,t \rangle}.\lambda e.f(e,x) \ \& \ \text{theme}(e,x) \ \& \ \text{in-the-possession}(x,y)$$

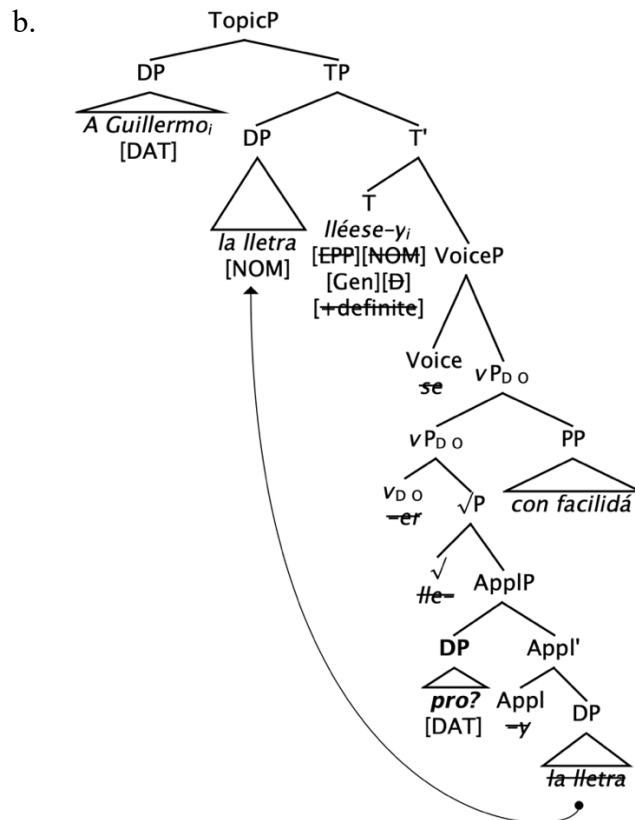
Following this proposal, the non-dislocated counterpart of an inalienable middle with a dative argument is shown in (14), which proceeds in the same way as the one in (12b).

(14) a. A Guillermo lléese-y la lletra con facilidad.



While (14) successfully accounts for the configuration in which the dative DP occupies the preverbal subject position, this proposal runs into intervention effects when applied to the left-dislocated counterpart of an inalienable middle. Crucially, for the relationship of possession to obtain in a low applicative analysis it is necessary for both the possessor and the possessee to merge under the same maximal projection. Therefore, if the possessor dative DP merges *in situ* in the left periphery, some sort of empty category standing for the possessor –and therefore bearing an identity relation with the dislocated constituent– would be expected to merge in SpecApplP so that the possession construal arises. However, because it is structurally closer to T°, this empty pronominal would be probed to its specifier to satisfy the EPP, instead of the possessee, thus yielding an undesired word order, as shown in (15).

(15) a. A Guillermo, la lletra lléese-y con facilidad.



Alternatively, if one assumes that the inalienable possession construal originates within the DP rather than inside the ApplP, this shortcoming can be overcome. Cardinaletti (1998) proposed the classification in (16), which comprises the different types of possessive pronouns that are encountered in Romance.

- (16) a. Mi letra *Clitic* (Spanish)
 my handwriting
- b. La mio lletra *Weak* (Asturian)
 the my handwriting
- c. La lletra mio *Strong* (Asturian)
 the handwriting mine

In light of these data, Alexiadou et al. (2007), based on Radford (2000), argue that those Romance languages where weak possessive pronouns are attested project a possessor projection (PossP or *nP*) which merges as complement to D°, and hosts the possessor of its complement, i.e. the NP. Assuming, Guéron's (1985) proposal that inalienably possessed nouns take a possessor as an argument, which can presumably be a null pronominal of some sort inside NP, the internal structure of an inalienably possessed DP such as (16b) is shown in (17).

- (17) a. La mio lletra
- b.
-
- ```

graph TD
 DP --> D
 DP --> PossP_nP[PossP/nP]
 D --> la["la
[+definite][D]
[F; SG]"]
 PossP_nP --> Poss_n[Poss/n]
 PossP_nP --> NP
 Poss_n --> mio_i["mioi
[GEN]
[1; SG]"]
 NP --> eci_lletra["eci lletra"]

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In (17), the head of PossP contains a genitive feature and the possessor's phi-features which, when combined, are spelled out as the possessive weak pronoun *mio* in Asturian; this pronoun binds the empty category inside the relational NP, giving rise to the inalienable possession interpretation. In order to assess how this structure comes into play with a dative possessor, it is necessary to observe the contrasts in (18).

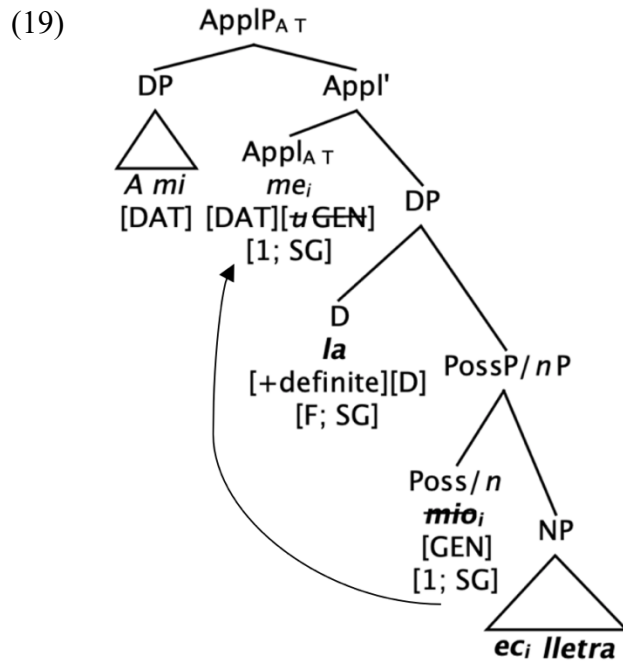
- (18) a. La mio lletra lléese bien.  
           the my handwriting reads.REFL well  
           ‘My handwriting reads well’
- b. ?La mio lletra lléese bien.  
           the my handwriting reads.REFL.1SG.DAT well
- c. La lletra lléese bien.  
           the handwriting reads.REFL.1SG.DAT well
- d. A mi, la lletra lléese bien.  
           to me.DAT the handwriting reads.REFL.1SG.DAT well
- e. \*A mi, la mio lletra lléese bien.  
           to me.DAT the my handwriting reads.REFL.1SG.DAT well

What can be inferred from (18) is that the grammar of Asturian encodes possession in inalienable middles by resorting to either a weak possessive pronoun or a possessive dative, but not through the combination of both. In other words, the moment the low applicative is inserted, the possessive pronoun disappears.

A possible way of accounting for such phenomenon is to assume that the low applicative head of possession probes the genitive and phi-features of the possessor in Poss° –along with the possessor interpretation– and, because there is a featural match between these two heads, the lower gets deleted at



PF; this would explain why the weak possessive pronoun is infelicitous in the context of a dative clitic possessor (cf. (18b)). The derivation is shown in (19).



This proposal does not rely on the presence of the applicative head for the relationship of inalienable possession to obtain, since it already originates inside the DP, along the lines of what was proposed by Guéron (1985), Demonte (1988) and Vergnaud & Zubizarreta (1992). Besides, this claim is supported by the fact that this construal already exists in the DP containing a possessive pronoun and a relational/body part noun alone: e.g. *los mios güeyos* ('my eyes'). One of the implications of this analysis is that an empty category standing for the possessor in the specifier of ApplP is no longer required in inalienable middles with a left-dislocated dative DP. Additionally, this account is applicable to other Iberian Romance languages that show the same pattern found in Asturian, such as Catalan:

- (20) a. La meva lletra                      es            llegeix fàcilment.  
           the my    handwriting    REFL    reads    easily  
           'My handwriting reads easily'

- b. ?La meva lletra s'em llegeix fàcilment.  
the my handwriting REFL-1SG.DAT reads easily
- c. La lletra s'em llegeix fàcilment.  
the handwriting REFL-1SG.DAT reads easily
- d. A mi, la lletra s'em llegeix fàcilment.  
to me.DAT the handwriting REFL-1SG.DAT reads easily
- e. \*A mi, la meva lletra s'em llegeix fàcilment.  
to me.DAT the my handwriting REFL-1SG.DAT reads easily

In sum, by assuming that the inalienable possession construal originates inside the DP containing the relational noun and not inside ApplP, it is possible to successfully account for both configurations yielding inalienable middles (cf. (9) above), therefore avoiding the intervention effects the left-dislocated variant faced under a standard low applicative analysis.

## 5. Conclusion

In this chapter, I provided novel data from Asturian middle-passives and their interaction with dative arguments. When these constructions contain certain activity verbs, such as *lleer* ('to read') and a relational noun as their grammatical subject, they can host a non-subcategorized dative argument that is interpreted as the inalienable possessor of such noun. Moreover, I argued that a preverbal dative DP can occur in two possible configurations in these contexts, namely, either in subject position, in which case the theme remains in the VP, or left-dislocated, allowing the theme to raise to SpecTP.

I showed the potential of a low applicative analysis as a way to account for these structure, as well as transfer middles, i.e. generic passivized double object constructions. Crucially, such an approach relies on the fact that the applicative head relates a possessor in its specifier with the possessee in its

complement position, therefore being responsible for the emergence of the possession relation, which can be inalienable at times. Nevertheless, it would be necessary to posit that an empty category of some sort occupies SpecApplP when the dative DP merges dislocated in the left-periphery; this null pronominal would subsequently be probed by  $T^0$  to its specifier in order to satisfy the EPP and therefore yielding an undesired word order.

In order to overcome such intervention effects, I provided an alternative account whereby the inalienable possession interpretation arises inside the DP, by means of a weak possessive pronoun heading PossP, which binds an empty category inside the relational NP. When the low applicative head of possession merges, it probes the genitive and phi features in Poss<sup>0</sup>; due to the fact that the features in Appl<sup>0</sup> and Poss<sup>0</sup> match, the latter gets deleted at PF, which would explain the unacceptability of encountering a weak possessive pronoun in the presence of a possessor dative in inchoative middles. Therefore, this proposal does not require any empty pronominal in SpecApplP for the inalienable possession to arise, which eliminates the intervention effects found in previous works. Additionally, I proposed that the analysis presented here can also be applied to other Iberian Romance languages showing the same behavior, such as Catalan.

Finally, the ultimate goal of this chapter was to emphasize the need to elaborate an exhaustive classification of middle-passive constructions in Asturian, paying careful attention to their structural properties, including their interaction with dative arguments. The implications of such undertaking are of major importance if its outcomes are regularly contrasted with data from the other Romance languages, in order to further the existing knowledge of the morphosyntactic phenomena of this linguistic family, as well as to contribute to the thriving field of syntactic microvariation.

## Abbreviations

DAT = dative, F = feminine, Gen = generic, GEN = genitive, NOM = nominative, REFL = reflexive, SG = singular, 1/2/3 = first/second/third persons

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#### NOTES

<sup>1</sup> This is not exclusive to Romance languages; in fact, German resorts to the reflexive *sich* to convey the middle-passive reading in certain constructions. See Schäfer (2008).

<sup>2</sup> Suñer (1982: 209) proposed the Naked Noun Phrase constraint to account for the fact that subjects cannot be bare NPs:



- (i) The Naked Noun Phrase Constraint: “An unmodified common noun in preverbal position cannot be the surface object of a sentence under conditions of normal stress and intonation.”

<sup>3</sup> Note that the reflexive pronoun could disappear in this context; however, in such case, the agentive reading disappears, which indicates we are dealing with a generic inchoative construction, instead of a generic passive. This is supported by the fact that only the *se*-less variant (ia) would license *por sí mismo* (‘by itself’), while the *se* counterpart (ib) would not. See Suárez-Palma (2020a; 2020b) for a diagnosis on how to discriminate and analyze these two structures.

- (i) a. L’hoxaldre esmigaya por sí mesmo.  
b. L’hoxaldre esmigáyase (\*por sí mesmo).

<sup>4</sup> Excluding a causative interpretation with a null subject.

<sup>5</sup> Numerous analyses of middle-passives (Zribi-Hertz 1993; Hoekstra & Roberts 1993; Ackema & Schoorlemmer 1995; Stroik 1995, 1999) agree on the semantic presence of the notional subject in these contexts, although there is no consensus as to whether it is syntactically represented in the derivation.

<sup>6</sup> See Sánchez López (2002) for data on Spanish.

<sup>7</sup> While the position of preverbal subjects has become a hot topic in Spanish syntax (cf. Olarrea 2012 *inter alia*), this debate goes beyond the scope of this chapter; therefore, for the current purposes, preverbal subjects in Spanish are assumed to raise to SpecTP.

<sup>8</sup> See Fernández Rubiera (2009) for an account of clitic pronoun excorporation in Asturian in the context of a preverbal negative quantifier.

<sup>9</sup> Alternatively, the DP theme can appear postponed after the adverbial (*A naide se-y llea bien la lletra*), in what I assume to be an instance of a clitic right dislocation (cf. López (2009), Villalba (2010), Fernández Sánchez (2017)).

<sup>10</sup> Following Harley’s (2014) proposal that roots head their own projection and do in fact take complements.

<sup>11</sup> See Schäfer (2008) for a proposal along these lines for Greek passives.

<sup>12</sup> According to Suárez-Palma (2020a), the [D] feature in T° accounts for the requirement of middle-passive and inchoative constructions to have subject DP, and

not a bare NP like in regular *se*-passives. However, T° in inchoative configurations –except for generic ones– lacks both a [+definite] feature and a generic operator, which explains why the grammatical subject’s unmarked order is postverbal in these contexts. Alternatively, Schäfer (2008) placed the [D] feature in Voice; however, by locating it in T°, it is also possible to account for the fact that the internal argument also raises to preverbal subject position in generic inchoative contexts, which presumably lack a VoiceP.

<sup>13</sup> Within Generative Grammar, inalienable possession between an object and a dative argument has been analyzed under the scope of binding and control (Guéron 1983, 1985; Demonte 1988, 1995), predication (Vergnaud & Zubizarreta 1992), and as instances of possessor raising (Landau 1999; Sánchez López 2007).