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# Indirect Object “Lowering”

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## 1. Introduction: Types of Linguistic Explanations

This paper will be another one of those papers demonstrating that a semantic account of a particular grammatical phenomenon, in this case the relationship between possessors and indirect objects, is superior to a syntactic one. However, in addition to proposing the semantic analysis of possessor ascension and indirect object “lowering”, I wish to compare the two types of linguistic explanation in order to see how they are related to each other.

The labels ‘syntactic’ and ‘semantic’ are both misleading when applied to types of explanation. In the case of the phenomena which I am about to discuss, it has become more popular to propose lexical rules rather than syntactic ones, although syntactic rules are still used by theories such as relational grammar. The term ‘formal’ has been used to describe syntactic/lexical types of explanations (e.g., Comrie 1983), but that too is partly a misnomer: semantics can be formal too, in the sense of being made precise and axiomatizable. Syntactic or lexical rules as explanations of grammatical phenomena are formal in the sense of mentioning only properties of the form of an utterance in their definition. Since the term ‘formal’ in this sense has an unfortunate homonymy with ‘formal’ meaning ‘precise or axiomatizable,’ I would prefer not to use it but instead use the synonymous term ‘structural.’

The term ‘semantic,’ like the term ‘syntactic,’ is not broad enough: in addition to explaining grammatical phenomena in terms of the structure of the real-world situations language describes, linguists also talk in terms of the structuring imposed by speaker’s cognitive apparatus and by the nature of discourse. These latter two factors have generally been called ‘pragmatic’ or ‘functional,’ with ‘functional’ sometimes covering semantic explanations as well (Comrie 1983), but both of those terms have many other meanings not relevant to the point at hand. Hyman (1983) has proposed the term ‘external’ explanations, contrasting with ‘internal,’ that is, structural, explanations. I will, however, stick to the terms ‘structural’ and ‘semantic,’ with the caveat that in the latter case I really mean ‘semantic-pragmatic.’ This terminological discussion has highlighted the differences between structural and semantic explanations; after presenting the evidence and the analysis, I will examine their similarities.

## 2. Possessor Ascension

The phenomenon I wish to analyze is the relationship between possession, generally manifested in one or more of a structurally diverse set of genitive relations,

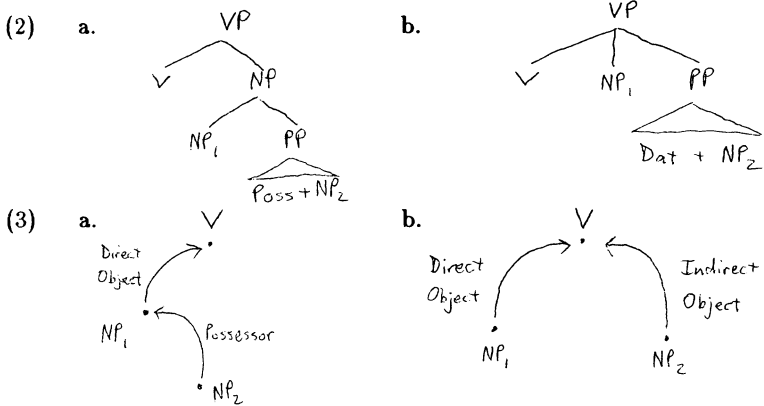
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including genitive case-marking, adpositions, possessor adjectivalization, simple word order, or cross-referencing affixes, and indirect objects, a structurally-defined class which generally includes the thematic roles of recipient, benefactor and sometimes malefactor. The most well-known relation between possession and indirect objects is "possessor ascension," so christened by relational grammarians, where the possessor of the direct object and sometimes the subject is realized as a surface indirect object:

- (1) Je lui ai cassé le bras.  
'I broke his arm.'

This phenomenon has not been discussed extensively in the literature. It has been described syntactically as a movement process, which would operate on phrase structures or dependency structures as in the (a) forms in the two diagrams, and yield surface structures as in the (b) forms (Poss and Dat representing whatever language-specific structure is used):



I have not seen lexical analyses of possessor ascension, so the following examples are hypothetical. A lexical rule for possessor ascension is not entirely straightforward, since it would have to refer to the internal structure of subcategorized phrases, but in a dependency-oriented notation, this is not particularly unusual:

- (4)  $break [- [NP_1 [Poss NP_2]_{PP}]_{NP}] \Rightarrow$   
 $break [- NP_1 [Dat NP_2]]$
- (5)  $\langle newpred\ indobj \rangle = \langle oldpred\ obj\ possessor \rangle$

While there are important issues involved in deciding whether to do it in the syntax or do it in the lexicon, and whether to do it with phrase structure or do it with dependency (functional) structures, all of these analyses have in common that they relate two structures, one a basic, underlying or abstract structure and the other a surface structure, and the relation is determined by structural properties. This makes all of these analyses structural.

All of these structural analyses have in common the property that they relate an underlying structure in which there is an NP dependent on the direct object NP to a surface structure in which the "former possessor" NP is dependent on the verb or VP as an indirect object. Possessor ascension thus resembles what has traditionally been called Raising in that an NP which "belongs" in a lower syntactic unit is realized in a higher syntactic unit, the main clause VP. This resemblance to another well-known and widely-attested phenomenon has perhaps allowed it to be accepted as relatively unproblematic, since it has not generated a great deal of controversy and the structural accounts available handle it decently enough. However, allowing the structural rules to raise NP's out of other NP's as well as out of lower clauses is a further generalization of Raising (however it is to be analyzed) which requires constraining to disallow sentences like 6, in which the possessor of the instrument ascends to indirect object—not to mention raising other kinds of dependent NP's than possessors, or raising NP's out of other kinds of syntactic structures, or even raising other kinds of syntactic units.

- (6) \*Il m'a brûlé le tableau avec le chalumeau.  
'He burned the painting with my blowtorch.'

### 3. Indirect Object "Lowering"

While possessor ascension does have resemblances to other well-known structural processes, namely, those having to do with Raising, there is one major structural fact about the relationship between possession and indirect objects which does not fit into this schema at all. That fact is that the inverse of possessor ascension is also attested. The inverse of possessor ascension I will call "indirect object lowering," in keeping with the traditional movement metaphor used for naming such phenomena but not implying a movement analysis. I have encountered instances of indirect object lowering in the following languages: Tlapanec (Otomanguean; Suárez 1983:123), Quiché (Mayan),<sup>1</sup> Hixkaryana (Carib; Derbyshire 1979:94), Kobon (Indo-Pacific; Davies 1981:112), Buin (Indo-Pacific; D. C. Laycock, p.c.), and Mokilese (Micronesian; Harrison 1976:133).

Indirect object lowering is the realization of a recipient or benefactive argument as the possessor of the direct object NP. The first two examples show the lowering of a recipient to the possessor of the direct object, and the next three examples show the lowering of a benefactor to the possessor of the direct object.

Quiché (Mondloch 1981:200)

- (7) k-Ø-(i)-yā xun nu-kěx  
IMPF-3sgABS-2plERG-give one 1sgPOSS-deer  
'Give me a deer.'

Mokilese (Harrison 1976:263, 133)

<sup>1</sup>Quiché evidence has been culled from my own notes from a course offered by Norman McQuown at the University of Chicago in 1976-1977, and in various texts; it has not been discussed in any of the linguistic literature on Quiché to my knowledge.

- (8) Ngoah rapah-ki ih pwa ngoa-n kioang nah mwani-ho  
 1sg look=for-COMP him COMP 1sg=MODAL give CLASS=3sgPOSS  
 money-that  
 'I looked for him to give him the money.'
- (9) Ngoah insigeh-di kijinlikkoan-oaw nih-mw  
 1sg write-ASP letter-one CLASS-2sgPOSS  
 'I wrote a letter to/for you.'

Kobon (Davies 1981:112)

- (10) Nipe win yad g-ab  
 3sg bow 1sgPOSS do-3sgPRES  
 'He is making a bow for me.'

Hixkaryana (Derbyshire 1979:94)

- (11) rokrahani yonyhoryeye Waraka  
 my-bow he-made-it Waraka  
 'Waraka made a bow for me.'

All four of these languages use cross-reference markers on the NP to indicate the possessor. This is the reason that we may safely say that the possessor is a surface syntactic dependent on the direct object NP. In those languages where case marking is used to indicate genitive relations, and the case markers for genitive and dative and/or benefactive are identical, one cannot determine by inspection whether or not indirect object lowering is present; one can do so only by using constituency tests. For example, in Guugu Yimidhirr, an Australian language, there is an unusual syncretism between the dative and just those genitives which can be lowered indirect objects in other languages. In Guugu Yimidhirr, case-marked nominals dependent on NP's agree with the NP in case, so there is double case-marking. Although the genitive marker is generally the same as the ablative, the double case marking Gen + Abs, i.e., the possessors of direct objects,<sup>2</sup> is identical to the dative (indirect object). Thus we find the following:

Guugu Yimidhirr (Haviland 1979:117, 148-149)

- (12) ngadhu gaarga(-∅)  
 1sg=DAT(GEN+ABS) younger=brother(-ABS)  
 'my brother'
- (13) Nyulu ngadhu mangal-∅ wagi  
 3sg=NOM 1sg=DAT(GEN+ABS) hand-ABS cut-PAST  
 'He cut me in the hand/He cut my hand.'
- (14) Nyulu ngadhu galga-∅ maandiidi  
 3sg=NOM 1sg=DAT(GEN+ABS) spear-ABS take=REDUP=NONPAST  
 'He brought me a spear.'

<sup>2</sup>And intransitive subjects, many of which fit the semantic account to be given; see 31-33 below.

However, in the absence of any evidence concerning constituency, we cannot infer that Guugu Yimidhirr has indirect object lowering.

A more unusual example of indirect object lowering is found in Mokilese. Mokilese has possessive classifiers, and one can lower the indirect object without a direct object being present by having the possessive classifier alone (Harrison 1976:133):

- (15) Li-ho doa-doa ah  
 woman-that sew-sew CLASS=3sgPOSS  
 'That woman sews for him.'

Finally, one can find evidence of indirect object lowering in even such a pedestrian language as English. The following is an attested utterance, in which the speaker was asking the hearer to go out and buy a beret, which I find only marginally acceptable out of context:

- (16) Let's go get your beret.

This sentence was not uttered with a specific beret in mind and of course without the hearer having acquired any beret at the time of utterance, so the possessive modifier cannot be considered to be merely a dependent denoting the possessor of the beret.

A structural analysis of indirect object lowering would presumably be the inverse of proposals for possessor ascension. The syntactic rules would take the 2b and 3b forms as basic and the 2a and 3a forms as derived, while the lexical rules would look like the following:

- (17) *give* [— NP<sub>1</sub> [Dat NP<sub>2</sub>]]  $\Rightarrow$  *give* [— [NP<sub>1</sub> [Poss NP<sub>2</sub>]<sub>PP</sub>]<sub>NP</sub>]  
 (18) <newpred obj possessor> = <oldpred indobj>

The structural analysis of indirect object lowering suffers from all of the defects of the structural analysis of possessor ascension and more. Just as there was no principled way of constraining what structures an NP could ascend from, there is no principled way to constrain what structures an NP can be lowered into, disallowing constructions like 19, where the instrument is lowered into the direct object, not mention lowering NP's into other dependent NP's than the direct object, lowering NP's into other syntactic structures, or even lowering other kinds of syntactic units:

- (19) \*Harry cut the knife's bread.  
 (= Harry cut the bread with the knife.)

Even worse, though, is that indirect object lowering is unique from a structural point of view. While there are a variety of raising rules, and these bear a distant similarity to promotional rules (see Langacker 1974 for a proposed explanation of this fact), there are no other lowering rules. The only similar rules are Quantifier Lowering, which is no longer generally accepted, reflects a semantic analysis of quantification rather than a syntactic one, and is radically different from indirect object lowering in its structural particulars; and various demotion rules, which

normally are either optional or are obligatory consequences of a promotional rule. Thus, permitting a structural lowering rule opens a Pandora's box of necessary constraints on lowering rules, since one cannot prohibit them altogether.

#### 4. Semantic Explanation

In this section I will propose a semantically-based analysis of the phenomena discussed which not only gets the gross facts right—the interchangeability of possessors only with indirect objects only, and the bidirectionality of the phenomenon—but will also account for some of the more subtle constraints which have been observed.

One of the constraints on indirect object lowering provides the key to the problem. Indirect object lowering is attested almost exclusively in cases where the individual denoted by the indirect object ends up possessing the item denoted by the direct object. Thus, the crucial semantic fact is that some sort of possession relation is involved. In the case of ordinary verbal constructions, any possession relations present are not altered by the event. However, in the cases where indirect object lowering is attested, the possession relations which hold are affected by the event itself. Generally, the benefactor (indirect object) comes into possession of the direct object by virtue of the event described by the main verb; thus, the possessive construction has generalized its use to include possessors-to-be.<sup>3</sup> The verb types fall into four classes, which seem to fit in a hierarchy of susceptibility to indirect object lowering: in a given language, the presence of indirect object lowering in types 1 and 2 implies the presence of indirect object lowering in types 3 and 4.

1. **Predication of possession.** This is the only case of indirect object lowering into subject position;<sup>4</sup> it occurs only in Quiché and Mokilese in our sample:

Quiché (course notes)

- (20) ?eh xumpa? ?i-čix ?iš ?e-kólik  
 PRT how=many 2plPOSS-sheep 2pl 3plABS-be  
 'How many sheep do you have?'

Mokilese (Harrison 1976:211)

- (21) Mine woaroa-n woal-o war  
 exist CLASS-3sgPOSS man-that canoe  
 'That man has a canoe.'

<sup>3</sup>These verbs are also the ones which license dative shift in English, an interesting functional parallel, though for opposite reasons: dative shifted indirect objects become direct objects since they are more intimately affected by the action denoted by the main verb, by virtue of their coming to possess the former direct object.

<sup>4</sup>except, of course, for passivized direct objects, as in the following from Quiché; they of course still come to be possessed by the lowered indirect object:

- a. ya sukumam čik le r-acyäq le ?al mate?y  
 already made then the 3sgPOSS-clothes the girl Matea  
 'Someone has already made the [wedding] clothes for Matea.'

A lowering analysis is proposed for semantic reasons: the relation is a two-place predicate  $\text{Possess}(x, y)$ , and yet in the surface structure the possessor argument is a dependent of the possessed. The only reason that an *indirect object* lowering analysis can be proposed is that in many languages predication of possession is done by making the possessed thing the subject and making the possessor the indirect object, e.g. Latin *Mihi liber est*. This is also the case in Guugu Yimidhirr (Haviland 1979:58), where the dative and genitive are identical:

- (22) Yarrga-wi galga- $\emptyset$  wu-naa  
 'boy-DAT(GEN=ABS) spear-ABS exist(lie)-NONPAST  
 'The boy has/owns a spear.'

This construction asserts the presence of a possession relation rather than a transfer of possession relation, and so differs from the other verb types.

**2. Transfer of Possession.** These are the standard verbs like *give* or *send*, where the agent carrying out the transfer is also the former owner of the thing transferred (the source). There are examples of type 2 from Quiché and Mokilese, and Suárez cites Tlapanec without providing any examples. They do not occur in Hixkaryana or Kobon.

**3. Verbs of Creation.** These are verbs of creation such as *make*, *bake*, *write*, *sew*, in which the subject creates the object, and at the same time gives it to the possessor. These differ from the verbs of type 2 in that there really is no former possessor: the creator does not intend to keep the created thing but instead it becomes the recipient's possession upon creation. At most, one could argue that the creator is a temporary possessor. Verbs of type 3 are attested in all of the languages cited.

**4. Verbs of Obtaining.** That is, the agent of the transfer is not the former possessor or source.<sup>5</sup> Type 4 includes verbs such as *buy*, *get*, and *bring*. This type is attested in the English innovation 16 as well as in the languages with more general indirect object lowering.

English examples of type 4 verbs sound much better in the past tense:

- (23) She got my beret at Macy's.  
 (24) She got me a beret at Macy's.

However, the reason for this greater acceptability is not because tense is another interacting factor with possession relations, but that in these sentences the normal function of *attributive* possession, modification of the head noun, is actually what renders these utterances acceptable. Unlike types 1-4, all of which have the pragmatic (discourse) function of defining two participants in an event in terms of their relationship to each other with respect to the action described by the main verb, attributive possession has the pragmatic function of modification of the referent, usually in order to assist in identifying the referent (restrictive modification) or to

<sup>5</sup>The agent may also be the recipient, in which case the verb may be a middle form or a simple active form without a benefactor or even possessor relation explicitly represented; see the discussion of the Tzotzil constraints in footnote 8.

make a secondary comment on it (nonrestrictive modification; see Croft 1984 and below for discussion of the basic pragmatic functions of clause structure). This sets it apart from types 1-4 and is responsible for the syntactic structures usually associated with it.

The reason that type 3 and type 4 verbs are more likely to undergo indirect object lowering than type 1 and type 2 verbs is that their semantics is more conducive to the pragmatic function of modification. Type 3 and 4 verbs primarily denote the actions of creation and obtaining respectively, and only secondarily denote the transfer of possession to the benefactor. In fact, the benefactor may be absent, in which case they denote only the actions of creation and obtaining, as in *I baked a cake* or *I got a beret*. As a less central part of the verbal semantics, the transfer of possession is more suitable to representation as modification as secondary comment. Type 1 and 2 verbs, on the other hand, primarily denote the possession or transfer of possession event respectively, and so it is much more likely that cross-linguistically the benefactor will remain a primary participant of the main verb in surface structure.

From this one would expect that indirect object lowering with both type 3 and type 4 verbs in English is also relatively acceptable under those circumstances most conducive to perceiving the possessor as a true NP constituent in its discourse function. For a possessor to assist in successfully identifying the referent of the head NP to the hearer, the type of entity denoted must be preferably unique (or uniquely salient) in its relation to the possessor. Hence, an already-owned item (past) is better than an unknown, to-be-owned one (future); and a unique or uniquely salient item is better than an ordinary one:

(25) (?)Marian will make her wedding dress.

(26) \*?Jane is going to make my yogurt.

In these sentences, it is extremely difficult if not outright impossible to separate the attributive-possessor from benefactive functions; the clearest examples of indirect object lowering are those where the attributive-possession function is impossible or very unlikely.

The reason for this is the primary semantic fact which licenses possessor ascension as well as indirect object lowering: something can be beneficially/adversely affected by an action by virtue of being the possessor of the entity which is directly affected by the action. In the examples of possessor ascension given above, the benefactor relation realized in the surface morphosyntax is semantically implied, or at least pragmatically implicated, by the possession relation. Actually, from the point of view of languages with extensive indirect object lowering, English and other languages with little or no indirect object lowering actually exhibit extensive "possessor ascension," realizing directly the dative/benefactive relation only implied in the Quiché and Mokilese constructions. This fact also accounts for the widespread syncretism among genitive, dative and benefactive cases. In a study of synchronic syncretism (formal identity) of case-markings in a forty language sample (Croft 1985), there were 24 independent instances of syncretism of at least two of these three cases.

If the analysis proposed here is correct, then one should be able to account for some of the constraints on possessor ascension. First, the more intimate the possession relation, the more likely one will find possessor ascension. In French, (inalienable) body part possessors can ascend. However, 28 is marginally acceptable if the painting was actually created as opposed to owned by the possessor. With an owned object which is unimportant, such as the pencil in 29, the possessor can hardly ascend.

- (27) Il m'a cassé le bras.  
'He broke my arm.'
- (28) ??Il m'a brûlé le tableau.  
'He burned my painting.'
- (29) \*?Il m'a cassé le crayon.  
'He broke my pencil.'

Also, if possessor ascension represents an implied benefactive/malefactive relationship between the action and the possessor, then one will find only direct objects and nonagentive subjects which are directly affected by the event with possessors that can ascend. 30 is bad because the object of a perception verb is not directly affected by the action, while the Spanish examples 31-33 contrast nonagentive and agentive subjects.

- (30) \*Il m'a écouté la chanson.  
'He listened to my song.'
- (31) Se me quebró el brazo.  
'I broke my arm.'
- (32) Se me olvidó/perdió el libro.  
'I forgot/lost my book.'
- (33) \*El perro me comió las tortillas.  
'My dog ate the tortillas.'

While this is not an exhaustive list of the kinds of constraints on possessor ascension, it suggests that the semantic explanation I have proposed here will bear fruit in a more detailed examination of possessor ascension.

## 5. Conclusion: Structural and Semantic Explanations Compared

Although I have argued that in the case of the relationship between possession and indirect objects a semantic analysis is superior to a structural one, and the way I have presented the two makes them look radically different, it is worth investigating the similarities between the two approaches.

Why does a syntactician propose the constituent structures and rules that he does? Because he can demonstrate that other rules must also refer to that constituent unit, and that that rule allows other rules to be written in a perspicuous form. Why does a semanticist propose the kinds of semantic relations and

pragmatic functions holding between them, such as those enumerated in Section 4? Because he has a model, intuitive or formalized, of the real world relations they denote, and because he can demonstrate that altering the semantic parameters will alter the interpretations, making the utterance more or less acceptable in predictable ways. These are very different forms of argumentation, and yet they usually yield surprisingly similar results.

The reason underlying abstract syntactic structures such as in 2 and 3 or basic lexical forms such as 4-5 and 17-18 is that they allow for a relatively uniform isomorphism to semantic or pragmatic structure, cutting across variations in surface form in a single language or variation across languages. Semantic arguments to a predicate are realized syntactically as dependents on the verb (or, dominated by VP). Pragmatic modifiers of a referring expression are realized syntactically as dependents of a head noun (or, dominated by NP). These intuitive matches are the cause, not the symptom, of the syntactic arguments proposed for the underlying forms. Thus, there is a great deal of similarity, i.e., redundancy, between abstract syntactic representations and semantic-pragmatic representations, while it is the surface structure which is periodically aberrant. Syntacticians explain the aberrance of surface structures by the application of syntactic rules, syntactic not only in the way they are stated but also because they are presumably sensitive to structural rather than semantic constraints.<sup>6</sup> Many linguists have argued, as I have here, that these rules are actually sensitive to semantic and pragmatic constraints. It now remains to describe the semantic alternative to a syntactic *rule* for realizing the surface structures themselves.

If we want a semantic-pragmatic analysis which is truly nontransformational, that is, describes utterances in terms of their own semantic and pragmatic structure rather than in terms of a derivation from a related structure or an abstract structure, then we must have a model of the interaction between the various semantic and pragmatic properties of the described situation and the utterance context that produces the desired surface structures. The following is a fragment of such a model. In most cases, semantic and pragmatic structure tend to align neatly with each other. The alignments, or natural correlations, are displayed in the following table, from Croft 1984:57:

<i>Syntactic Category</i>	noun	adjective	verb
<i>Semantic Class</i>	object	property	action
<i>Pragmatic Function</i>	reference (topic)	modification	predication (comment)

**Table 1.** Natural correlations of syntactic categories

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<sup>6</sup>These arguments apply *mutatis mutandis* to lexical rules, since lexical rules are essentially transformations applied to subcategorizations, which are partially specified trees or dependency structures.

When this is the case, semantic and pragmatic structure can be read directly from surface structure. When conflicts in semantic and/or pragmatic structures arise, surface structures have to resolve that conflict in some way. The same is true when a single entity plays a double role in either semantic or pragmatic structure. This creates a conflict with principles of the linearization of dependencies, since linearization optimally keeps dependents contiguous with their heads. A constituent with two heads is a suboptimal situation: either only one dependency will be realized, or there will be doubling of the constituent unit.

This model predicts that cross-linguistic variation will be found where such conflicts take place, since arbitrary choices must be made to resolve the conflict. This is certainly true in the case of the relationship between possession and indirect objects. The type 1-4 verbs where indirect object lowering is found are examples of a double-role conflict: a semantic participant in the event denoted by the main verb ends up entering into a possession relation with another semantic participant by virtue of the action or state denoted by the main verb. There is also a pragmatic conflict, especially for type 3 and 4 verbs, between reference to a participant in the action denoted by the main verb and modification of the possessed item. Most languages conventionally resolve the conflicts by making the possessor-to-be a surface-syntactic dependent of the main verb, which also fits the referential pragmatic function it plays. But a small number of languages conventionally resolve the conflict the other way, realizing the possessor-to-be as an actual possessor and thus a modifier of the direct object; this is indirect object lowering.

In the case of possessor ascension, the situation is similar but slightly different. The possessor again plays a double role in the semantic structure: it is both the possessor of the direct object and a beneficiary (or "maleficiary") of the action by virtue of being the possessor of the direct object, and as such the modifier is derivatively a participant in the action. Some languages conventionally resolve this conflict by realizing the possessor as possessor only, the "normal" case. Others realize the possessor as benefactor only, i.e., the derived meaning and function; this is possessor ascension.

More rarely, languages will realize both functions in possessor ascension or indirect object lowering. In English, which has historically tended to realize dative experiencers as subjects, one finds the following nonagentive constructions where the possessor both has ascended to subject and is the possessor:

(34) I broke my arm.

(35) I lost/forgot/remembered my book.

In the following example, there is double marking where the lowered indirect object is realized as surface recipient and as possessor; the acceptability of the example is improved, of course, by the past tense:<sup>7</sup>

(36) I gave him his first book.

<sup>7</sup>This example was pointed out to me by Jane Robinson.

The best example of the bidirectional relation between possession and indirect objects can be found in Tzotzil, a Mayan language (Aissen 1980). Tzotzil represents both the situations which give rise to indirect object lowering and the situations which give rise to possessor ascension with double marking: possessors ascend to indirect object (which is then promoted to direct object, triggering verb agreement and the applicative suffix *-be*), while the (former) direct object still retains a possessive cross-reference prefix (37; possessive forms are identical to the ergative forms). On the other hand, benefactors and recipients can be represented also as cross-referenced possessors not just under the conditions licensed by the type 2-4 constructions (e.g., 38-40) but also in other benefactive constructions where the benefactor does not come to possess the direct object (41):<sup>8</sup>

- (37) ?i-s-tz'is-be la s-nukulal ti pukuj-e.  
 PF-3ERG-set-APPL PRT 3ERG-skin the devil-ENC  
 'He sewed up the devil's skin.'
- (38) ta x-a-k-ak'-be s-kolesob-il l-a-vokol.  
 IMPF -2ABS-1ERG-give-APPL 3ERG-help-SUFF the-2ERG-hardship  
 'I will give you something to relieve your hardship (lit. hardship's help).'
- (39) ?i-j-meltzan-be y-ot li Romin-e.  
 PF-1ERG-make-APPL 3ERG-tortilla the Romin-ENC  
 'I made Romin's tortillas/I made tortillas for Romin.'
- (40) Ch-i-na?-be tal j-nichim-al.  
 IMPF-3ABS-1ERG-remember-APPL coming 1ERG-flower-SUFF  
 'They remember to bring me flowers.'
- (41) Tz-jok'-be-ik x-ch'en-al.  
 IMP=3ERG-dig-APPL-3pl 3ERG-hole-SUFF  
 'They dig a hole for them [the bones].'

If, as this analysis as well as others suggest, much of syntax can be analyzed as semantics and pragmatics in disguise, that is, structural phenomena give rise

<sup>8</sup>It is no accident that the non-possessor benefactives in the Tzotzil examples in Aissen's paper are or can be translated using the English benefactive preposition *for*.

I should point out that Aissen provides a structural (relational grammar) analysis of Tzotzil, and does not describe the phenomena in 38-41 as indirect object lowering. Tzotzil also exhibits two constraints on this construction, only one of which is easily explainable. The relatively explainable one is that possessor ascension is disallowed (i.e., only the possessor is present in the surface) when the possessor/benefactor is coreferential with the subject; this is presumably because the possessor/benefactor is also agent and thus does not allow representation as an oblique form (see Croft 1985 for more discussion). The inexplicable one is that the double representation is obligatory for third persons but optional for first and second persons, where only the possessor is acceptable. This goes contrary to predictions by the animacy hierarchy, since this means the first and second person may optionally be left in a more embedded structure and thus will not trigger verb agreement. On the other hand, type 2-4 verbs can be realized with the recipient/benefactor as a surface argument of the verb only as well (Aissen 1983); more evidence concerning distribution of possessor-only, benefactor-only, and double marking in Tzotzil is necessary to sort out the conditioning factors.

to semantic-pragmatic explanations, the distinction between syntax and semantics as different levels in the grammar is misplaced. Instead, form and meaning can be quite directly connected in the way I have demonstrated here. The genuinely relevant distinction for linguistics is between what is motivated, and thus can be explained directly in terms of semantic and pragmatic structures, and what is arbitrary, and thus must be explained in terms of the conventional resolution of conflicts in semantic and pragmatic structure by particular languages.

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