

Explaining Case Variation in German Inalienable Possession Constructions

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Abstract: In external possession constructions with a PP-embedded body part, the possessor can be dative or accusative-marked (e.g. *ihm/ihn in die Nase beißen* ‘bite him (DAT/ACC) in the nose’). Drawing on a preliminary corpus search and typological findings concerning general tendencies of encoding possessors (Lehmann et al. 2004), we explain this variation from both a semantic/pragmatic/functional and a formal syntactic perspective. We also give an account of the internal (possessive pronoun) option (*in seine Nase beißen* ‘bite in his nose’) and the marginal but possible “doubly marked” possessor option (*ihm/ihn in seine Nase beißen* ‘bite him (DAT/ACC) in his nose’).

0. Introduction

Some inalienable possession constructions in German show case variation between dative (DAT) and accusative (ACC) in the external possessor argument (Wegener 1985, Lee-Schoenfeld 2012).

- (1) Die Krähe hat ihr/sie in die Hand gebissen.
the crow has her.DAT/ACC in the hand bitten
‘The crow bit her in the hand.’
- (2) Das Kind hat ihm/ihn in den Magen getreten.
the child has him.DAT/ACC in the stomach kicked
‘The child kicked him in the stomach.’

The same variation is found with *hauen/schlagen* ‘hit’ and *kneifen/zwicken* ‘pinch’, which, like *beißen* ‘bite’ and *treten* ‘kick’, allow a simple transitive (3a) as well as directional (3b) valency frame. The PP in (b) indicates the endpoint of the directed motion expressed by the verb.

- (3) a. Die Krähe hat den Welpen gebissen.
the crow has the puppy.ACC bitten
‘The crow bit the puppy.’
- b. Die Krähe hat ins Körbchen gebissen.
the crow has into-the basket bitten
‘The crow bit into the dog basket.’

Whether used with or without a GOAL PP, verbs that participate in the DAT/ACC variation have an inherent endpoint, i.e. they are telic, and the variation is a result of the verb having access to both the transitive and the intransitive/directional valency pattern. This is summarized in Table 1.

Table 1: External possessor with PP-embedded body part (Lee-Schoenfeld 2012)

Option		Constituent/Argument Structure
(i)	DAT-marked possessor	Verb used intransitively with the PP as argument (i.e. the PP is valency-based)
(ii)	ACC-marked possessor	Verb used transitively, with the possessor as direct object and the PP as adjunct (i.e. the PP is not valency-based)

This generalization covers a number of cases but does not motivate the variation – is it completely free, or are dative and accusative chosen in certain contexts? Furthermore, the results of a preliminary questionnaire-based study reveal that there is no clear-cut picture of acceptable versus unacceptable cases. Instead, we have a scale of graded acceptability. Assuming that there is no meaningless variation, we argue that a DAT-marked possessor represents its referent as an empathetic co-participant, involved in the situation independently of the body part, while an ACC-marked possessor represents its referent and the body part as analogously affected, interpreted as equally involved in the situation (cf. Lehmann et al. 2004; section 3.2). The use of the dative emphasizes the personal (emotional) involvement of the possessor, whereas the accusative use results in a neutral description of the scene (‘who did what’). Before diving into more data and the analysis, we clarify the use of the term “affected(ness).”

1. “Affectedness”

As discussed in Lee-Schoenfeld (2012), Draye (1996) and Lamiroy & Delbecque (1998) argue that the more “affected” the external possessor is, the more likely it is that this possessor is ACC-marked. This seems to be the exact opposite of what we argue here: The more emphasis is put on its “affectedness,” the more likely it is that the possessor is DAT-marked. This apparent contradiction is due to the fact that we are dealing with two different uses of the term “affected(ness).”

Table 2: Uses/meanings of “affected”

Use/Meaning	
(a)	Being an empathetic, necessarily animate co-participant in the situation (see e.g. Hole 2005, Lee-Schoenfeld 2006, 2007, McIntyre 2006, Pykkänen 2008)
(b)	Being directly acted upon or influenced, as opposed to being in control, not necessarily animate (see e.g. Lehmann et al. 2004)

Given use (a), more affectedness should mean choice of dative case because (a) describes what is typical of an indirect object, the RECIPIENT or BENE-/MALEFICIARY. Given use (b), more affected-

ness should mean choice of accusative case because (b) describes what is typical of a direct object, the THEME or PATIENT. In Draye (1996) and Lamiroy & Delbecque (1998), the term must have been used with this latter meaning in mind.

Crucially, the possible semantic/pragmatic distinction between dative and accusative case-marking of the possessor cannot be isolated from the rest of the construction, and affectedness – in each of the possible definitions of the term – is not a binary characteristic but should receive gradable values on a scale.

2. Some More Challenging Data and Extensive Variation

To get to the core of the semantic/pragmatic distinction between the DAT- and ACC-possessor variants of the inalienable possession constructions in question, we conducted a pilot corpus search.¹ Expanding on our target data, we included the option of having a possessive pronoun (e.g. *seine* ‘his’) instead of a definite article (e.g. *die* ‘the’) specifying the body part (henceforth “possessed DP” or “possessum”). A possessive pronoun is an instance of a genitive (GEN)-marked, internal possessor – “internal” because the possessor is part of the possessum, that is, inside the possessed DP, whereas a possessor dative in an external possession construction is part of the verbal argument structure, that is, outside the possessed DP. The search string we entered is given in (4).

- (4) in [...] Nase gebissen (i.e. in die/seine/ihre Nase gebissen)
 in nose bitten (i.e. in the/his/her nose bitten)

The results of this search revealed that each construction is found in very idiosyncratic surroundings, i.e. subject to a number of restrictions (lexical, selectional, as well as concerning register and genre). More detailed empirical research is necessary, but our pilot study resulted in three main findings. The following table summarizes these findings and provides one or two search examples of each.

Table 3: Preliminary corpus search results

Example Type	Example(s) Found in Corpus
A. ACC-external possessor and DAT-external possessor in the same text	(i) Hallo, bin neu hier und muss gleich mein Problem los werden...mein kleiner Pascha (3 Monate alter Jack-Russell-Terrier) hat mich gestern in die Nase gebissen . Zuerst haben wir wie immer total lieb miteinander gespielt, [...]. Dabei hab ich mich etwas zu ihm herab gebeugt und Pascha sprang hoch und biss mir in die Nase . Ich musste sogar zum Arzt, da es so stark geblutet hat. <i>'Hello, am new here and have to share my problem right away...my little Pascha (3-month-old Jack Russell Terrier) bit me (ACC) in the nose yesterday. First we played nicely as always, [...]. At that point I bent down to him a little bit and Pascha jumped up and</i>

¹ We used Google, the DGD (Datenbank für Gesprochenes Deutsch provided by the IDS (<http://dgd.ids-mannheim.de:8080/> dgd/pragdb.dgd_extern.welcome), and the core corpus of the DWDS (<http://www.dwds.de/ressourcen/kernkorpus/>) for a first exploratory random search.

	<p><i>bit me (DAT) in the nose. I even had to go to the doctor because there was so much bleeding.</i> (http://www.dogforum.de/hilfe-mein-hund-hat-mich-in-die-nase-gebissen-t57915.html Hilfe, mein Hund hat mich in die Nase gebissen! von Fellknäuel » 21.08.2008 20:25)</p>
<p>B. External/internal possessor variation between texts and in the same text</p>	<p>(i) ist ihnen auch schon aufgefallen, oder wussten sie schon, dass 10 monate alte säuglinge mit nur vier zähnen trotzdem richtig fest in ihre nase beißen können? <i>'have you noticed, or do you happen to know already, that 10-month-old infants with only four teeth can nonetheless bite into your nose really hard?'</i> (http://lamamma.twoday.net/stories/11497757/comment la-mamma - 19. Dez, 19:17)</p> <p>(ii) <u>Der Freundin</u> aus Wut <u>in die Nase</u> gebissen Amtsgericht Jena [...] Petra habe sich an seiner Jacke festgekrallt und sei ihm dabei ganz nahe gekommen. Da <u>habe</u> er reflexartig <u>in ihre Nase</u> gebissen. Das alles tue ihm nun wahnsinnig leid. [...] <i>'Girlfriend bitten into the nose out of anger</i> Courthouse Jena [...] <i>Petra allegedly clawed herself into his jacket and got very close to him. Then, as if triggered by a reflex, he bit into her nose. He now deeply regrets everything that happened. [...]</i> (http://stadtroda.otz.de/web/lokal/leben/detail/-/specific/Der-Freundin-aus-Wut-in-die-Nase-gebissen-1196906345 Ruth Hirschel / 01.08.12 / OTZ)</p>
<p>C. "Doubly marked" possessors: Combined external and internal possession</p>	<p>(i) Heute bekommt ihr endlich Post von Kathy. Ich wohne jetzt schon 2 Wochen bei den Harder's, und fühle mich dort echt wohl. [...] Ach ja, mein „Freund“ Jakob... der Alexandersittich. Als ich ihn fangen wollte, <u>hat er mir in meine Nase</u> gebissen. Das hat so wehgetan, dem gehe ich lieber aus dem Weg. [...] <i>'Today you are finally getting mail from Kathy. I have been living with the Harders for two weeks now and feel really comfortable there. [...] Oh, yes, my "friend" Jakob ... the [type of parakeet]. When I wanted to catch him, he bit me in my nose. That hurt so badly, I better avoid him. [...]</i> (http://www.lichtblickfür4pfoten.de/post-von-ehemaligen.html 30.01.2012: Post von Kate)</p> <p>(ii) „Eine Wiese voller Blumen! Sie riechen gut, aber ganz anders als du! Und wer seid ihr?“ Vorwitzig steckte das Kitz seine Nase in den Hügel, der unter einem der großen Bäume stand. „Aua, aua, was macht ihr denn? Lasst das! Wieso beißt ihr mich?“ [...] „Ich wollte sie doch nur kennen lernen, aber sie <u>haben mir in meine Nase</u> gebissen!“ Vorsichtig steckte das Rehkind die malträtierte Schnauze zwischen die Zweige des kleinen Baums. <i>'"A lawn full of flowers! They smell good, but very different from you. And who are you?" The fawn cheekily stuck her nose in the mound that stood was one of the big trees. "Ouch, ouch, what are you doing? Stop that! Why are you biting me?" [...] "I only wanted to get to know you, but you bit me into my nose!" Carefully, the deer youngling put its maltreated snout between the branches of the small tree.'</i> (http://www.fanfiktion.de/s/50d8881d0001ab2b0c907530/1/Der-Baum von SidneyDreamer, erstellt: 24.12.2012)</p>

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The empirical situation points to high variability and a very flexible application of the basic morphosyntactic patterns, leading to the question whether the seemingly free variation between the constructions (DAT-external possessor vs. ACC-external possessor vs. internal possessor only vs. double marking) is really free or whether there are features (pragmatic, textual, etc.) that guide each individual choice. Assuming that there is no meaningless variation we expect to find subtle distinctions in meaning concerning perspective, stance, etc.

Notice that example A (i) supports Lee-Schoenfeld's (2012) intuition (contra Draye 1996 and Lamiroy & Delbecque 1998) that ACC-marking of the possessor is used when the possessor's involvement is neutrally stated, and that DAT-marking of the possessor is used when the addressee is supposed to take the possessor's perspective as an empathically involved participant. In the example, the possessor is the speaker/writer, and the text is a personal account. The first two instances of external possession are ACC-external possessors (*mich*), and they occur in the headline and initial statement of the facts, when the audience does not know the speaker/writer yet. The third instance is a DAT-external possessor (*mir*), and, at this point, the account is more personal. The audience knows the speaker/writer better and feels for her.

In example B (i) (internal possessor), on the other hand, the possessor is the addressee/reader. The speaker/writer makes a generic statement about 10-month-olds and their nose-biting behavior, but they also address the reader, using the polite form of address (*Ihre* instead of *eure Nase* 'your nose'). Here, the distance between the speaker/writer and the audience seems even greater than in the instances of ACC-external possession in A (i). The addressee is not emphasized as a direct participant in the biting scenario, only as possessor of the nose.

Interestingly, both examples C (i) and (ii) (doubly marked possession), the only two hits a Google search of "mir in meine Nase gebissen" yielded, are taken from texts (a letter and a fictional piece of writing, respectively) in which animals speak. The first example is a quote from a dog, and the second is a quote from a baby deer. This shows both how marginal doubly marked possession is and that this construction may result from a somewhat unnatural kind of emphasis. We suspect that our search of spoken corpora will yield further hits and reveal that doubly marked possession occurs more commonly in casual discourse.

The syntactic questions arising from our search, to be taken up in section 4, are whether the possessor relationship is syntactically encoded, that is, via theta-assignment, and if so, how an account of possessor raising (Lee-Schoenfeld 2006, 2007) can be reconciled with occurrences of double marking, where both the external possessor position and the internal possessor position are filled. But first, in section 3 we broaden the perspective by taking into account typological tendencies on argument structuring, creating a more general basis for the evaluation of possible semantic distinctions.

3. A Typological Account of Participation and Possession with Special Attention to the German Case

In order to capture the peculiarities of the possessor dative in German, it is useful to broaden the view and take into account some fundamental considerations offered by typological research on argument structure in general, and the possessor dative in German in particular. We take up sug-

gestions by Lehmann et al. (2004), who, building on earlier models (Comrie 1991, Croft 1991, Foley & Van Valin 1984, Langacker 1991; see also Dowty 1991) argue for three macro roles for participant relations: ACTOR, UNDERGOER, and INDIRECTUS, distinguished by the relational features [control] and [affectedness]. Most relevant for us is the INDIRECTUS, which has neither maximum control nor maximum affectedness but is maximally empathetic and embodies “co-involvement” (‘Mitbetroffenheit,’ cf. Lehmann et al. 2004: 18f.). Macro roles can each be broken down into several micro (thematic) roles. The micro role associated with ACTOR that has the most control is AGENT, and the micro role associated with UNDERGOER that has the most affectedness is PATIENT. Most typical of INDIRECTUS, falling in the middle of the scale of micro roles, is the role of RECIPIENT. The role of SYMPATHETICUS, which is crucial for inalienable possession, falls into the range of micro roles associated with both INDIRECTUS and UNDERGOER. Lehmann et al. (2004: 19) suggest the following linear ordering of the typologically most important micro roles: AGENT – FORCE – COMITATIVE – INSTRUMENT – EXPERIENCER – EMITTENT – RECIPIENT – BENEFICIARY – SYNPATHETICUS – SOURCE – LOCATION – GOAL – THEME – PATIENT. The three locative roles (source, location and goal) are omitted in the following as they are not needed for our argumentation.

The large area of overlap between the ranges of micro roles covered by each macro role is evident from the scales of possible micro roles in Table 4. The prototypical micro roles for each macro role are underlined. As the macro role of INDIRECTUS covers the intermediate space on the scale between ACTOR to UNDERGOER, its prototypical realization as RECIPIENT allows for less prototypical extensions toward both ends of the scale (toward the ACTOR pole via EMITTENT, and towards the UNDERGOER pole via BENEFICIARY).

Table 4: Overview of macro and micro roles (cf. Lehmann et al. 2004:19)

Macro roles	Micro roles
ACTOR	<u>AGENT</u> < FORCE < COMITATIVE < INSTRUMENT < EXPERIENCER < EMITTENT < RECIPIENT < BENEFICIARY
UNDERGOER	<u>PATIENT</u> < THEME < SYMPATHETICUS < BENEFICIARY < RECIPIENT < EMITTENT < EXPERIENCER
INDIRECTUS	EXPERIENCER < EMITTENT < <u>RECIPIENT</u> > BENEFICIARY > SYMPATHETICUS

In languages distinguishing three macro roles and using case-marking, the correlation between participant role and case marking results in the typical ditransitive pattern (i.e. ACTOR correlated with nominative, UNDERGOER with accusative, and INDIRECTUS with dative).

The roles described so far express participant relations, i.e. relations defined by the situational core (encoded in the predicate). However, according to Lehmann et al. (2004), there are also interparticipant relations, i.e. relations between individual participants that are independent of the primary situational core. Thus, any participant may simultaneously carry several roles, deriving either from the situational core (participation relation) or from an independent connection

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among entities functioning as participants (interparticipant relation). The most important interparticipant relation for our purposes here is possession. In a sentence like *Erna wäscht Erwin die Haare* ‘Erna is washing Erwin’s hair’ (cf. Lehmann et. al 2004:52/21), there is an inalienable possession relation between *Erwin* as the possessor and *die Haare* as the possessum. This relation exists independently of the situation expressed by the predicate, namely the situational core (*waschen*), which consists of the participant relations AGENT (*Erna*), PATIENT (*die Haare*), and BENEFICIARY/ SYMPATHETICUS (*Erwin*).

In German, the INDIRECTUS, which is – as expected – marked by the dative, has an exceptionally broad domain of associated micro roles. This is particularly true of possessive relations, where German prefers dative constructions to an extent that is typologically rare. More specifically, while inalienable possession in the majority of languages is expressed via an internal (“adnominal”) possessor construction as in (5), German prefers the typologically marked external possessor construction in (6), with the possessor dative as a direct participant in the situational core (“adverbal” realization of the possessor).

- (5) a. Ich wasche meine Hände.
 I wash my hands
 ‘I wash my hands.’
- b. Er trägt meine / Susannes Schleppe.
 he carries my / Susanne’s train
 ‘He carries my/Susanne’s train.’
- (6) a. Ich wasche mir die Hände.
 I wash me.DAT the hands
 ‘I wash my hands.’
- b. Er trägt mir / (der) Susanne die Schleppe.
 he carries me.DAT / the.DAT Susanne the train
 ‘He carries my/Susanne’s train.’

The prototypical German strategy for expressing inalienable possession is the realization of an adverbial possessor (6), which makes the possessor a direct participant of the situation (as BENEFICIARY/SYMPATHETICUS). It backgrounds the possessive relation, which is merely the result of pragmatic inferencing. That is, in (6b, *mir...die Schleppe*), the possessive relation expressing that I am the possessor of the train, which is the standard interpretation, is not explicitly expressed but inferred. On the other hand, the typologically unmarked strategy qua adnominal possessor (5) is dispreferred in German. It backgrounds the participation of the possessor putting emphasis on the possession relation, which is explicitly encoded.

In addition to these two options, there is a third strategy, illustrated in (7), which combines the first two and therefore leads to a “double encoding” of the possessor via the optional addition of a possessive pronoun to an already externally expressed possessive relation. This option is cross-linguistically marginal and also rare in German.

- (7) a. Ich wasche mir meine Hände.
 I wash me.DAT my hands
'I wash my hands.'
- b. Er trägt mir / (der) Susanne meine/ihre Schleppe.
 he carries me.DAT / (the.DAT) Susanne my/her train
'He carries my/Susanne's train.'

The three strategies of expressing possession in German discussed in this section are summarized in here in Table 5.

Table 5: Strategies for expressing possessive relations in German

	Strategy 1	Strategy 2	Strategy 3
	Adnominal realization of the possessor (see 9)	Adverbial realization of the possessor (see 10)	Double encoding of possessor (see 11)
Features	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Indirect participation of the possessor in the situation • Participant relation is backgrounded • Possessive relation explicitly encoded 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Direct participation of the possessor in the situation • Participant relation is foregrounded • Possessive relation is backgrounded 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Possessive relation is represented twice (external and internal) • Explicit expression of direct participant relation • Explicit expression of possessive relation (internal possessor)
Status	Dispreferred	Prototypical	Marginal
Effect	Possession wins over participation	Participation wins over possession	Participation and possession are equally prominent

The dative/accusative variation in the external possessor, as exemplified in our starting point data (1) and (2), can be seen as a fourth strategy, which is, however, severely restricted by lexical and other factors. To explain the motivation for this variation, Lehmann et al.'s discussion of different degrees of analogous affectedness comes into play (2004:57). In situations with analogous affectedness (*Erna schlug Erwin auf den Kopf* 'Erna hit Erwin on the head' > *Erna schlug Erwin* 'Erna hit Erwin'), the possessor plays the role of a SYMPATHETICUS and, via implication, acquires the role of a PATIENT as well. In situations with non-analogous affectedness (*Erna brach Erwin den Arm* 'Erna broke Erwin the arm' // #*Erna brach Erwin* 'Erna broke Erwin'), the possessor is only a SYMPATHETICUS, without being a PATIENT. Extending Lehmann et al.'s discussion, we argue that the use of an ACC-marked possessor in the external possessor construction expresses possessor and possessum (the PATIENT) as analogously affected, i.e. the possessor is also seen as PATIENT. The use of a DAT-marked possessor, on the other hand, draws attention to the possessor as a SYMPATHETICUS, a direct participant of the situation (independently of the PATIENT), expressing more empathy than the use of an ACC-marked possessor. This confirms that the dative/accusative variation found in our data is indeed not free but a consequence of stylistic or expressive choice.

In sum, German allows for the possibility of the possessor participant to be furnished with one or more of the micro roles associated with the INDIRECTUS. As the INDIRECTUS has a broad range of associated micro roles, the potential for various more specific interpretations of the micro role(s) is particularly large (depending on the situation type). For the expression of possessive relations, Strategy 2 is the unmarked case, with the others being used “freely”, whenever a particular type of foregrounding and backgrounding between possessive relation and participant relation is preferred.

4. A Formal Syntactic Account of the Variation

4.1. DAT/ACC-External (Adverbial) Possessor

An ACC-marked possessor results from the transitive use of the verbs that participate in the case alternation (*beißen* ‘bite’, *treten* ‘kick’, *hauen/schlagen* ‘hit’, *kneifen/zwicken* ‘pinch’, etc.), with the possessor as the direct object (the PATIENT) and the PP as an adjunct (Table 1, option ii). The possessor is not theta-marked as such but gets its interpretation by way of pragmatic inferencing (Table 5, strategy 2).

- (8) a. Er hat mich in die Nase gebissen.
he has me.ACC in the nose bitten
‘He bit me in the nose.’

A DAT-marked possessor results from the intransitive use of the verb with the PP as the argument (Table 1, option i) and the possessor as the SYMPATHETICUS in the verbal argument domain (Spec of affectee v , see Lee-Schoenfeld 2006, 2007).

In the case of inalienable (body part) possession, we argue, in line with Landau (1999) and Lee-Schoenfeld (2006, 2007) that the D of the possessed DP is “defective” in that it is syntactically unable to express a possessive relation, i.e. unable to license genitive case, because N inherently includes this relation. Looking for case, the possessor then raises to the specifier of the DAT-case-licensing affectee v (an instance of Internal Merge coupled with inherent case assignment). We therefore predict that only the external possessor (*mir* ‘me.DAT,’ cf. 9a), not the internal possessor (the possessive pronoun *meine* ‘my,’ cf. 9b) should be possible. This prediction is on the right track but not fully borne out. The internal possessor is degraded but not impossible. We argue that this is because a body part can be coerced into an alienable possession construction, perhaps in order to avoid drawing attention to the involvement of the possessor.

- (9) a. Er hat mir in die Nase gebissen.
he has me.DAT in the nose bitten
‘He bit me in the nose.’
b. ? Er hat in meine Nase gebissen.
he has in my nose bitten
‘He bit in my nose.’

Note also that a body part possessum can only have a defective D if the predicate is compatible with roles associated with the macro role INDIRECTUS. More specifically, the verb needs to be able to project an affectee vP; otherwise, the possessor DP can't be case-licensed. The copula construction in (10), for example, does not allow for a SYMPATHETICUS.

- (10) Das ist meine Hand / *mir die Hand.
 that is my hand / *me.DAT the hand
'That is my hand.'

In the case of alienable possession, the D of the possessed DP is not defective, i.e. it can express the full range of relations that Ds normally can. Since German favors possessors as direct participants, it prefers a DAT-external possessor in Spec affectee vP (in this case, via External Merge), although the specifier of the possessed DP could host a GEN-marked possessor. The latter may or may not be added, depending on whether possession is to be emphasized (see 11).

- (11) Er ist mir auf die / meine Schleppe getreten.
 he has me.DAT on the / my train stepped
'He (unfortunately for me) stepped on the train of my train.'

We will return to examples like this, with doubly marked possession, in section 4.3.

4.2 Internal (Adnominal) Possessor

The internal possessor option, with a possessive pronoun (Table 5, strategy 1), serves to avoid giving the possessor any direct participation status. It is predicted to work well with alienable possession (see 12), but not with inalienable possession because the D of a body part DP is defective in this context (see sect. 4.1). If an impersonal interpretation is intended, the body part is coerced into an alienable possession construction with an internal possessor (see 13).

- (12) Er ist auf meine Schleppe getreten.
 he has on my train stepped
'He stepped on the train of my train.'

- (13) ? Er hat in meine Nase gebissen.
 he has in my nose bitten
'He bit in my nose.'

4.3 Doubly Marked Possessor

If the possessor is ACC-marked, we have the situation explained in section 4.1, with the possessor as a PATIENT and its role as a SYMPATHETICUS de-emphasized. But in this case the ACC-external possessor is combined with an explicitly expressed internal possessor relation. This leads to less degraded examples than those displaying internal possession only (see 13) because the German

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preference for possessors expressed as directly involved participants is being upheld. It is also predicted to be better than a DAT-marked possessor combined with internal possession because, when not used in association with the macro role INDIRECTUS, the D of the possessed DP cannot be defective – external and internal possessor do not compete for Spec DP (see 14).

- (14) Er hat mich in meine Nase gebissen.
he has me.ACC in my nose bitten
'He bit me in my nose.'

External and internal possessors do compete for Spec DP when the possessum is a body part and the possessor is DAT-marked. The possessor raises from the specifier of the defective possessed DP to the inherent case-licensing affectee ν and should therefore make an additional internal possessor, as in (15), impossible. The fact that such examples are at least marginally acceptable is unexpected and needs to be explained.

- (15) ? Er hat mir in meine Nase gebissen / auf meinen Fuß getreten.
he has me.DAT in my nose bitten on my foot stepped
'He bit me in my nose/ stepped me on my foot.'

If the possessum is not a body part, double marking is correctly predicted to be unproblematic. Once again, here, the D of the possessum is not defective.

- (16) Er ist mir auf meine Schleppe getreten.
he has me.DAT on my train stepped
'He (unfortunately for me) stepped on the train of my train.'

Assuming the Copy Theory of Movement, the unexpected possibility of doubly marked possession with a DAT-external possessor (see 15) may be due to the lower copy of the raised possessor being – accidentally or for reasons of somewhat unnatural emphasis – pronounced in addition to the higher copy, similar to a resumptive pronoun (see e.g. Sells 1984 and Potsdam & Runner 2001 on resumptive pronouns in the domain of A-movement).

5. Conclusion

Supported by the results of a preliminary corpus search, we have shown that the variation found in German possession constructions with a PP-embedded body part is not free but rather serves pragmatic purposes. We have also established that the variation is constrained by the verb's subcategorization (semantic and syntactic selectional) requirements.

Only verbs that inherently express directed motion and can be used either transitively (with a directional PP adjunct) or intransitively (with a directional PP argument) participate in the dative/accusative alternation. So far, our corpus search results are in line with Lehmann et al. 2004, suggesting that the choice between dative and accusative depends on the participant status

of the possessor. The more involved in the core situation the possessor is, independently of the affected body part, the more likely it will be expressed as a DAT-marked nominal, playing the role of SYMPATHETICUS. The more the possessor is identified with the affected body part, the more likely it will be expressed as an ACC-marked nominal, playing the role of a (not necessarily empathy-invoking) PATIENT.

The less fine-grained variation between external (adverbal), internal (adnominal), and doubly marked possession simply comes down to whether the speaker wants to emphasize the possessor's core participant role of SYMPATHETICUS, his/her non-core interparticipant role of POSSESSOR, or both. Internal possession with a body part possessum seems to be a coercion of inalienable possession into an alienable possession construction, which probably has the purpose of maximally downplaying the significance of the possessor's role in the core situation expressed by the verb.

Doubly marked possession presents an interesting challenge for possessor raising analyses of external possession. We have tentatively suggested here that the presence of a possessive pronoun (i.e. an internal possessor) despite raising of the possessor into the verbal argument domain is due to resumption, that is, not only the higher but also the lower copy of the possessor being pronounced.

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