I. Introduction.

An External Possession Construction (EPC), loosely put, is a construction in which the possessor (PR) is “external” to the possessee (PS), as opposed to an Internal possession construction (IPC) in which the PR is “internal” to the PS. Let us consider the following examples:

(1)  
   a. John hit Mary on the arm. (EPC)  
   b. John hit Mary’s arm. (IPC)

In an EPC, PR can be expressed as subject, direct object, indirect object or dative, or structural topic, or as ergative or absolutive depending on the language type, but not an oblique-case marked element (Payne and Barshi 1999: 3).

In a traditional transformational grammar or relational grammar, EPCs were called PR-raising constructions or PR ascension/promotion constructions. PR raising assumes that a PR viewed as having a semantic or argument-structure dependency on an element within a “lower” constituent is structurally realized in a “higher” syntactic unit.

In this paper, however, we shall call them EPC as there are two arguments against a PR-raising approach.

First, it is not always possible to alternate between EPCs and IPCs.

(2)  
   a. Nay-ka mok-i malu-ta  
       I-Nom throat-Nom dry-Dec  
       “It is me who is thirsty”  
   b. ?? Na-uy mok-i malu-ta.  
       I-Gen throat-Nom dry-Dec

Secondly, there are semantic differences between an EPC and its IPC counterpart.

(3)  
       police-Nom I-Acc house-Acc search-Past-Dec  
       “Lit. The police searched me in the house.”  
       Police-Nom I-Gen house-Acc search-Past-Dec  
       “The police searched my house.”

Secondly, there are semantic differences between an EPC and its IPC counterpart.

(4)  
       Nom foot-Nom wide-Dec  
       “Yongsu knows a lot of people.”  
   b. Yongsu-uy pal-i nelp-ta.  
       Nom foot-Nom wide-Dec

1 This research was supported by the Academy of Korean Studies of the Republic of Korea.
“Yongsu has a wide foot.”

There is also a different flavour in meaning between an EPC and its IPC counterpart, despite their logically identical truth-conditions. Consider the following contrast:

     Nom Poss clothes-Acc touch-Past-Dec  
     "Yongsu touched Suni's clothes."

     Nom Acc clothes-Acc touch-Past-Dec  
     "Yongsu touched Suni on the clothes."

(5b) is used when Suni is actually wearing the clothes, while (5a) is also possible when the clothes is detached from Suni. Within the old formal approaches including transformational paradigm, possessor ascension was based on the assumption that (5a) and (5b) have the same meaning. It has recently been proposed that the external possessor is licensed in a specifier position of a designated functional projection, indicated FP, whose head assigns it an affect theta role (Ko 2005, Tomioka & Sim 2005). This could be responsible for adding meaning such as affectedness. Vermeulen (2005) has proposed that the external possessor is in fact licensed within the VP, and argue that the affected interpretation arises due to pragmatics rather than due to a grammatically defined theta role. On the other hand, the functionalists (Chappell and McGregor 1996b among others) argue that (5a) and (5b) have different meanings. First of all, in (5b) the action is represented as more intimately and directly affecting the person in (5a). Secondly, the possession is represented in (5a) as though it were disembodied from the person, that is, as though the clothes were not attached to the person. Furthermore, in (5b), the action is viewed as being directed at the person whereas in (5a) the action is viewed as being directed at the clothes to the exclusion of the person (Heine 1997).

On the basis of these two arguments, I claim that EPCs are non-derived constructions without involving any raising or promotion of the PR-NP.

There can be three ways in which EPCs are manifested in Korean: Double-Accusative constructions (DAC), Double-Dative constructions (DDC) or Double-Nominative constructions (DNC). Consider the following examples:

     John-Nom Mary-Acc arm-Acc hit-PAST-DEC  
     “John hit Mary on the arm.”


2 The different flavour in meaning between an EPC and its IPC counterpart is reported in Mohawk (Baker 1999: 294, ex.(3); 311, ex.(32c); also cited from M-J Kim 2000).

1 a. Wa’-khe-hsin-ohare’-  
     FACT-1SG:SUBJ/FEM:SG:OBJ-leg-wash-PUNC  
     “I washed her leg.”

     b. Wa’-ke-nohare’-  
     “I washed her leg.”

Baker reports that (1b) has a funny interpretation that native speakers fell that the body part leg is detached from the woman, who is part of the theme of the washing event.

3 The case particle -ey in Korean is also used as locative Case marker. But Maling and Kim (1992:43)
John-Nom Mary-Dat injection-Acc give-Past-Dec
“John gave an injection to Mary in the arm.”

c. John-i emeni-ka uysa-i-ta. (DNC)
John-Nom mother-Nom doctor-Cop-Dec
“It is John whose mother is a doctor.”

In this paper, however, we restrict our discussion on DAC like (6a), in which PR and PS are marked with the accusative. We call them Double-accusative EPCs (DA-EPC).

2. Some observations about Korean DA-EPCs

Before we delve into the constraints on DA-EPCs in Korean, let’s make some observations about Korean DA-EPCs.

2.1. Word order between PR and PS

As for word order between PR and PS, PR must precede PS.

John-Nom Mary-Acc arm-Acc hit-Past-Dec
John-Nom arm-Acc Mary-Acc hit-Past-Dec
‘John hit Mary on the arm.’

At first sight, it seems that these DA nominals are glued together in the exact order of PR + PS. Based on this fact, one might suspect whether they form a single constituent. This conjecture, however, does not seem to be born out, as these elements can be intervened by other constituents like adverbs, as shown in (8 – 10) below:

a. with regard to manner adverbs:

John-Nom Mary-Acc arm-Acc hard hit-Past-Dec
John-Nom arm-Acc hard arm-Acc hit-Past-Dec
John-Nom hard Acc arm-Acc hit-Past-Dec
‘John hit Mary hard on the arm.’

b. with regard to temporal adverbs:

John-Nom yesterday Acc arm-Acc hit-Past-Dec
John-Nom Acc yesterday arm-Acc hit-Past-Dec

analyze it as a DAT Case-marker, based on the fact that –eykey and -ey are in complimentary distribution depending on the animacy of the nominals they combine with: -eykey always marks [+ animate] nouns, whereas -ey marks [-animate] ones. Following their analysis, I take these two case-particles as "allomorphs’ of a single morpheme, i.e., DAT Case-particle.
Nom    Acc    arm-Acc yesterday hit-Past-Dec
“Yesterday John hit Mary on the arm”

c. with regard to locative adverbials

    Nom    Acc    arm-Acc    classroom-in    hit-Past-Dec
    Nom    classroom-in    Acc    arm-Acc    hit-Past-Dec
    Nom    Acc    classroom-in    arm-Acc    hit-Past-Dec
“John hit Mary on the arm in the classroom”

The data in (8-10) suggest that PR and PS do not form a single constituent. If they did, then the intervention by adverbials cannot be possible.

2.2. The grammatical statuses of PR and PS in a Korean EPC

PR behaves like a typical core grammatical element. It passes the following diagnostics: extraction (scrambling or focus movement), relativization, and passivization. PS, in contrast, seems to have adjunct/chomeur status, since it fails all the aforementioned diagnostics.

Scrambling or focus movement:

    Mary-Acc    John-Top    arm-Acc    hit-Past-Dec
    arm-Acc    John-Top    Mary-Acc    hit-Past-Dec
‘John hit Mary on the arm.’

Relativization:

(12) a. [John-i    t*i    phal-ul    ttayli]-n    Mary\i.
    John-Nom    arm-Acc    hit\]-REL    Mary
   ‘Mary who John hit on the arm’

b. *[John-i    Mary-lul    t*i    ttayli]-n    phal\i.
    John-Nom    Mary-Acc    hit\]-REL    arm
   ‘Lit. the arm that John hit Mary on.’

Passivizability:

    Mary-Nom    John-by    arm-Acc    catch-Pass-Past-Dec
b. */# Phal-i    John-hanthe    Mary-lul    cap-hi-ess-ta.
    arm-Nom    John-by    Mary-Acc    catch-Pass-Past-Dec
   ‘Mary got caught on the arm by John.’

However, it is possible to passivize both PR and PS in that order.

    Mary-Nom    John-by    arm-Nom    catch-Pass-Past-Dec
   ‘Mary got caught on the arm by John.’

On the basis of this observation, I conclude that in an EPC, PR is a core grammatical relation (or primary object in Palmer’s (1994) parlance) and PS indeed has lost its core argument status.
In the following section, while examining the constraints working on Korean DA-EPCs, I will argue that Korean EPCs cannot be fully explained without considering some pragmatic and cognitive factors.

3. Constraints on Korean DA EPCs

The constraints which allow DA-EPCs seem to be variable across languages, such that, for example, the DA-EPC is limited to body-part possessions in one language, and it is constrained by different factors in another (cf. Chappell and McGregor 1996b). It is difficult to formulate the constraints in purely syntactic terms (Chun 1986, Kim 1990 among others), and it is also not possible to treat them either in terms of well-defined semantic roles or in terms of syntactic relation-changing processes as in Relational Grammar (see Shibatani 1994, O'Conner 1996).

As for syntactic constraints, Park (1985) notes two restrictions. The first is that if the possessor of the direct object is coreferential with the subject, then the DA-EPC is not possible as in (15) (Park 1985:341):

(15) a. Insu-ka casin-uy sonthop-ul kkakk-ass-ta
    Nom   self-Gen fingernail-Acc trim-Past-Dec
    "Insu trimmed his fingernails."

      Nom     Acc        Acc
      "Insu trimmed himself, his fingernails."

The second restriction is that if the possessive phrase is raised to be the direct object of the sentence, then the possessor ascension is not applicable to this derived direct object. Thus the DA-EPC in (16c) is ungrammatical because the possessor ascension has applied to the raised object (Park 1985:342).

      Nom book-Gen cover-Nom tear-Pass-Past-Dec-Comp think-Pres-Dec
      "Minu thinks that the book's cover was torn."

      Nom book-Gen cover-Acc tear-Pass-Past-Dec-Comp think-Pres-Dec
      "Minu thinks the book's cover to be torn."

      Nom book-Acc cover-Acc tear-Pass-Past-Dec-Comp think-Pres-Dec
      "Minu thinks the book, its cover to be torn." [sic]

As for semantic restrictions, Park (1985:342) notes that the EPC is restricted to the possessive phrase in which certain semantic relation such as whole/part relation is held between two nominals. However, as it turns out in the discussion below, the DA-EPCs can not be simply defined by whole/part relation since it takes place when whole/part relation is not held on the one hand, and under certain circumstances the EPC is not possible even when whole/part relation is held.

Several authors (e.g. Kim 1989; Yoon 1989, 1990; Yoon 1998) have observed that the PS appearing in a DA-EPC must be a body-part, as illustrated in (17)

(17) a. John-i Mary-lul son-ul tayli-ess-ta
      Nom   Acc hand-Acc hit-Past-Dec
“John hit Mary on the hand.”

   Nom Acc mother-Acc hit-Past-Dec
   “Intended to mean: John hit Mary on her mother.”

It is widely accepted that DA EPCs are allowed when the construction includes body-part nouns. However, as the following data exemplify, DA-EPCs are allowed even when the PS is not a body-part noun:

   Police-Nom Acc bag-Acc catch-Past-Dec
   “Lit. The police caught Mary in her bag.”

b. John-i Mary-lul os-ul ccic-ess-ta
   Nom Acc clothes-Acc tear-Past-Dec
   “Lit. John tore Mary’s clothes to the effect of affecting Mary.”

c. John-i Mary-lul shinpal-ul palp-ass-ta
   Nom Acc shoe-Acc step.on-Past-Dec
   “Lit. John stepped on Mary on the shoe”.

One thing to be noted here is that the sentences in (18) are grammatical only when Mary is actually carrying/wearing the PS’s. For example, as Yeon (1999) pointed out, (18b) is ungrammatical if John tore Mary’s clothes but they were hanging in the closet. What matters here is not really the absolute distinction between inalienable (i.e. body-part) possession and alienable possession, as is often assumed, but is rather whether or not the possessor physically contiguous with the possessed object. Based on this observation, Yeon (1999) argued that the physical contiguity is the most important factor allowing DA-EPCs. However, further observations lead us to modify this constraint to accommodate wider data.

If it is contiguity that is most critical, we cannot explain why it is not, in general, possible to make DA-EPC when the possessor is HOLDING or otherwise “attached to” an alienable possession such as an apple, a book, or a bracelet, and so is contiguous with it. Imagine, for instance, Mary is holding an apple as John comes up and bites it: * John bit Mary in the apple.

   Nom Acc apple Acc eat/bite-Past-Dec
   “Lit. John ate/bit Mary’s apple to the effect of affecting Mary.”

It is not possible to utter DA-EPC like (19a) in the situation above, whereas Korean speakers would find the following example (19b) to be much more acceptable than (19a) when Mary is holding an apple as a dog comes up intending to bite Mary's hand or something:

   dog Nom Acc apple Acc bite-Past-Dec
   ”’The dog bit Mary in the apple.”

It seems here that the “affectedness” factor plays a role as well as "contiguity". Here the difference seems to be that the focus is laid on whether Mary is affected at all by dog's biting whereas in (19a) Mary seems not to be affected by John's eating/biting Mary's apple. Also consider the contrast in the following examples:

4 I am grateful to anonymous reader for this English example.
English speakers find (20a) worse than (20b) even though I am more contiguous with (or attached to) my bracelet than with my bumper. Presumably this has something to do with speakers' judgments about how "affected" a possessor is by an action on a possession. (20b) is construed as affecting more than (20a). But this is not a matter of "contiguity" per se. Here we can see that the notion of "contiguity" must be supplemented by the notion of "affectedness", which in turn is quite subjective.

Normally actions on body parts and clothing worn on the body are apparently construed as affecting the possessor more than actions on other "contiguous" possessions. Indeed, the fact that body part nouns show different behaviour from non-body part nouns can be explained cognitively: Body parts are physically attached to and contiguous with their possessors, and thus when a body part is affected by an action, its possessor is necessarily affected by that action as well.

DA-EPC is often impossible when the clause contains a non-action verb, i.e., one which has little or no effect on the object, since in this case there is little or no "affectedness". Consider the following examples in Korean.

    Nom Poss voice Acc hear-Past-Dec
    "John heard Mary's voice."

       Nom Acc voice Acc hear-Past-Dec
       "John heard Mary's voice."

      Nom Poss leg Acc see-Past-Dec
      "John saw Mary's leg."

       Nom Acc leg Acc see-Past-Dec
       "John saw Mary's leg."

(21b) is unacceptable because the possessor is not physically affected at all by the action of hearing. In comparison with the action of hearing, (22b) is not totally unacceptable but sounds awkward because the action of seeing also hardly affects the object. Given that the affectedness of the possessor in the case of body parts allows the possessor to be interpreted as a direct object, when the clause in question contains a non-action verb like "hear" or "see", it is expected that DA-EPC is often not permitted\(^5\). On the contrary, in (23a) and (23b), in which the verb chyetapo- ‘look at’ and

\(^5\) We owe this claim to Fox (1981), who used English and Dutch examples given in (1-2) below to make exactly the same claim. Hyman (1977) also points to differences in the acceptability of EPC constructions as a function of the verb varies.

(1) Dutch: a. Ik schudde hem de hand
       I shook him the hand
       "I shook his hand."

    b. *Ik zag hem de hand
       I saw him the hand
       "I saw his hand."

(2) a. I hit her on the leg.
the adverb *ttwulhecikey* ‘hard’ are used respectively, the acceptability of EPC is increased.

(23) a. John-*i* Mary-*lul* tali-*lul* chyetapo-*ass*-*ta.*
    Nom Acc leg-Acc look at-Past-Dec
    “John looked at Mary’s leg.”

    b. John-*i* Mary-*lul* tali-*lul* *ttwulhecikey* po-*ass*-*ta.*
    Nom Acc leg Acc hard see-Past-Dec
    “John looked at Mary’s leg hard [enough to make a hole in it].”

Thus we can argue that the acceptability of the EPC appears to be sensitive to the context, rather than to the grammatical status of the verb or the semantic role, which would be expected under the distinct projection approach and has been suggested by Tomioka & Sim (2005).

EPCs may also be restricted by the nature of the PR, that is, whether it is animate or inanimate (Hyman 1977: 106). Following Hyman (1977), Fox (1981) also argues, for instance, that since the possessor-possession relationship with inanimate entities is not as contiguous as with animate entities, inanimate possessors are regarded by humans as less affectable than animate possessors. Thus, we expect that EPC would not occur as frequently with inanimate possessors as with their animate counterparts. Consider the following examples (Fox 1981:328):

(24) a. *I hit the tree on the branch.*
    b. *I painted the house on the door.*

Here the difference between animate and inanimate entities as possessors is not a difference in contiguity - the branch of the tree is just as contiguous with the tree as my hand is with me. Maybe the difference lies in prototypicality with respect to their possessor status. The prototypical possessor tends to be human or animate entities whereas the inanimate entities are not normally interpreted as a typical possessor. We would expect that there are cross-linguistic variations in terms of prototype effects.

In some languages, for instance, EPC is permitted even with inanimate possessors. For example, in language like Mayali (a Gunwinyguan (non-Pama-Nyungan) language of North Western Australia), the body part incorporated constructions is not limited to parts of animates, but extends to parts of trees and plants as well (Evans 1996: 92). This is also the case in Korean:

(25) a. John-*i* namu uy kaci lul cal-*ass*-*ta.*
    Nom tree Poss branch Acc cut-Past-Dec
    "John cut the tree's branch.”

    b. John-*i* namu lul kaci lul cal-*ass*-*ta.*
    Nom tree Acc branch Acc cut-Past-Dec
    "John cut the tree on the branch.”

(26) a. John-*i* cip uy pyek ul hemul-*ess*-*ta.*
    Nom house Poss wall Acc demolish-Past-Dec
    b. *I saw her on the leg.*

The possessor is physically affected by the action of shaking his/her hand as in (1a), hitting his/her leg as in (2a), whereas the possessor is not physically affected by the action of seeing as in (1b) and (2b). As a consequence, the EPC is not allowed in (1b) and (2b).
"John demolished the house's wall."

b. John i cip ul pyek ul hemul - ess - ta.
   Nom house Acc wall Acc demolish-Past-Dec
"John demolished the house on the wall."

In Korean, EPC is also allowed even with inanimate possessor like cip 'house' as in (26). Korean data is rather exceptional in allowing inanimate possessor in EPC considering that cross-linguistically EPC prefers animate nouns as the PRs.

A related question here is that if 'contiguity' were the main factor at stake, we would expect to find EPCs involving unconscious or dead possessors of human body parts. However, in most languages, EPCs are less acceptable when the PR is not sentient. We may argue that nonsentient body-part PRs are not as “affected” by sentient PRs would be, and this is of course true. But in this case, the notion of “contiguity” on its own is not contributing much – it must be supplemented by the notion of “affectedness”. As the notion of affectedness plays an important role in DA-EPCs, the possessor of an inalienably possessed object, typically a body-part is the most likely target for the DA-EPCs. This was easily explained with the notion of affectedness. Namely, when a body-part is affected in an event, its possessor is also affected by the transitivity effect.

Lastly, it should also be noted here that simply describing the relationship between the PR and the PS in EPC as inalienable possession or body-part is not specific enough to characterise the possible condition in which DA-EPC can occur in Korean at least. The semantic range of this construction is wider than what we would normally understand by ‘body parts’, or even by ‘part-whole’ relations. It includes nouns of ‘personal representation’ (Chappell-McGregor 1996) such as names as in (27), photos as in (28).

(27) a. pancang-i Suni-uy ilum-ul cek-ess-ta.
    class leader-Nom Suni-Poss name-Acc write down-Past-Dec
    “The class leader wrote down Suni’s name.”

    b. pancang-i Suni-lul ilum-ul cek-ess-ta.
    class leader-Nom Suni-Acc name-Acc write down-Past-Dec
    “The class leader wrote down Suni’s name.”

    movie director-Nom Yongsu-Poss photo-Acc imprint-Past-Dec
    “The movie director took a picture of Yongsu.”

    b. yenghwa kamtok-i Yongsu-lul sacin-ul ccik-ess-ta.
    movie director-Nom Yongsu-Acc photo-Acc imprint-Past-Dec
    “The movie director took a picture of Yongsu.”

These examples clearly illustrate that the term “body part” is too narrow, as it would fail to include non-body part like names, photos, etc. Many linguists have noted that the distinction between "inalienable" and "alienable" is vague as well as complex and cross-linguistically variable - body parts are usually treated as inalienable, but so are other things; and linguists have discussed a hypothetical hierarchy from inalienable to alienable possession, with different languages adopting different cut-off points, as in Chappell & McGregor (1996), Nichols (1988), and Haiman (1985), among others.

The concept of contiguity thus can be better understood as a cognitive/psychological one, not as a physical or material contact or distance. In other words, contiguity cannot be defined in terms of very close physical proximity, but must be "construed" on a language-specific basis so as to include or exclude e.g. a name or close kin relationship. It should thus be noted that the delimitation
of the concept of contiguity might vary depending on speech community. The different speech community may have different view as to whether to consider name, kinship, or certain other objects as belonging to the domain of contiguity or ‘personal representation’.

Our explanation that crucially based on the notion of contiguity and affectedness, in fact, trivializes the notion of inalienability in the DA-EPCs, and other relevant constructions, such as the "retained-object passive construction" (Yeon 2003).

4. Conclusion.

To formulate the DA-EPC in purely syntactic terms or semantic roles is not possible. For instance, simply describing the constraint of EPC in the following example as any kind of possession whatsoever is not specific enough to characterise the possible condition in which EPC can actually occur.


The EPC is not always possible even with same sentence. (29b) is possible only when Yongsu is actually wearing the clothes, and not when his clothes are hanging in the closet or on the wall. Here we need to incorporate semantico-pragmatic explanations to accommodate more proper account on EPCs. Many different proposals to account for the case-marking patterns in EPCs in Korean so far (Park 1985, Chun 1986, Yoon 1989, Kim, Y. 1990, O'Grady 1991, Yoon 1998 among others) do not concern about the fact that the EPC is not always possible even with same sentence as these proposals mainly concern about the mechanism of case agreement or case assignment within particular theoretical framework. Proper characterisation of EPC cannot be satisfactorily described without pragmatic/cognitive considerations.

We have shown that the notion of affectedness and contiguity is more appropriate than the distinction between alienable and inalienable possession to characterise more accurately the relationship between the PR and the PS in Korean EPCs.

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