

## Adnominal possession in the European languages: anchoring vs. non-anchoring relations

As is well known, constructions, known as “adnominal possessive constructions” are never dedicated to expressing possession *stricto sensu*, but can normally also be used for a number of other relations, by which the head’s referent is identified via its relation to the possessor’s referent. The possessors serve as *anchors* or *reference point entities* for identification of the head, and the corresponding relations can be called *anchoring relations* – e.g. LEGAL OWNERSHIP (*Peter’s hat*), KIN relations (*Peter’s brother*), BODY-PART vs. person/animal relations (*Peter’s leg*), DISPOSAL (*Peter’s office*), AUTHORSHIP (*Peter’s poem*), CARRIER OF PROPERTIES (*Peter’s braveness*), TEMPORAL relations (*Monday’s performance*), LOCATIVE relations (*Stockholm’s banks*), etc. However, many languages resort to (more or less) the same structure for expressing not only anchoring relations, but also numerous other relations, in which the nominal dependent is to classify, describe or qualify the class of entities denoted by it. The dependent itself is non-referential, and qualification, again, involves various meaning relations, e.g. DURATION (‘a journey of one month’), MATERIAL (‘a golden cup’), QUANTITY (‘a ship of thousand tons’), AGE (‘a girl of 17 years’) etc. The rationale for the similar treatment of anchoring and non-anchoring relations is obvious – both types of adnominal dependents **characterize entities via their relations to other entities**. The two differ, however, in that 1. the dependent is non-referential; 2. the dependent-head combination refers to a subclass of a broader class and often functions as a classificatory label for it, suggesting that the D and the H together correspond to one concept; 3. but the head cannot be identified via its relation to the dependent.

These similarities and differences between anchoring and non-anchoring relations underlie the considerable cross-linguistic variation as to how the two are treated. In Chappell’s and McGregor’s (1989) sample of 20 non-European languages, non-anchoring relations are expressed almost unexceptionally by juxtaposition or compounding, the pattern often found in inalienable constructions. This has led Chappell and McGregor to suggest two implicational hierarchies which associate alienability, inalienability and non-anchoring relations with constituent status on the one hand and morphological marking on the other: the “constituent status” scale, which is said to be iconic of the degree of referentiality of the nominals involved; and the “morphological marking” scale, which is said to iconically reflect the conceptual proximity between the nominals. On both scales inalienability is both between alienability and non-anchoring relations and closer to the latter, which would explain why the two are often expressed by similar means.

The paper will look in detail at the cross-linguistic variation in the expression of anchoring vs. non-anchoring relations across the European languages (with the Caucasus included in Europe). The European patterns partly confirm the earlier findings, but also add new dimensions to them, since juxtaposition and/or compounding are not universally used here. Different degrees of referentiality associated with different relations are often coded by the (obligatory) presence vs. absence of articles in dependents themselves and by the concomitant incompatibility vs. compatibility of dependents with articles pertaining to the head. The use of relational adjectives for non-anchoring dependents also follows from their non-referentiality: typically, nouns are used for reference, while adjectives denote properties and are used for attribution (and predication). Non-referential nominals in attributive functions will therefore be in-between prototypical instances of nouns and adjectives. This general clash between the various semantic and functional properties of non-anchoring dependents may also be invoked for explaining the frequent juxtapositional and compounding patterns, since all these phenomena involve **reduction or loss of nominal properties**. Thus, in a compound the first part is morphosyntactically inert and, thus, lacks distinctive characteristics of any word class.

