

TYPES OF POSSESSIVE STRUCTURES IN THE BALKAN LANGUAGES AND IN ARBËRESH

ILIANA KRAPOVA AND GIUSEPPINA TURANO

1. What is possession?

Prima facie, it seems to be a relation that holds between a Possessor/Owner/Holder and a Possessee/Possessed, as in *John has a car*, which means ‘John possesses a car’. But this definition does not fit the whole range of the constructions. Consider a sentence like *John has my book* where the possessor *John* is not the owner of the object. The same is true for Italian sentences like *Gianni ha sonno* ‘John is sleepy’ [lit. John has sleep] which seems an instance of possession but actually feelings cannot be possessed. Thus, both the *possessor* and its counterpart the *possessee* are more abstractly related to the prototypical notion of possession (ownership) as it is intuitively understood.

A major divide has been established in the literature between alienable and inalienable possession. Inalienable possession involves an inseparable relation between a possessor and a possessee. Typical representatives of this type refer to: a) kinship terms (*John has a brother*); b) body parts (*John has blue eyes*); c) physical traits or abstract properties (*John has a bad character*); d) part-whole relations (*The table has four legs*). As the examples show, this categorization is independent of the nature of the possessor (both animates and inanimates can be coded as inalienable possessors) but depends on the nature of the possessee (it must be some type of relational noun which has an implicit argument, the possessor, as part of its semantic structure).

The opposite properties characterize alienable possession. While this type necessarily involves animate possessors, the possessee is relatively autonomous from the possessor: it can be concrete or abstract but it needn’t be relational. The literature distinguishes two basic alienable types: a) temporary possession: the possessor can dispose of the possessee for a limited time, but cannot claim ownership to it (*John has my book*); b) permanent possession: the possessee is the possessor’s property, i.e. it

belongs to the possessor (*John has a house*).

Many languages model their possessive constructions on the split between alienable and inalienable possession, as can be seen from some syntactic differences which oppose these two classes. For example, in English, alienable possession can appear in the post-copular position. This is not possible for inalienables. See the contrast between (1b) and (2b).

- (1) a. *John has a book*
 b. *The book is John's*
- (2) a. *John has blue eyes*
 b. **The eyes are John's*

Nevertheless, data from a large number of languages have shown that this split (alienable vs. inalienable) is not sufficient to cover the entire domain of what is called possession. Stassen (2009) offers four models for a typological description of the predicative structures in the languages of the world. Besides the classical split between 'alienable' and 'inalienable', he introduces two additional categories: temporary and abstract possession:

- (3) Alienable: *John has a car*
 Inalienable: *John has brown eyes*
- Temporary: *That guy has a knife!*
 Abstract: *Bill has a cold/strange feeling*

Stassen (2009: 17) considers alienable possession (ownership) as the prototypical form of possession that human languages can express. He posits two (informal) features to describe its content: "control"¹ and "contact":

- (4) A prototypical case of possession is characterized by the presence of two entities such that:
- a. the possessor and the possessed are in some relatively enduring locational relation;

¹ This feature has been recognized in typological literature for a long time: "For X to control Y means that X has Y under its control, that X is prior to Y and that Y is dependent on it" (LEHMAN 1998). This is especially true for physical ownership (of concrete, inanimate objects), The feature of control brings possessors closer to Agents of transitive structures and motivates the predominant usage of HAVE in many Indo-European languages.

- b. the possessor exerts control over the possessee (and is therefore typically human).

Inalienables, on the other hand, are characterized by a locational relation between the two entities involved in the possessive relation but not by control. The features in (4) are also relevant for the two additional categories introduced by Stassen. Thus, temporary possession is said to differ from permanent possession in the absence of a permanent contact between the possessor and the possessee, whereas the label ‘abstract’ covers relations where the possessee is a concept that is not visible or tangible, like a disease, a feeling or some other (psychological) state related to (or located in or on) the possessor though not controlled by him.

The four subdomains outlined by Stassen are relevant for the languages we are going to analyse (Albanian, Bulgarian, Modern Greek, Arbëresh) since the syntactic structures associated with predicative possession encode all four subtypes: there are contexts where the temporary/transient and the abstract dimensions of possessive relations affect the syntax, so these two categories will figure prominently in the comparison we would like to offer.

2. Attributive vs. predicative possession

From a syntactic point of view, two types of possession structures can be recognized: *attributive* vs. *predicative*. In **attributive** possession, possessor and possessee form an NP together, as in genitive constructions of the type *Mary's book*, where we find an NP-internal possessive relation. The genitive is of course not the only way of coding attributive possession cross-linguistically. Relevant for this paper are phrases expressing the possessee via a preposition typically used in many Indo-European languages for accompaniment or association, i.e., the comitative P *with*, e.g. (English) *the boy with the red hair*, (Italian) *l'uomo con la barba rossa*.

In **predicative** possession, the possessee is part of the VP whereas the possessor is outside the VP, as in transitive constructions of the type *Mary has a book*, where we find a VP-internal possessive relation. In the Balkan languages under study, as we will see, comitative constructions are also available across the copula BE. Our paper is thus relevant a) for the areal distribution of certain less prominent (among Indo-European languages) models of predicative possession and b) for the loss of such models under contact, as is the case of Arbëresh.

3. Predicative possession

Two predominant strategies have been identified to express the predicative possession: there are languages which use a verb like HAVE and languages that use a verb like BE and a preposition. The first type is exemplified by the English sentence in (5), where the possessor represents the external argument or the subject of the verb *have*, while the possessee represents the direct object:

(5) *John has a sister*

The second strategy is found in Russian where the predicative possession is expressed with the verb BE and a preposition *u* ‘at’ which is the same used in locative constructions. The possessor argument is realized as the complement of the locative preposition. This is the best-known and most-discussed type of locative morphology in possessive encoding (Lyons 1968:388-399, Freeze 1992, among others).

(6) *U menja byla sestra*
at 1sg.GEN was sister.NOM
‘I had a sister’

Stassen has identified a third strategy, which he calls *comitative*, that makes use of the verb BE and a preposition corresponding to the English ‘with’. While typical for many non-Indo-European languages, this strategy is quite rare in the Indo-European family. The literature (Stolz *et al.* 2008; Stassen 2009) reports similar cases only from two languages: Icelandic (7a) and Portuguese (7b).

(7) a. *Sumir krakk-ar vor-u með litil flog*
some.NOM child.NOM be.3PL with little flag
‘Some kids had little flags’
b. *Estava com uma ponta de fibre por causa da sede*
was.3SG with a point of fever for reason of thirst
‘He had a little fever because of the thirst.’

(Stolz *et al.* 2008: 429)

4. The Balkan languages

We shall discuss the predicative possession system in languages such as Albanian, Bulgarian, Greek, which belong to different families of the

Indo-European macro-family, and in dialects such as Arbëresh, which is related to Albanian but behaves differently.

The languages we are going to analyse show an interesting split in their predicative possession structures in that they exploit a functional verb corresponding to the English *have* as well as a construction involving the copula *be* + a preposition. Languages of such mixed *have-be* type (Isačenko 1974, Freeze 1992)) are relatively rare since, as is well known, the evolution of most of the Indo-European languages shows a switch from a *be*-type to a *have*-type possession. The exclusive use of *be* + Dative or Genitive case was typical of the older Indo-European languages (Latin, Greek, cf. Baldi and Nuti 2011; Benvenuto and Pompeo 2012), while in their modern stages (Romance, Modern Greek) the transitive *have*-construction has superseded the former non-transitive one involving *be*.

4.1. Albanian

In Albanian, predicative possession can be expressed in two different ways: through a transitive *have*- construction and through a copular construction containing a prepositional possessee.

The first strategy involves the verb *kam* ‘have’. *Kam* is a transitive verb taking an object in the Accusative case (8a). It can also be used as an auxiliary verb in periphrastic constructions (8b).

- (8) a. *Beni ka një punë interesante*
Ben has a job interesting
Ben has an interesting job’
b. *Beni ka pasur një punë interesante*
Ben has had a job interesting
Ben had an interesting job’

Kam has a large functional domain that covers different kinds of possession: it can be used in structures including kinship relations (9a), temporary possession (9b), permanent possession (9c), body-parts (9d), part-whole relations (9e), physico-psychological states (9f).

- (9) a. *Beni ka një vëlla*
‘Ben has a brother’
b. *Beni ka çelësat tuaj*
Ben has keys.the your
‘Ben has your keys’

- c. *Beni ka një shtëpi*
‘Ben has a house’
- d. *Beni ka sy gështenjë*
Ben has eyes brown
‘Ben has brown eyes’
- e. *Pema ka shumë degë*
tree.the has many branches
‘The tree has many branches’
- f. *Beni ka frikë/uri*
Ben.NOM has fear/hunger
‘Ben is scared/hungry’

So, the verb *kam* ‘have’ can be used to express all of the predicative subtypes identified by Stassen: alienable possession (9a), temporary possession (9b), inalienable possession (9d-e), abstract possession (9f). Nevertheless, the *kam*-construction does not extend to all the types of abstract possession: it can be used when the possessee denotes a psychological or a physical state but not when it denotes a disease.

- (10) **Beni ka grip*
‘Ben has flu’

The second strategy involves a copular construction in which the possessee appears as the complement of the preposition *me*, corresponding to the English ‘with’. Following Stassen, we shall label this predicative structure “comitative possession” since it employs the same preposition as the one more generally used in comitative structures. The possessor is constructed as the grammatical subject, while the possessee is marked with Accusative case by the preposition. This strategy can be used when the possessee refers to a body-part (11a), a part-whole relation (11b) or when it expresses a disease (11c).

- (11) a. *Beni është me sy gështenjë*
Ben is with eyes brown
‘Ben has brown eyes’
- b. *Pema është me shumë degë*
tree.the is with many branches
‘The tree has many branches’
- c. *Beni është me grip*
Ben is with flu
‘Ben has flu’

Other types of alienable (12a) and inalienable possession (12b) or structures where the possessee refers to a psychological state (12c) are excluded in Albanian.

- (12) a. **Beni është më shtëpi*
Ben is with house
'Ben has a house'
- b. **Beni është me vëlla*
Ben is with brother
'Ben has a brother'
- c. **Beni është me frikë/uri*
Ben is with fear/hunger
'Ben is scared/hungry'

Nor can this strategy be used to express temporary possession (13a) of concrete objects or physical ownership (13b).

- (13) a. **Beni është me çelësat tuaj*
Ben is with keys.the your
'Ben has your keys'
- b. **Beni është me libër*
Ben is with book
'Ben has a book'

From the above data we can conclude that the two predicative constructions of Albanian, the *kam*-construction and the *jam + me* construction, are partially in complementary distribution: kinship nouns only allow the *kam*-construction and exclude the copular one (cf. (9a) vs. (12a)); temporary and permanent possession can only be realized through the *kam*-construction (cf. (9b) vs. (13a) and (9c) vs. (12a)); psychological or physical states that allow the *kam*-construction exclude the *jam + me* construction (cf. (9f) vs. (12c)) and inversely physical states that allow the *jam + me* construction exclude the *kam*-construction (cf. (11c) vs. (10)). On the other hand, the two strategies overlap in the expression of the more general part-whole relation: body-parts of human possessors (cf. (9d) and (11a); (9e) and (11d)), as well as inherent parts of inanimate possessors ((11b)).

To summarize, the Albanian system of predicative possession shows two splits: one that cuts across the class of inalienables distinguishing between kinship and body-parts/part-wholes, and another one that cuts across the class of abstract possesseees, distinguishing between diseases

and other types of psychological/physical states.

4.2. Bulgarian

Bulgarian too can be claimed to be a mixed language with both *have*- and comitative possessives, the latter being quite frequent in colloquial speech. The comitative strategy is realized by BE + the preposition *s/sās* ‘with’,² as in Albanian. The two possessive constructions express a wide variety of possessive relations both alienable (16) and inalienable (14a, 15a), concrete (16) and abstract (17):

- (14) a. *Ivan ima sini oči*
Ivan has blue eyes
b. *Ivan e sās sini oči*
Ivan is with blue eyes
‘Ivan has blue eyes’
- (15) a. *Dārvoto ima mnogo kloni*
‘The tree has many branches’
b. *Dārvoto e s mnogo kloni*
the tree is with many branches
‘The tree has many branches’
- (16) a. *Ivan ima nova kola* .
‘Ivan has a new car’
b. *Ivan e s nova kola*
Ivan is with new car
‘Ivan has a new car’
- (17) a. *Ivan ima grip/treska/ glavobolie*
‘Ivan has flu/fever/headache’
b. *Ivan e s grip/treska/ glavobolie*
Ivan is with flu/fever/headache
‘Ivan has flu/fever/headache’

The functional domains of *have* and *be* possessives thus seem largely to overlap. However, there are restrictions on the use of either construction but, as we shall see, these have to do with the grammatical encoding of the

² *Sās* is the reduplicated version of *s* ‘with’, used when the following word begins with the same consonant.

possessee and the syntax of the construction itself rather than with a semantic distinction in terms of alienable/inalienable. In fact, the only relevant semantic distinction in Bulgarian turns out to be between temporary and permanent possession.

First, the HAVE construction is obligatory with physical ownership (of concrete alienable objects belonging to human possessors) if the object is a bare noun, which is by definition indefinite.

- (18) a. *Ivan ima kniga/kola/magazin*
Ivan has book/car/shop
'Ivan has a book/car/shop'
- b. **Ivan e s kniga/kola/magazin*
Ivan is with book/car/shop

Bare kinship nouns also require the *have*-construction:

- (19) a. *Ivan ima brat*
Ivan has brother
'John has a brother'
- b. **Ivan e s brat.*
Ivan is with brother

However, if the noun is made more specific, the *with*-construction becomes available. This is especially true for kinship (20) when modified by a numeral or an inherent non-restrictive adjective³ or both, but to a large extent also for (countable) alienables when modified by a numeral or some other modifier that forces the interpretation of (legal rather than just physical) ownership (18):

- (20) *Ivan e s bolna majka/dvama vāzrastni roditeli/trima bratja/malki detsa*
Ivan is with sick mother/two old parents/three brothers/small children
'Ivan has a sick mother/two old parents/three brothers/small children'

³ Inherent adjectives in possessive contexts typically refer to age or physical condition.

- (21) *Semejstvoto e s dve koli i tri golemi apartamenta*
 the family is with two cars and three big apartments
 ‘The family owns two cars and three big apartments’

These data show that Bulgarian uses the *with*-construction more extensively than Albanian. Adding a modifier or a numeral does not render Albanian (12a,b) repeated here as (22a) grammatical:

- (22) a. **Beni është me vëlla/ shtëpi*
 Ben is with brother/house
 ‘Ben has a brother/house’
 b. **Ai është me tre vëllezër/shtëpi*
 he is with three brothers/houses
 ‘He has three brothers/houses’

This confirms our previous observation that the *with*-construction in Albanian is constrained semantically, i.e. dependent on the split between kinship terms on the one hand and body parts on the other, and also including abstract properties (e.g. diseases) under the latter rubric as long as they can be interpreted by metonymy as associated with the human body (see (11c)). Thus, Albanian uses the possessive *with*-construction in its more literal sense⁴ and maintains *have* as its unmarked possessive structure.

⁴ Wherever the *with*-construction is available in Albanian (as with body part expressions), the possessee, i.e. the body part, must be modified in some way, typically by an adjective. An example was given in (11a) above. See also (i)-(ii) below. This is no extraordinary property of such possessive structures in Albanian but a universal semantic fact about body part expressions. Such expressions are typically relational in the sense noun to be that reference to a possessor is an inherent part of their meaning. Therefore, in order for a predication containing such a informative, the presence of an adjective (typically inherent or restrictive, e.g. *long, short, small, big, colour*) is necessary. Otherwise, the predication would express an obvious state of affairs, e.g. *I have a head/I am with a head* (BALDI; NUTI 2011:9):

- (i) *Xhoni është me flokë të verdha/me sy të kaltër/me mjekër të zezë*
 John is with hair blond /with eyes blue /with beard black
 ‘John has blond hair/blue eyes/black beard’
 (ii) *Ivan e s dëlga kosa/goljama glava/malki rätse*
 Ivan is with long hair/big head/small hands
 ‘Ivan has long hair/big head/small hands’

Bulgarian too exploits this literal sense of association to characterize abstract bodily properties such as diseases or indispositions (see (17b) which is parallel to Albanian (11c) but extends the domain of its *with*-construction to all possessive subtypes under the proviso that the possessee is an indefinite specific noun. Definiteness marking crucially distinguishes the *with*-possessive from the purely comitative usages of the prepositional phrase, which must bear the definite article. Cf. the difference in interpretation between (23a) and (23b):

- (23) a. *Deteto e s edinija si roditel*
 child is with one.the refl parent
 ‘The child is with one of the parents’
 b. *Deteto e s edin roditel*
 child.the is with one parent
 ‘The child has one parent’

Finally, Albanian and Bulgarian match in their use of both the *have*- and the *with*-strategy for part-whole relations involving an inanimate possessor. See examples (15) and (24) below from Bulgarian and (9e), (11b) and (25) below from Albanian. The use of the *with*-possessive is, at first sight, more surprising for Albanian, since this language poses stricter conditions on the construction, but it is given a natural explanation if we follow Stassen’s (2009: 55) interpretation of the comitative possessive as indicating a spatial/locational relation between a “contained” element and its “container”. This spatial relation can be deemed prototypical for the comitative possessive and the exact opposite of the locational possessive (cf. (6) above) where the semantic relation (as well as the grammatical encoding) of possessor and possessed is reversed. Usage of the comitative construction with animate possessors, as found in Bulgarian and Albanian, can be considered an extension, to a greater or lesser extent, of this more basic locational relation.

- (24) a. *Vratata ima brava/drāzhka*
 door.the has lock/handle
 b. *Vratata e s brava/drāzhka*
 door.the is with lock/handle
 ‘The door has a lock/handle’
 (25) a. *Dera ka bravë/dorëz*
 door.the has lock/handle
 b. *Dera është me bravë/dorëz*
 door.the is with lock/handle
 ‘The door has a lock/handle’

To summarize so far, both languages choose *have* for coding possessive relations exhibiting a high degree of ‘control’ (and thus involving human possessors, cf. (4) above) and an ‘enduring locational relationship’ (and thus involving typically alienable inanimates *qua* possessesees). The stricter conditions on the use of *with*-possessives can be taken to show that this construction does not express possession *per se*, rather it builds on the semantics and structure of the true comitative in order to introduce (uncontrolled) properties of a possessor in a part-whole relation with its “possessee”. Whether or not the *with*-possessive can be extended to animate possessors is language specific.

A peculiarity of Bulgarian involves the distinction between “enduring” and “temporary” locational relation in predicative possession structures: *have* cannot introduce a temporary possession. This is due to the fact that unlike other I.E. languages (cf. e.g. English *John has your keys*, Italian *Gianni ha le [tue] chiavi*) (per minimal pair con (26)), including Albanian (cf. (9b) and the contrast with (13a)), Bulgarian disallows definite objects as complements of *have*. See (26).

- (26) *Ivan ima ključove/*klučovete ti*
 Ivan has keys/keys.the your
 ‘Ivan has keys’/*‘Ivan has your keys’

Two strategies compensate for this gap: the comitative (27a) with a definite possessee and a locative construction built on the preposition *u* ‘at’, (27b). A property of both constructions is that the prepositional possessor cannot refer to the owner of the keys but rather to their temporary possessor.

- (27) a. *Ivan e s tvoite ključove*
 Ivan is with your keys
 ‘Ivan has your keys’
 b. *Ključovete ti sa u Ivan*
 keys.the your are at Ivan
 ‘Ivan has your keys’

(27b) is a Slavic construction inherited from Old Church Slavonic (28) and similar to Russian (6).⁵ According to McAnallen (2011), the *u*-possessives

⁵ OCS had two predicative possession constructions – one in which the possessor appears in the dative case, similar to the Latin *mihī est liber*, and another one with *iměti* ‘have’ (MCANALLEN 2011). The former construction was used primarily with kinship terms and abstract states and concepts, while the latter was the default

of OCS (28) were used predominantly with concrete, countable objects located in close proximity to the speaker/possessor.

- (28) *ašte bōdetŭ ou eter-a člověk-a 100 ovecŭ...*(*Cod Assem*, McAnallen 2011, ex. (3))
 if be-fut.3sg at certain-gen.sg person-gen.sg 100 sheep-gen.pl
 ‘If a man have an hundred sheep’ (Mt 18:12)

As mentioned above, Stassen’s definition of prototypical possession (i.e., permanent possession/ownership) involves both control over the possessee on the part of the possessor, as well as an enduring locational relation between the two. With temporary possession on the other hand, there is no entailment of an enduring locative relationship (Levinson 2011). Temporary possession can thus be said to differ from permanent possession only with respect to the time span during which the possessor has control over the possessee. For Bulgarian, this is confirmed by the possibility of adding a temporal adverbial specifying this time span, cf. (29):

- (29) *Ključovete ti sa u Ivan veče dve sedmitsi*
 keys.the your are at Ivan already two weeks
 ‘Ivan has your keys for two weeks already’

This is also possible for the *with*-possessive:

- (30) *Az sām s tvoite ključove ot včera*
 I am with your keys since yesterday

Note that the word order in *u*-possessives mirrors that of both the *with*- and *have*--possessives: here, the possessor is coded as the object of the preposition while the possessee appears as the subject of the construction. This reversal of word order affects information structure: the subject has the properties of a topic, while the prepositional object carries new information. Thus, wherever definiteness cannot be employed to render

possessive construction. The *u*-locative construction has been maintained in Russian and has evolved into an all-purpose predicative possessive construction supplanting the other constructions and in particular the HAVE construction which in the contemporary language can refer to abstract properties only. In Bulgarian on the other hand it was the HAVE construction that supplanted the locative/prepositional one without, however, causing its total loss but restricting it to the expression of just one possessive type, namely temporary possession. In this way, the original locative specialization of the construction could be retained.

the relevant distribution of semantic contrasts, Bulgarian resorts to syntax to resolve the tension between the two, which is most probably due the loss of the nominal case system.

4.3. Modern Greek

Although in this paper we cannot dwell on Modern Greek with the precision the data require, we wish to mention a few facts of relevance for a future comparative analysis. First, the *have*-construction seems to be the dominant model of predicative possession in Modern Greek, with both alienable and inalienable possession:

- (31) a. *O Yannis ehi makria malia*
the Yannis has long hair
'Yannis has long hair'
- b. *O Yannis ehi dhio ksadelfia*
the Yannis has two cousins
'Yannis has two cousins'
- c. *O Yannis ehi ghialia*
the Yannis has glasses
'Yannis has glasses'
- d. *O Yannis ehi dhio avtokineta*
the Yannis has two cars
'Yannis has two cars'
- e. *O Yannis ehi kriologhima*
the Yannis has a cold
'Yannis has a cold'

These sentences would be ungrammatical with *with*-construction unless under specific pragmatic conditions forcing focalization, in which case, however, they seem to be better analysed as involving an attributive possession structure with an elided head noun rather than a predicative one. Cf. the translation of (32):

- (32) *O Yannis ine me makria malia*
the Yannis is with long hair
'Yannis is the one with the long hair'

In some cases, it appears plausible to use the comitative construction predicatively in a neutral context. For example, our informants find both of the following examples acceptable:

- (33) a. *To diamerisma ehi 5 domatia*
 ‘The apartment has 5 rooms’
 b. *?To diamerisma ine me 5 domatia*
 the apartment is with 5 rooms
 ‘The apartment has 5 rooms’

With other inanimate possessors however, this is not possible.

- (34) a. *To trapezi ehi tessera podhia*
 ‘The table has four legs’
 b. **To trapezi ine me tessera podhia*
 the table is with four legs
 ‘The table has four legs’

While this makes it difficult to generalize which contexts allow the possessive BE + WITH in Modern Greek, judging from these very few examples, it seems that this language exploits only prototypical locational meaning of the construction, namely as a relation between a “container” and “contained” entity under the condition that the latter is designated as a relational N (on the meaning of *leg* as a non-relational N, see Partee and Borschev 2001). Such relations are also expressed with the *with*-construction in Bulgarian and Albanian.

4.4. Arbëresh

Arbëresh is an Albanian variety spoken in Southern Italy, in villages where all the speakers also speak Italian, the language of state education and the media. The Arbëresh speakers migrated to Italy from Southern Albania in the mid-15th Century so their dialect had many centuries of intensive contact with Italian and Romance dialects.

Although closely related to Albanian, Arbëresh has a quite different possessive system. Unlike Standard Albanian, which has both *have*- and comitative possessives, Arbëresh is homogeneous as it employs only one construction to cover all kinds of possession. Indeed, in Arbëresh, predicative possession can only be expressed with the transitive verb *kam* ‘have’, whereas the comitative strategy is non-existent. As we can see in (35), *kam* covers all predicative types: kinship nouns (35a), inalienable possession (35b), part-whole relations (35c), temporary possession (35d), permanent possession (35e), psychological/physical states (35f), diseases (35g).

- (35) a. *Xhani ka nj ghua*
‘John has a brother’
- b. *Xhani ka si çelesti*
‘John has blue eyes’
- c. *Lisi ka shum deg*
tree.the has many branches
‘The tree has many branches’
- d. *Xhani ka nj makin*
‘John has a car’
- e. *Xhani ka nj shpi*
‘John has a house’
- f. *Xhani ka etje*
John has thirst
‘John is thirsty’
- g. *Xhani ka frevin*
John has flu
‘John is feverish’

Arbëresh only has one generalized use of *kam* ‘have’, whereas there are no instances of comitative possession. Arbëresh has no equivalent of the Albanian *be* + preposition construction:

- (36) a. **Xhani osht me (nj) ghua*
John is with (a) brother
- b. **Xhani osht me si çelesti*
John is with blue eyes
- c. **Lisi osht me shum deg*
the tree is with many branches
- d. **Xhani osht me (nj) makin*
John is with (a) car
- e. **Xhani osht me (nj) shpi*
John is with (a) house
- f. **Xhani osht me etje*
John is with thirst
- g. **Xhani osht me frevin*
John is with fever

Despite the genetic closeness, Arbëresh is different from Albanian. We shall try to capture this difference in terms of language contact. In fact, as we shall see, the possessive system of Arbëresh follows the pattern typical of Italian, which is a standard *have*-language. See the Italian sentences

below, all of which become ungrammatical under the comitative strategy of predicative possession irrespective of the type of possessee involved (alienable or inalienable).

- (37) a. *Gianni ha una sorella*
 ‘John has a sister’
 b. **Gianni è con (una) sorella*
 John is with a sister
- (38) a. *Gianni ha occhi azzurri*
 ‘John has blue eyes’
 b. **Gianni è con occhi azzurri*
 John is with blue eyes
- (39) a. *L’albero ha molti rami*
 ‘The tree has many branches’
 b. **L’albero è con molti rami*
 the tree is with many branches
- (40) a. *Gianni ha un’auto*
 ‘John has a car’
 b. **Gianni è con (un’) auto*
 Gianni is with a car
- (41) a. *Gianni ha una casa*
 ‘John has a house’
 b. **Gianni è con una casa*
 Gianni is with a house
- (42) a. *Gianni ha sete*
 John has thirst
 ‘John is thirsty’
 b. **Gianni è con sete*
 Gianni is with thirst
 ‘John is thirsty’
- (43) a. *Gianni ha la febbre*
 ‘John has fever’
 b. **Gianni è con (la) febbre*
 Gianni is with fever
 ‘John is feverish’

Arbëresh thus converges with Italian as regards the ban on the use of the comitative construction to express possession in a predicative context. The Arbëresh-Italian parallelism can be viewed as a contact-induced change in the grammar of Arbëresh, more precisely that at a certain stage this language lost the BE-construction typical of Albanian and shifted towards the general *have*-pattern of Italian. Therefore, the intensity of contact with Italian and Romance dialects is the crucial factor for this syntactic change.

5. Conclusion

As shown in the study by Stolz *et al.* (2008), Indo-European languages use prepositional comitative phrases more extensively as a clause-level adjunct than as an argument in attributive possession structures ((44a) vs (44b)).

- (44) a. *People wander around with dragon balls*
 b. *The boy with the red hair came*

If a comitative phrase is defined along the lines of Arkhipov (2009), namely as an *asymmetrical* construction introducing a non-obligatory participant with the same role as that of the core participant, then (44a) is not a true comitative: the two arguments do not form a participant set that can be interpreted as a coordination structure or as a way of pluralizing the participants:

- (45) *Ann went to the party with Mike = Ann and Mike went to the party*

Nevertheless, under a looser definition of comitativity, the comitative-like expression in (44a) (for which Stolz *et al.* use the term “confective”) is largely available among the Indo-European languages, while (44b) (for which Stolz *et al.* use the term “ornative”) is typical of “Indo-European languages spoken in more eastern regions of the continent <...> than [for] those spoken in the west and the vast majority of the non-Indo-European languages.” (p. 413). Romance languages outside the Balkans disfavour the Companion Schema for ornatives whereas Rumanian displays a preference for comitative-based constructions, which is in line with the behaviour of the other members of the Balkan *Sprachbund* (Albanian, Greek, Bulgarian and Macedonian) (*ibidem*). This can be illustrated with an example from Modern Greek:

- (46) *dipla ston psëlo me ta kokkina mallia.*
 at_side in_det:acc long with det:nt.pl red:nt:pl hair:nt:pl
 ‘Beside the tall one with the red hair.’

While the study shows that language groups within the Indo-European family are divided into preferences for coding (44a, b) via a comitative construction, making a genetic account look improbable, data from Balkan languages, all of which make consistent use of comitatives in attributive possession corresponding to (44b)/(46), point to an areal interpretation of the phenomenon.

This can be understood in terms of a conceptual distinction, as Stolz *et al* argue, between alienable and inalienable possession, as well as between permanent and temporary possession: body parts as opposed to autonomous “entities” that can be disposed of more easily.⁶

As far as predicative possession is concerned, the Balkan languages that employ the *with*-possessive (Albanian and Bulgarian, and to a much lesser extent Modern Greek) pattern with only two other Indo-European languages: Icelandic and Portuguese. The highest degree of comitative grammaticalization is seen in Icelandic in that it restricts the functional domain of *have*. Thus, while *hafa* ‘have’ requires the specification of a location, *eiga* ‘own’ is preferred to specify ownership,⁷ while *vera með* is reserved for temporary possession without a location (Levinson 2011, Stolz *et al* 2008). These three constructions compete for the expression of predicative possession according to semantic criteria:

- (47) *hun átt-i jepp-a* (Stolz *et al* B113.1, p. 154)
 she own.pret-3SG jeep-acc

⁶ Interestingly, Russian displays a clear preference for comitatives in cases corresponding to b. as opposed to those corresponding to a. If we relate this statistical fact to the use in Russian of the locational construction to express general possession, we can conclude that Russian has generalized the use of a prepositional phrase (associated with a *belong*-reading when the possessee is the subject of the construction, i.e. *the book is with me*) from contexts involving an inalienable/permanent possession to all other possessive contexts, thereby shifting the Companion schema to a Locational schema (*the book is at me: kniga u menja*). Have-possessives in Russian occur only with generic possessives. As a result, the Russian system is not organized according to the alienability/inalienability and temporal/permanent distinctions.

⁷ However, it can also express family relations.

- (48) *Jón hefur margar bækur í herberginu sínu* (Levinson 2011, ex. (12))
 John.NOM has many books.ACC in room-the.DAT his
 ‘John has many books in his room.’
- (49) a. *Hún er með bækurnar fimm.* (Levinson 2011, ex. (14))
 she.NOM is with books-the.ACC five
 ‘She has five books.’
- b. *Jón er með kvef*
 John is with cold
 ‘John has a cold’.
- c. *Jón er með gleraugu*
 John is with glasses
 ‘John is wearing glasses’ / ‘John has glasses’

The Icelandic *vera með* construction is used mostly with temporary possession (e.g. diseases, portable objects, accessories, Levinson 2011) but it may also combine freely with NPs that represent concrete objects (in the proximity of the speaker). It can also be used to denote inalienables such as body parts.

Portuguese on the other hand, uses alongside the *ter*-‘have’ construction also *estar com* ‘be with’-for abstract concepts *qua* possessees (feelings, physico-mental states and bodily ailments such as illnesses experienced by the possessor at the reference time) and NOT with body parts or current physical possessions.

- (50) *Fred e George estavam de novo com ar carrancudo* (Stolz *et al* 2008: 425)
 Fred and George be:imperf:3pl of new with air grumpy
 ‘Fred and George looked grumpy again.’

Of course, these languages have different functional domains for each of the alternative modes of expressing predicative possession, and there are statistical differences in the distribution of their respective prepositional constructions. It is worth noting that Stolz *et al* (2008) conclude that the distribution of the construction based on the Companion Schema (Heine 1997) in both Portuguese and Icelandic shares a number of properties relating to the expression of abstract possession (physico-mental states) and temporary possession of concrete objects.

While the Balkan languages do not show such variation in the use of the comitative construction with respect to the default *have-* construction, it is still a significant fact that these languages exploit alternative *with-* or other prepositional structures, albeit to a varying degree at least in instances of a) abstract and/or temporary possession (Albanian and Bulgarian), and b) locational relations involving inanimates (Bulgarian, Albanian, Modern Greek). In neither language are such alternatives available for the expression of the core possessive relations, ownership, which is usually taken to be the prototypical instance of permanent possession. This may point to a more general split between temporary and permanent possession in the remote areas of the Indo-European boundaries, comprising, not only the Balkan languages, but also Portuguese and Icelandic, as well as Lithuanian/Latvian (which belong to the Circum-Baltic area interfacing with Slavic and Finno-Ugric⁸). This split is instrumental for rendering distinctions pertaining to the inalienable domain and may well turn out to be more important than the classic alienable-inalienable split.

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⁸ It is very probable that the predominance in Russian of the locative construction is due to areal influence from the Finnish substrate (TIMBERLAKE 2014).

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