**Possessive Constructions in Romance**

**(PossRom2018)**

The conference is dedicated to the investigation of **synchronic and diachronic functioning and variation of possessives** from a great variety of perspectives and in any Romance varieties.

**Invited speakers:**

* Virginia Bertolotti (University of the Republic of Uruguay)
* Giuseppina Silvestri (Cambridge University)
* Carme Silva Domínguez (University of Santiago de Compostela)

As is well-known, there are syntactic differences within the Romance languages with respect to the adjectival or article-like status of prenominal possessives: as such, Italian and Catalan need to use the combination of an article and a possessive, while for others, such as French, and Spanish, the possessive itself suffices, as illustrated in (1). Certain Romance languages also display so-called Differential Possessor Expression/Marking (O’Connor 2003) as two constructions can express internal possession, using for instance, pre- and postnominal possessives, as in (2).

* 1. *mon livre / mi libro* vs. *el meu llibre / il mio libro*

my book the my book

‘my book.’ [French / Spanish / Catalan / Italian]

* 1. *mi casa*  / *la casa mía* [Spanish]

my house /the house my

‘my house’

However, most accounts that describe (the grammaticalisation of) possessive structures limit themselves to those found in the standard Romance languages, leaving aside the rich microvariation displayed by the vernacular varieties. To illustrate, the microvariation in (1) can be observed not only between the various Romance languages, but also within different historical and diatopic varieties of the same language, as for instance in Old Spanish and Guatemalan Spanish; or Old Portuguese and Brazilian Portuguese (e.g. Brito & Lopes 2016; Company Company 2009; Elsig 2017; Pato 2001; Nieuwenhuijsen 2007; Rosemeyer & Enrique-Arias 2016). This syntactic microvariation is not limited to the prenominal domain, as demonstrated by the Italian dialects, where the northern vernaculars favour the prenominal position, whereas the southern dialects opt for the postnominal distribution (e.g. Manzini & Savoia 2005; Silvestri 2016).

1. *El treinta de mayo es el cumpleaños de ellos* [Canarian Spanish]

the 30 of May is the birthday of they

‘The 30th of May is their birthday’ (Almeida & Díaz Alayón 1988: 116)

Moreover, Differential Possessor Marking appears to be more complex in diatopic vernaculars: Canarian Spanish, for instance, does not display two, but (at least) three different internal possession constructions, as prepositional phrases with personal pronouns, such as *de ellos* ‘of them’ in (3), are also used (e.g. Almeida & Díaz Alayón 1988: 116; Lorenzo Ramos 1976: 96).

Despite this rich microvariation, to date hardly any studies have tried to provide accurate descriptions of the syntactic distribution of the possessive NP constructions for the diatopic varieties of Spanish, which also detail their semantic and pragmatic functions (Aleza-Izquierdo 2016, Orozco 2010 are notable exceptions).

1. Possessives with adverbials
   1. *detrás mío / mía* [Andalusian Spanish]
   2. *detrás meu / miña* [Galician]
   3. *detrás meu /\*meva* [Catalan]

behind my.masc / my.fem

‘behind me’

1. *Tu ex habla mal tuyo*  [Zulian Spanish]

Your ex talk.3sg badly your

‘Your ex talks badly about you.’ (Bouzouita & Casanova 2017)

1. *Gustas mío?* [Uruguayan Spanish]
2. *Gostas meu* [Rio Grande do Sul Portuguese]

Like.2sg my

‘Do you like me?’ (Bouzouita & Pato forthc)

Moreover, the use of possessives in domains other than the nominal one has received only very recently some attention, and only for Spanish. As shown in (4) and (5)-(7), possessives can be documented as complements of locative adverbials, as well as verbs. In both domains, these possessive constructions enter into competition with the normatively sanctioned structures consisting of a prepositional phrase with a personal pronoun (e.g. *de mí* ‘of me’). While the range of adverbs which can appear with possessive complements has been studied for Spanish (e.g. Marttinen Larsson & Bouzouita in press; Salgado & Bouzouita 2017), this remains to be done for other Romance languages, such as Catalan and Galician.

Interestingly, the adverbial possessives can also appear in the feminine form in certain Romance vernaculars, such as Andalusian Spanish and Galician (4a)-(4b), but only in the masculine in others, such as Catalan (4c) (e.g. Salgado & Bouzouita 2017; Marttinen Larsson & Álvarez López 2017; Silva Domínguez 1995). It remains, however, unclear whether these cases genuinely mark gender or whether other factors are at play.

The verbal possessives too can be found in different Romance varieties, as is illustrated in (5)-(7) for Spanish spoken in Zulia (Venezuela) and Uruguay (e.g. Bertolotti 2014; Bouzouita & Casanova forthc), as well as Brazilian Portuguese spoken in the neighbouring province of Rio Grande do Sul (Bouzouita & Pato forthc). Nonetheless, little is known about the syntactic behaviour of these verbal possessives, or the functional or sociolinguistic factors that propagate their use.

Considering all the previous, it has become increasingly urgent to scrutinise the functioning of possessives within the different sentential domains in the various Romance varieties. We, therefore, welcome contributions that deal with the following aspects:

* The syntactic, semantic, pragmatic and prosodic functioning of prenominal and postnominal possessives in diatopic and other types of Romance varieties;
* The intra- and extra-linguistic factors that govern the morphosyntactic variation in the various possessive constructions in Romance, both synchronically and diachronically;
* The genesis and diachronic development of the different syntactic possessive configurations, within any of the sentential domains (nominal, adverbial, verbal, etc.);
* The grammatical interaction between the different domains in which possessives can be used.

We encourage contributions from scholars working on **any of the Romance languages**, as well as **Romance-based creoles and pidgins**.

**Conference venue**: Ghent University, Het Pand (Belgium)

**Conference dates**: **27th – 29th of June, 2018**

**Deadline**: **15th of March, 2018**

**Abstract submissio**n: through EasyChair: <https://easychair.org/conferences/?conf=possrom2018>

Presentations can be held in **one of the Romance languages, as well as English**. There will also be a poster session.

Abstracts need to be written in Times New Roman, 12 pt., 1.5 spacing. and should be max. 1 page (references excluded). They need to be anonymous, submitted as Word or Pdf file and contain the title. When submitting an abstract for a poster, this should also be stated explicitly..

**Organising committee:**

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* Claudia Crocco (Ghent University)
* Renata Enghels (Ghent University)
* Vanessa Casanova (Ghent University)
* Matti Marttinen Larsson (Ghent University)
* Antoine Primerano (Ghent University)
* Bert Cornillie (Catholic University of Leuven)
* Pedro Gras (University of Antwerp)
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