

Attitudes towards possessive constructions in La Palma, Islas Canarias

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This study analyzes the alternation between unstressed prenominal possessives (1), prepositional possession doubled with a possessive pronoun (2), prepositional possession without doubling (3), and possession expressed with a stressed postnominal possessive (4).

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|---|--------------------------|
| (1) <i>Mariana apagó su teléfono</i>
'Mariana turned off her phone' | UNSTRESSED POS + NP |
| (2) <i>Mariana apagó su teléfono de ella</i>
'lit. Mariana turned off her phone of hers' | UNSTRESSED POS + NP + PP |
| (3) <i>Mariana apagó el teléfono de ella</i>
'lit. Mariana turned off the phone of she' | ART + NP + PP |
| (4) <i>Mariana apagó el teléfono suyo</i>
'lit. Mariana turned off the phone hers' | ART + NP + STRESSED POS |

Postnominal possessives have not received as much attention as other type of constructions in which stressed possessives are used, as for instance, adverbial pronominal possessives (*delante mía* vs. *delante de mí*; e.g., Hoff 2020; Marttinen Larsson 2022; Marttinen Larsson and Bouzouita 2018; Marttinen Larsson and Álvarez López 2022). Diatopically, postnominal possessives have been documented both in European and Latin American Spanish varieties, such as Venezuelan, Costa Rican, Cuban, Canarian and Andalusian Spanish, to name but a few (Bouzouita and Marttinen Larsson 2020; Guirado 2021). Furthermore, few authors have taken into account the whole range of possessive construction possibilities given in (1) to (4). The social factors that have been attested to influence this variation are age, sex, and socioeconomic level with seniors, men, and lower income people favoring the postnominal stressed variant. In this study, we present preliminary qualitative and experimental results that analyze the attitudes of Canarian speakers towards the different ways to express nominal possession in Spanish.

Twenty-three participants of La Palma completed attitudinal questionnaire in which the following variables were manipulated, which yielded a total of 54 experimental items: type of possessive construction (see examples 1-4), grammatical person (first vs. second vs. third) and number (singular vs. plural), and gender of the possessive (feminine vs. masculine) The questionnaire was divided into two sets in which informants evaluated each target sentence using a visual scale that consisted of three emoticons: happy 😊, neutral 😐 and sad ☹️. The data was submitted to a multinomial generalized mixed effects model in R.

As expected (see Figure 1 below), the unstressed variant showed the highest acceptability rates (84%), however and unexpectedly, this was not categorical, followed by the stressed variant (44%), the prepositional undoubled variant (33%), and the doubled prepositional variant (16%). With regards to the gender of the stressed possessive, the masculine form shows higher rates of acceptability (46% vs. 41% of the feminine possessive), which goes in the opposite direction of what has been found for postnominal adverbial possessives where the feminine variant is preferred (Merino Hernández and Bouzouita 2022; for Andalusian Spanish, see Marttinen Larsson and Bouzouita 2022). The statistical analysis (see Table 1 below) reveals that the type of possession, grammatical person, and age of participants are the predicting factors that condition the evaluation of the different target items. Overall, the unstressed variant is evaluated significantly better ($p < 0.001$) than the other three, with the strongest difference being between this type and the doubled variant. There is a statistically significant difference between first and third person ($p = 0.027$), but not between second and first. This confirms what has been found for adverbial possessives (e.g., Marttinen Larsson and Álvarez López

2022). Finally, overall people over 40 years ($p = 0.047$) of age evaluate the target items better than those who are younger.

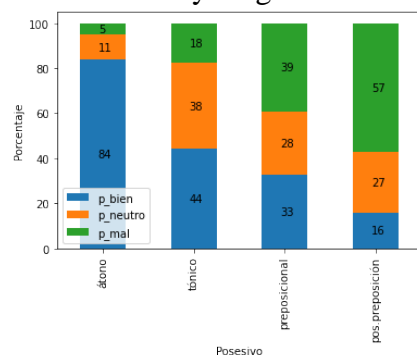


Figure 1. Acceptability rate of the different possessive constructions.

Dependent variable: evaluation (good, bad, neutral), Reference group: good							
Predictors	Reference group	Estimate	Std. Error	z value	Odds Ratios	CI	p
(Intercept)		-1.03266	0.66134	-1.561	0.36	0.10 – 1.30	0.118
possessive[doubled]	unstressed	3.93180	0.36809	10.682	51.00	24.79 – 104.92	<0.001
possessive[prepositional]	unstressed	2.73911	0.25750	10.637	15.47	9.34 – 25.63	<0.001
possessive[stressed]	unstressed	2.16675	0.24799	8.737	8.73	5.37 – 14.19	<0.001
person [second]	first	-0.02102	0.22335	-0.094	0.98	0.63 – 1.52	0.925
person [third]	first	-0.61807	0.27798	-2.223	0.54	0.31 – 0.93	0.026
number [singular]	plural	0.37011	0.20645	1.793	1.45	0.97 – 2.17	0.073
age [40+]	adults (18-39)	-1.06802	0.53817	-1.985	0.34	0.12 – 0.99	0.047
sex [male]	women	0.23548	0.42995	0.548	1.27	0.54 – 2.94	0.584
education [middle school]	high school	-1.19275	0.63166	-1.888	0.30	0.09 – 1.05	0.059
education [high school+]	high school	0.28314	0.89935	0.315	1.33	0.23 – 7.74	0.753

Table 1. Statistical analysis for the evaluation of the target items.

Bouzouita, Miriam. 2022. Las estructuras posesivas nominales. In Á. Tullio & E. Pato (Ed.), *Universales vernáculos en la gramática del español* (pp. 71-96). Frankfurt a. M., Madrid: Vervuert Verlagsgesellschaft. <https://doi.org/10.31819/9783968692098-004>

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