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POSSESSIVE-ING and ACCUSATIVE-ING Constructions in English

1. Introduction

The purpose of this paper is to analyze the POSSESSIVE-ING and ACCUSATIVE-ING constructions in English. * These two ING constructions contain a word that ends in the suffix *-ing* and that has both nominal and verbal characteristics. Such a word is commonly referred to as a gerund. The gerund in (1a-b) is *re-taking* and the entire ING construction is in boldface. The boldfaced portion of (1a) is POSSESSIVE-ING (POSS-ING for short), and the boldfaced portion of (1b) is ACCUSATIVE-ING (ACC-ING):

(1) a. I appreciate **John's re-taking the test.**¹

b. I appreciate **John re-taking the test.**

Studying gerunds is particularly interesting to linguists because of the difficulties in accounting for a type of word that seems to share characteristics of both the noun and verb categories. No acceptable analysis of POSS-ING or ACC-ING has been proposed in any generative grammar framework (Suzuki 1988: 1).

In chapter 2, I classify various ING constructions and distinguish POSS-ING and ACC-ING from the remaining types. Then in chapter 3, I consider how the distribution of POSS-ING and ACC-ING differ, and thus, why they should be classified as two separate forms. In chapter 4, I present previous syntactic analyses of POSS-ING and ACC-ING, especially attempts within Noam Chomsky's Government-Binding theory. Finally, in

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¹ Many people prefer (1b) to (1a) or cannot generate (1a) at all. See §3.2 for reasons why (1b) may be preferable.

chapter 5, I discuss the problems with the proposed analyses and indicate directions for future research.

2. ING Constructions

In this chapter, I present eight possible ING constructions and isolate POSS-ING and ACC-ING for in depth study. Chapter 3 will then contrast the distributions of these two forms.

2.1 Constructions ending in the suffix *-ing*

There are roughly eight classifications of surface strings in English that end in the suffix *-ing*, given in boldface below (classifications from Suzuki 1988: 7) :

- (1) a. I appreciate that **John is re-taking² the test.**
- b. I appreciate **John's re-taking of the test.**
- c. I appreciate **John's re-taking the test.**
- d. I appreciate **John re-taking the test.**
- e. I don't mind **PRO re-taking the test.**
- f. I saw **John re-taking the test.**
- g. I found **John re-taking the test.**
- h. I had a staring contest with a **student re-taking the test.**

² The verb *re-taking* may seem an odd choice. I chose this verb because it cannot combine with the NP to form a noun, as in *test-taking*. This noun form is sometimes preferred to *taking the test* after the genitive *John's*. Using *re-taking* here eliminates this possible preference, although it does leave the possibility of (1b), which similarly acts as a noun phrase.

(1a) is progressive participial and *is re-taking* behaves consistently like a verb string and not like a noun string. As a mix of verbal and nominal characteristics is typically understood as the distinguishing feature of gerunds, progressive participles cannot be considered to be gerunds. Furthermore, “[p]articipial *-ing* and the others [i.e., (1b-e)] are in virtually complementary distribution” (Reuland 1983: 114).

The boldfaced portions of (1b-e) contain gerunds, albeit of very different types. These constructions will be discussed in section 2.2.

(1f) and (1g) at first glance appear to contain gerunds, as the boldfaced surface string of each is identical to that of (1d), *John re-taking the test*. Nevertheless, the distribution of the construction in both (1f), or Perception Verb Complement ING, and (1g), or Non-constituent NP-ING, resembles the distribution of the progressive participial construction more than that of the constructions in (1b-e). Specifically, (1f) and (1g) carry a progressive reading and the entire construction *John re-taking the test* lacks Case requirements, in contrast with nominals. (1h), or the Reduced Relative Clause, also carries a progressive reading and the construction *John re-taking the test* again lacks a Case requirement. (Suzuki 1988: 26)

(1f-h) thus cannot be considered to contain gerunds without significantly altering the extent of the natural category of gerund, and they will not be considered in this paper, nor will the progressive participial construction (1a) be considered.

2.2 Nominal and Verbal Gerunds

Eliminating the non-gerundive ING constructions from (1) leaves us with four gerundive constructions:

- (1) b. I appreciate **John's re-taking of the test.**
- c. I appreciate **John's re-taking the test.**
- d. I appreciate **John re-taking the test.**
- e. I don't mind **PRO re-taking the test.**

An important distinction should be made between (1b) and (1c-e), or nominal and verbal gerunds.

(1b) contains a nominal gerund. The head *retaking* is arguably an N and has the distribution and syntactic behavior of a true noun. For example, determiners and quantifiers are used freely before the gerund, the possessive form *John's* is required rather than *John*, and adjectives modify the gerund rather than adverbs:

- (2) a. I appreciate the/a/every re-taking of the test.
- b. I appreciate John's/*John re-taking of the test.
- c. I appreciate John's quick/*quickly re-taking of the test.

Nominal gerunds are similar to other derived nominals like *refusal* (Suzuki 1988: 12). Since nominal gerunds can successfully be treated as true nouns, they are not a problem. The structure of (1b) would be parallel to the structure of, for instance, the sentence *I appreciate John's candy.*

(1c-e) are different types of verbal gerunds. It is this category of ING constructions that has been most interesting to linguists because they really do have a mix of verbal and nominal characteristics. An investigation of these characteristics follows.

2.2.1 Verbal Characteristics of Verbal Gerunds

The internal structure of gerundive³ constructions resembles that of an S. For instance, gerundive constructions can have subjects and direct objects (Hudson 2003: 580):

- | | | |
|-----------|-----------|-----------------|
| (3) John | re-taking | the test |
| (subject) | (gerund) | (direct object) |

In fact, an NP specifier (either genitive NP *John's*, objective NP *John*, or PRO) is required (Suzuki 1988: 11). Other specifiers, including determiners and quantifiers, are precluded:

- (4) I appreciate *the/*a/*every re-taking the test [Cf. (2a)]

Verbal gerunds thus resemble verbs, and as expected, take adverbs rather than adjectives (Hudson 2003: 580):

- (5) a. Bill's making money **effortlessly** bothered me.
b. *Bill's **effortless** making money bothered me.

and cannot be pluralized like nominal gerunds can (Suzuki 1988: 11):

- (6) a. *PRO makings money bothered Bill.
b. Re-takings of tests can be annoying.

³ Different authors use the term "gerundive" differently. I follow Bresnan 2001 and Hudson 2003 in using the term as an adjective to describe "patterns that involve verbal gerunds" (Hudson 2003: 579 fn. 2).

2.2.2 Nominal Characteristics of Verbal Gerunds

The external structure of gerundive constructions has the distribution of NPs. These constructions can occur in places where only NPs can occur or where Ss or VPs cannot occur. For instance, VPs cannot occur in the focal position of cleft sentences, but gerundive constructions can (Suzuki 1988: 13):

- (7) a. It was **Bill's bank balance** that bothered me.
b. It was **Bill's making money** that bothered me.

Sentential subjects cannot usually undergo NP-AUX Inversion, but gerundive constructions can (Suzuki 1988: 13):

- (8) a. Does **Bill's bank balance** bother you?
b. *Does **that Bill makes money so effortlessly** bother you?
c. Does **Bill's making money so effortlessly** bother you?

Thus, verbal gerunds simultaneously must be verbs and must head noun phrases. This presents a problem to any theory of grammar that requires noun phrases to be headed by nouns, or verbs to head verb phrases. For example, verbal gerunds present a problem for X-bar theory (in Government-Binding theory). The problem is further complicated by the fact that there are three different main forms of verbal gerunds (1c-e), each of which has a slightly different distribution within the general distribution of verbal gerunds described above.

2.2.3 POSS-ING, ACC-ING, and PRO-ING

- (1) c. I appreciate **John's re-taking the test.**
d. I appreciate **John re-taking the test.**
e. I don't mind **PRO re-taking the test.**

The boldfaced portion of (1c), or POSS-ING, naturally contrasts with that of (1d), ACC-ING (Suzuki 1988: 8). Both forms appear to have an identical string and internal structure, including a subject *John*. The only difference is that the subject in POSS-ING takes the genitive Case (*John's*), while the subject in ACC-ING takes the objective case (*John*).

(1e)'s boldfaced portion is slightly different because the subject is phonologically null. This structure is called PRO-ING because, although phonologically null, the subject is syntactically present and called PRO. The PRO subject is necessary for several reasons: it is needed to satisfy the Extended Projection Principle (EPP) of X-bar theory, for one, (Suzuki 1988: 22), but it also provides a way to think about who is performing the action of the *X-ing*, and allows for the straightforward preclusion of determiners and quantifiers.

Control theory is the portion of Government-Binding theory that deals with PRO and its potential for reference (Chomsky 1981: 6). Maria Rita Manzini summarizes Chomsky's theory of control as follows:

- (9) ...V...[s'...Comp [s...PRO...

where V subcategorizes S'

- (10) In (9) NP is a controller for V if

- a. NP is properly related to V (subject, direct object, certain complements)
- b. if V = [+SC] (i.e. [+Subject Control]), NP is the subject of V.

(11) In (9)

- a. if Comp \neq null and V has no controller, PRO (co)refers freely;
- b. if Comp = null or V has a controller, PRO is coreferential with the nearest controller.

Through control theory, PRO is coindexed with the matrix subject (the subject of the sentence):

(12) I_i like [PRO_i re-taking tests].

Comp = null in (12), so PRO is coreferential with the nearest controller (*I*).

POSS-ING and ACC-ING, as will be shown in this paper, have natural dichotomies, and interesting accounts have been put forth to describe their distribution and syntax. This paper will primarily deal with these two forms of verbal gerunds. PRO-ING shares characteristics with both POSS-ING and ACC-ING and is problematic in accounts that dichotomize POSS-ING and ACC-ING. The problems with PRO-ING will be discussed in Chapter 5.

3. Distribution of POSS-ING and ACC-ING

POSS-ING and ACC-ING may generally appear in the same environments. Thus, (1a) and (1b) are both grammatical:

- (1) a. Mary's learning the tango impresses me.
- b. Mary learning the tango impresses me.

Some situations, however, are more conducive to one construction over the other, or may even allow only one or the other. This difference in distribution is vitally important when considering how to account for verbal gerundive constructions, since the distribution of each individual ING construction must be accounted for.

3.1 Preference for POSS-ING

Richard Hudson 2003 posits a preference for POSS-ING in three situations: 1) when a gerundive construction with a personal pronoun subject is in subject position within the larger sentence, 2) in prescriptive or formal situations, and 3) in American English as opposed to British English.

3.1.1 Personal pronoun gerundive constructions in subject position

(2) a. **My learning the tango** impresses Mary.

b. ?**Me learning the tango** impresses Mary.

(2a) and (2b) each have a gerundive construction (the boldfaced portion) in subject position within the total sentence. Thus, the subject of sentence (2a) is *My learning the tango*. Within the gerundive construction of (2b), the subject is a personal pronoun (*me*). In this situation, according to Hudson, the possessive adjective *my* is preferred to *me* by native speakers (2003: 581).

3.1.2 Prescriptive and formal situations

Westbrook found in 1923 that the genitive case was used more than the objective case in contemporary literary works (141). His work was written in the same era as Fowler's *Dictionary of Modern English Usage* (1926), which adamantly denounced the use of ACC-ING, even when POSS-ING produced such phrases as the awkward:

(3) ?...which will result in **many's having to go into lodgings.**

(Nunnally 1991: 360). Thus, the prescriptive standard at the time was to avoid the use of ACC-ING, and this prescriptive standard was manifested in literary works. Yet, even in 1923 Westbrook noted that there was movement towards more use of the objective case (141). Since that time, the use of ACC-ING has become more and more preferable to POSS-ING, but is still generally seen as informal. Nunnally found that even today, grammar handbooks rarely accept ACC-ING constructions. Speakers of English today would be more likely to use POSS-ING if they were trying to speak “correctly”; for instance, in formal situations. (4a) and (4b)⁴ are examples of the tendency to use POSS-ING in business situations, while (4c) is what Nunnally describes as a hypercorrection⁵ made by an administrator at a business meeting (examples taken from Nunnally 1991: 365):

- (4) a. ...in recognition of **your** providing superior service.
b. I appreciate **your** serving on the committee.
c. ?We will try to avoid **that's** happening.

3.1.3 American English

Hudson speculates that POSS-ING may be more accepted in American English than it is in British English. He cites as evidence the fact that when American linguists first began to discuss the gerund in the 1960s and 1970s, they typically only used examples of POSS-ING, and in fact used the term POSS-ING to describe verbal gerunds as a category

⁴ These examples are interesting, but limited in relevance. (4a-b) generally only appear with *your* rather than a full NP such as *John's*, and as such do not give enough evidence to confirm a pattern.

⁵ (4c) is possibly grammatical and therefore not a hypercorrection, depending on whether one accepts the grammaticality of the genitive form of *that*. For instance, *That is a monster. And ?that's tail is long.* Certainly, though, (4c) seems awkward, especially compared to *We will try to avoid that happening.*

(2003: 581). Hudson does not provide much evidence to support a difference between British and American English; if there is a difference, it is probably not very large. However, Hudson describes (5a) as “forced and formal” in British English (2003: 603), while many Americans would actually prefer the POSS-ING (5a) to the ACC-ING (5b):

- (5) a. John’s knowing the answer surprised us.
b. John knowing the answer surprised us.

3.2 Preference for ACC-ING

There are several situations in which ACC-ING is the more likely choice or the only acceptable choice, as Nunnally describes.

Nunnally claims that possessive endings are either not added or are not phonologically realized when the subject is pluralized, and possibly with subjects ending in /s/ (1991: 363):

- (6) a. I appreciated the girls/ ?girls’ re-taking the test.⁶
b. I appreciated Grace/ ?Grace’s re-taking the test.

Since indefinite and demonstrative pronouns have no possessive forms, obviously POSS-ING is not available as construction for those subjects (example from Nunnally 1991: 363):

- (7) *All’s bringing a dish makes for a feast.

Inanimates are more likely to take ACC-ING (1991: 363):

⁶ There is no phonetic difference, of course, between standard pronunciations of *girls* and *girls’*, so there would be no way of telling whether the possessive ending is present or not. However, speakers will sometimes add an extra syllable /əz/ to the end of *girls’* (but not *girls*) in other situations, and it would be interesting if there were evidence that they did this, or did not do this, before gerunds. Nunnally does not present this type of evidence.

(8) The lamp hitting Jim sent him to the hospital.

Long or modified subjects are not likely to take a possessive (1991: 364):

(9) The thought of John, in just four years, starting college is odd.

Elliptical constructions require ACC-ING before the ellipsis, and prefer it for parallelism in the first half (1991: 364):

(10) They objected to Tom/ ?Tom's getting nothing and John/ *John's everything.

These examples show that there are not only numerous times when ACC-ING is preferred, but there are also situations in which POSS-ING is not possible.

4. Syntactic Analyses of POSS-ING and ACC-ING

A good syntactic analysis of POSS-ING and ACC-ING should successfully account for the distribution described above, be as straightforward and uncomplicated as possible (without over-generalizing), and should work within a theory of grammar that can account for a wide range of data. This paper follows Suzuki's lead in finding an analysis that works within Government-Binding theory. In this chapter, both analyses that predate Chomsky's *Lectures on Government and Binding* (1981) and those that attempt to work within this theory are examined.

4.1 Rosenbaum's Analysis

Rosenbaum 1967 proposes a POSS-ING complementizer paralleling a "that" complementizer and a "for-to" complementizer, as seen in his examples (1967: 24) reproduced below as (1)-(3):

- (1) I think **that** Fords are too expensive.
- (2) I should like very much **for** you to reconsider your refusal.
- (3) I am concerned about John's being so lazy.

POSS-ING occurs through a transformation he calls Complementizer Placement. (4) shows how a gerundial construction changes from D-structure to S-structure under Rosenbaum's analysis (example from Suzuki 1988: 15):

(4) Deep Structure:

they prefer [NP [S [NP John] [VP attend the meeting]]]

Complementizer Placement:

they prefer [NP [S **POSS** [NP John][VP **-ing** attend the meeting]]]

Affix Hopping

they prefer [NP [S [NP **John+POSS**] [VP **attend+-ing** the meeting]]]

Surface Structure

they prefer John's attending the meeting.

Rosenbaum further proposes another transformation where "the 'POSS' segment of the 'POSS-ing' complementizer can be optionally deleted...." (1967: 45)

This analysis is successful in three ways. First, the distribution of gerundive constructions is that of an NP because an NP dominates the constructions. Second, the constructions are sentential in nature because an S dominates the constructions as well. (Suzuki 1988: 15) These two facts allow gerundive constructions to have both NP and S

characteristics. Third, treating the genitive morpheme 's as a complementizer in parallel to *for-to* and *that* acknowledges the commonalities between the three constructions.

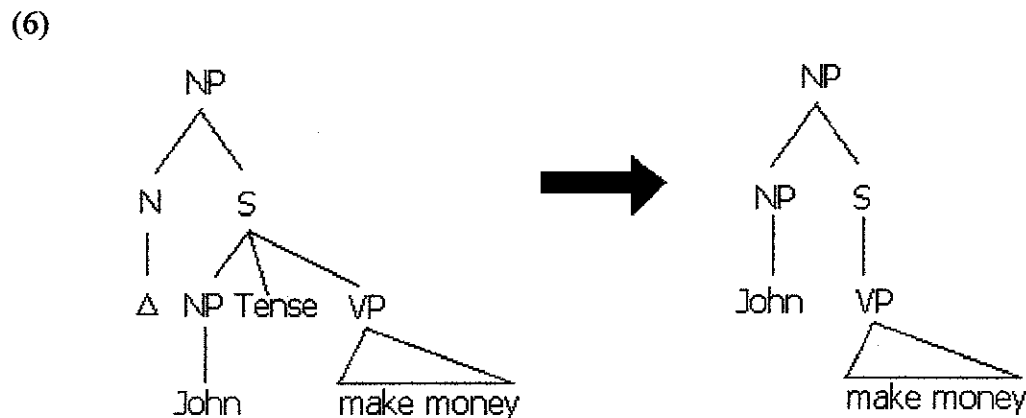
There are two major drawbacks to Rosenbaum's analysis. First, it requires two distinct genitive morphemes – one for ordinary NPs and one for gerund complementizers (Suzuki 1988: 16). As subsequent analyses will demonstrate, requiring two different 's morphemes is unnecessarily complicated. Second, introducing X-bar theory into this analysis is problematic because there is no N identified within the NP (Suzuki 1988: 16), which is required by the rule of endocentricity:

$$(5) X^n \rightarrow \dots X^{n-1} \dots$$

(Jackendoff 1977: 30). Rosenbaum's analysis is an early attempt that serves as a starting point for later analyses.

4.2 Emonds' Analysis

Emonds 1976 proposes a transformation whereby an NP in the embedded S replaces an empty head (1976: 126), as in (6):



The advantages of this analysis over Rosenbaum's are that it preserves endocentricity at the DS level and that a single genitive morpheme can be used both in regular NPs and in gerundive constructions, by using (7):

- (7) Assign genitive Case to the leftmost NP immediately dominated by another NP.

(Suzuki 1988: 17).

On the other hand, Suzuki is justifiably reluctant both to regard a genitive subject as the head of a phrase and to replace an empty nominal head projected at zero-level with the maximally projected embedded NP (1988: 17). There are important differences between lexical levels and phrasal levels that underlie most movement proposals within Government-Binding theory.

4.3 Jackendoff's Analysis

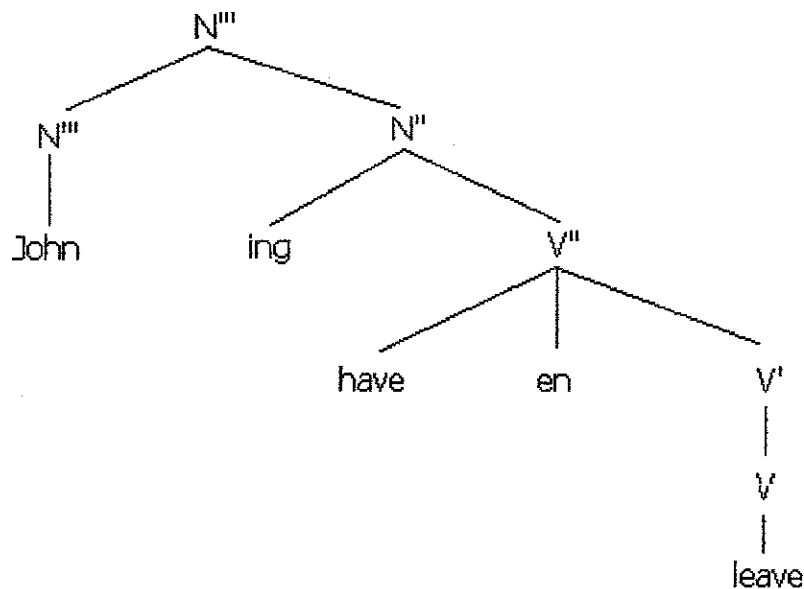
Jackendoff 1977 introduces a Deverbalizing Rule Schema, shown in (8):

- (8) Deverbalizing Rule Schema:

$$X^i \rightarrow af - V^i$$

where X is a lexical category and V is a verb at the same level as X, and af is an affix (1977: 221). So, gerundive nominals would have the form $N'' \rightarrow ing - V''$. For instance, the underlying structure of *John having left* would look like (9):

(9)



(Jackendoff 1977: 223).

This analysis does not strictly follow the rule of endocentricity (5) because there is no N' under N'' , but Jackendoff claims that the Deverbalizing Rule Schema characterizes one of three classes of systematic exceptions (1877: 221).

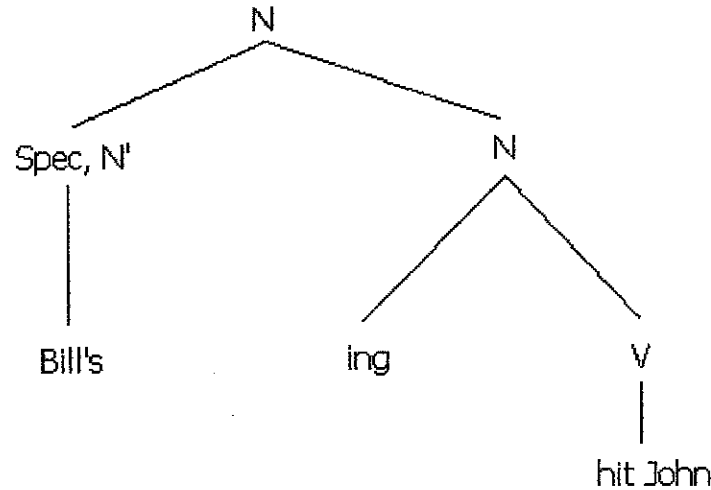
Jackendoff's analysis also does not explain the difference in distribution of ACC-ING and POSS-ING, nor does Rosenbaum's or Emonds'. All three seem to consider ACC-ING a variation of POSS-ING, an assumption that is fairly widely accepted in the literature (Suzuki 1988: 18). Nevertheless, our investigation above seems to imply that there is something significantly different between ACC-ING and POSS-ING.

4.4 Horn and Schachter's Analyses

Horn 1975 and Schachter 1976 were independent analyses suggesting that ACC-ING and POSS-ING were different enough to be treated separately in an analysis of verbal gerunds.

Horn argues that POSS-ING constructions cannot be analyzed as sentences that are embedded in NP nodes, but rather have structures like (10) (Horn 1975: 386):

(10)



Horn supports his argument with evidence of cleft sentences. If POSS-ING constructions are dominated by NP instead of being in an embedded S, then they will correctly be predicted to be able to occur in the focus position in cleft sentences. POSS-ING also does not allow *wh*-extraction.

Schachter gives a nontransformational, determiner-plus-nominal analysis for POSS-ING. He argues against a sentential analysis, which is the transformational approach taken by Rosenbaum, Emonds, and Jackendoff. Assuming an NP structure for POSS-ING but not for ACC-ING allows an analysis where the genitive Case is obligatory for both NPs and verbal gerunds. Previously, the argument was that genitive Case was optional for gerunds and obligatory for NPs, but Horn and Schachter's analyses allow a neater conclusion that genitive Case is obligatory for NPs (including POSS-ING) and prohibited for sentences (including ACC-ING).

4.5 Suzuki's Analysis

Suzuki 1988 presents an analysis in the vein of Horn and Schachter, but capturing even more precisely the dichotomy between POSS-ING and ACC-ING. Suzuki's analysis consists of three main proposals.

4.5.1 Minimality of government

First, Suzuki proposes a rule of Minimality of Government (1988: 41):

(11) Minimality of Government:

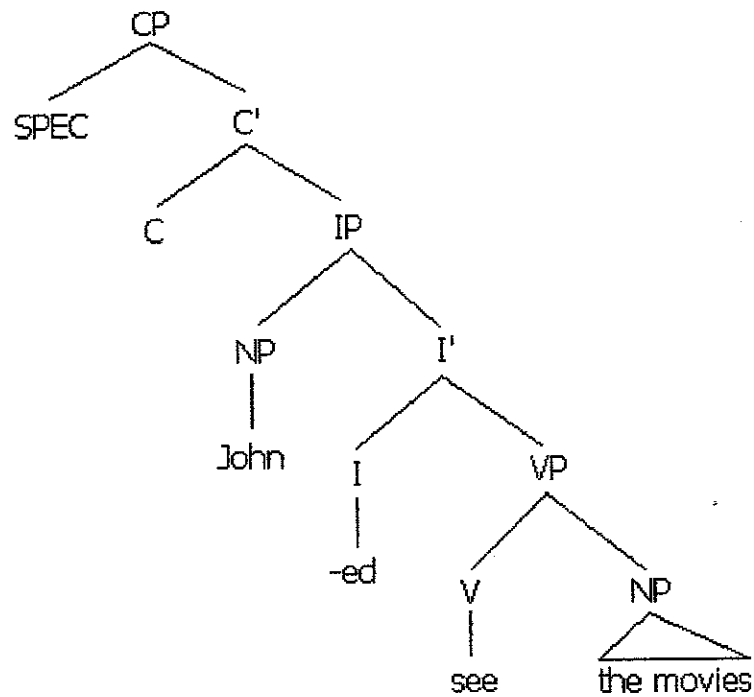
Choose the closest governor (Case assigner) if there is more than one possible governor (Case assigner).

This rule assumes that every Case assigner is X^0 or a feature of X^0 (like Tense). The analysis also assumes endocentricity, so every phrase has only one head. Therefore, it is never ambiguous which possibility is "closest". (Suzuki 1988: 41)

4.5.2 *-ing* is Inflectional

Secondly, Suzuki argues that *-ing* is not derivational, but inflectional. (See 5.3 for possible historical reasons why *-ing* has become inflectional.) Other suffixes have been analyzed as INFL as well; for instance, *-ed* in (12):

(12)

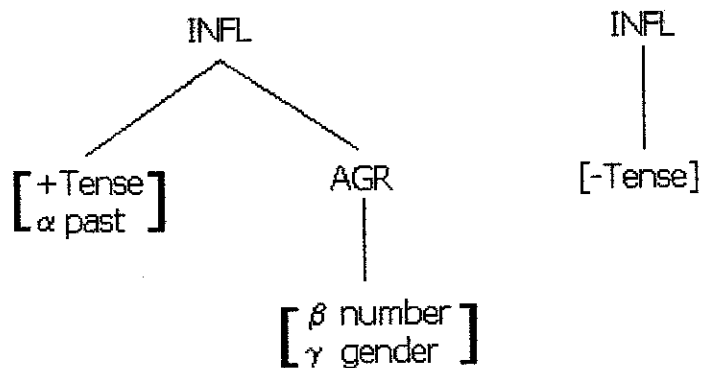


(Suzuki 1988: 49).

The INFL category can be further broken down into one of the two structures shown in

(13)⁷:

(13)



(Suzuki 1988: 50). Assuming this structure of INFL, Case is assigned by a feature within

INFL rather than INFL⁰.

⁷ This is prior to Pollock 1989, who argues that each inflection heads its own phrase.

4.5.3 Genitive Case assigned when governor is [+N]

Chomsky claims that an NP is nominative if it is governed by [+AGR] (1981: 170).

Suzuki claims that nominative Case is assigned by the feature [+Tense] inside the category INFL⁰, confirmed by the fact that infinitives [-Tense, -AGR] never have a nominative subject (1988: 51). The Case Adjacency Principle (14) blocks any other Case assigner.

(14) Case Adjacency Principle:

A Case assigner and a Case assignee must be adjacent.

(Stowell 1981: 113).

Suzuki proposes (15) for genitive Case assignment of both NPs and gerunds (1988: 52):

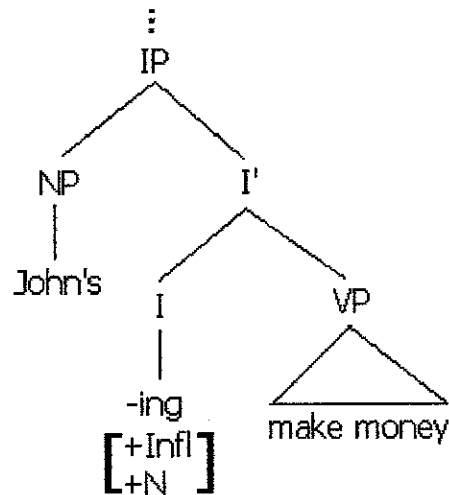
(15) Genitive Case Assignment:

Assign genitive Case to an NP which is governed by the feature [+N].

An N is assumed to contain the feature [+N] by its very nature, so in regular NPs (which must contain Ns according to (5)), genitive Case is obligatorily assigned to the subject of the NP. For gerunds, genitive Case is assigned to the subject of a gerund that contains *-ing* [+Infl, +N]. A sample gerundial construction that would be assigned genitive Case is

(16):

(16)



ACC-ING, on the other hand, does not take the genitive Case. Suzuki proposes that ACC-ING is *-ing* [+Infl, -N] (1988: 56). According to (14), Case is then assigned by the matrix verb, which is the closest verb, above and adjacent to the subject. For example, in (17):

(17) I appreciate **Mary learning the tango.**

the matrix verb is *appreciate*. This matrix verb always assigns objective Case.

Therefore, in all situations where *-ing* is [-N], the Case is objective.

4.5.4 Summary of Suzuki's Analysis

Suzuki proposes that POSS-ING and ACC-ING are identical structures except that POSS-ING is [+Infl, +N] and ACC-ING is [+Infl, -N]. He motivates this conclusion with a historical perspective. His analysis recognizes both the similarities and the differences between the two constructions. Since the two constructions are intuitively similar, an analysis such as Suzuki's makes more sense than analyses like Horn and Schachter, which treat POSS-ING and ACC-ING as totally different structures (Suzuki 1988: 57). Suzuki is able to account for the differences in distribution between the two forms

without saying one looks like a sentence and one looks like an NP, by assuming that *-ing* can be inflected with a Nominal feature [\pm N]. ACC-ING is assigned objective Case by the matrix verb and thus has a more verbal distribution, while POSS-ING has the same [+N] feature as NPs and thus acts more like an NP. Neither needs special motivation; POSS-ING is analyzed equivalently to an NP and ACC-ING is analyzed in a way similar to complements of ECM constructions.

Suzuki's analysis maintains endocentricity, assigns genitive Case under government, and is compatible with the distribution of NPs, tensed clauses, and POSS-ING and ACC-ING. However, analyzing ACC-ING similarly to ECM constructions is problematic. ECM constructions are lexically governed. Only certain verbs can cross the IP barrier. On the other hand, ACC-ING distribution does not depend on lexical items.

5. Residual Problems and Conclusions

5.1 PRO-ING

Although the emphasis of this paper is on the POSS-ING and ACC-ING constructions, it is important to acknowledge that there is a third category of verbal gerund, namely PRO-ING. Below, (1a) is a POSS-ING construction, (1b) is an ACC-ING construction, and (1c) is a PRO-ING construction:

- (1) a. I appreciate Sally's typing my letters.
- b. I appreciate Sally doing my laundry.
- c. Sally loves PRO cleaning my room.

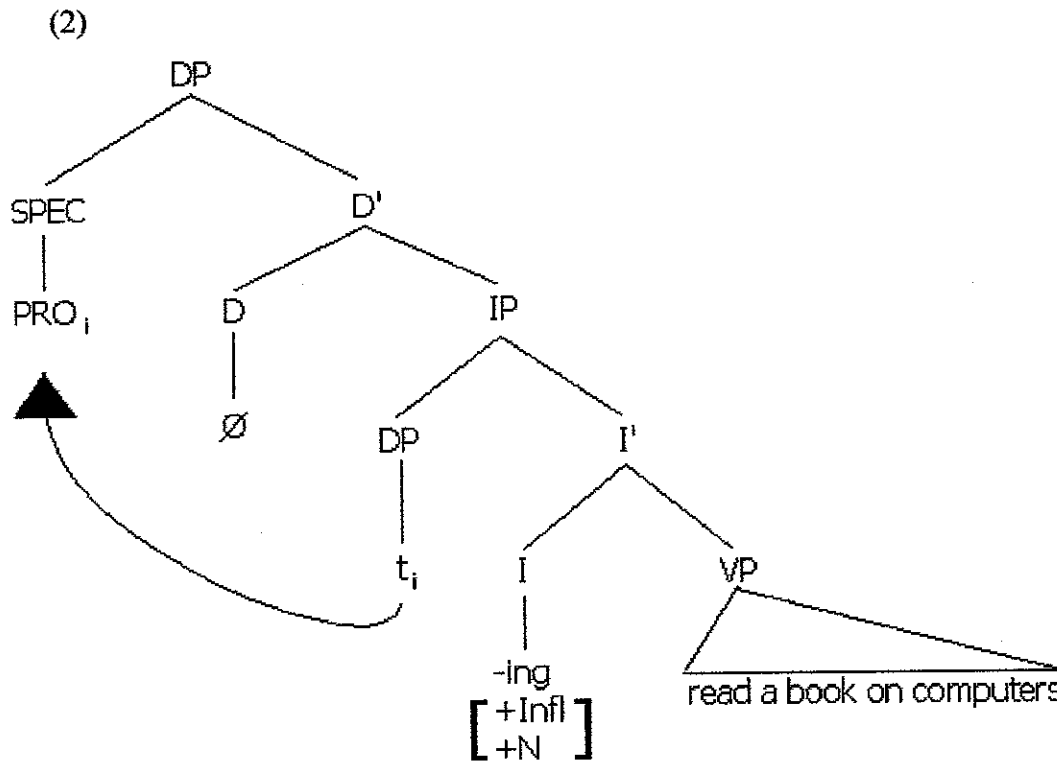
In (1c), PRO (which is phonologically null) is coindexed with Sally. Thus, Sally is the one who cleans my room, and the semantic interpretation is that Sally loves Sally's cleaning my room.

The problem is this: we have treated POSS-ING and ACC-ING as a dichotomous pair. How do we introduce PRO-ING into the analysis? If the difference between POSS-ING and ACC-ING constructions is that POSS-ING is [+N] and ACC-ING is [-N], then which is PRO-ING? The binary nature of the N feature seems to preclude a third construction, so it must be either [+N] or [-N].

The simplest way to describe the distribution of PRO is claiming that PRO must be ungoverned, which means that it cannot be Case-marked (Chomsky 1995: 108-9).

However, no matter whether N is + or -, if PRO is analyzed equivalently to the subject of ACC-ING or POSS-ING, PRO will be Case-marked (either by the matrix verb or by the nominal feature) (Suzuki 1988: 124).

Suzuki gets around this dilemma by assuming the Determiner Phrase hypothesis of Fukui and Speas 1986 and proposing a PRO movement rule such that PRO moves from DP to [Spec, DP] if it will receive Case if it does not move. PRO movement is seen in (2):



(Suzuki 1988: 128). Suzuki's DP hypothesis will not be explained here, but it is assumed by Suzuki without evidence involving gerunds, and then gerunds are fit into the hypothesis. If we do not wish to support the DP hypothesis, then his analysis does not help us move towards an acceptable analysis of PRO.

Suzuki also cites other data to support PRO movement; for instance, it prevents *the* occurring before a gerund (1988: 128), as in (3):

(3) *Sally enjoys the cleaning my room.

However, this also prevents any determiner from occurring before a gerund, including an example like (4), which Suzuki would claim is ungrammatical (1988: 130), but I claim is grammatical and in common usage:

(4) This forgetting your homework every day has got to stop.

Suzuki does acknowledge that sentences like (3) were grammatical in Early Modern English and provides a mechanism for them to be grammatical within that earlier schema (1988: 141).

How to account for PRO-ING will be a key issue in determining how to account for ACC-ING and POSS-ING, and further research is needed.

5.2 Other directions for research

Further research is also needed to account for the distributional issues described in chapter 3. Many of these areas, especially where POSS-ING is preferred to ACC-ING, have not been sufficiently studied. For instance, the relationship between American and British English uses of gerunds have not seemingly been studied at all.

Also, I agree with Hudson 2003 that the history of gerunds and the modern syntax should be studied more jointly. Both Hudson and Suzuki include historical background as motivation for the combination of verbal and nominal characteristics associated with gerunds, but I have yet to see an analysis that completely integrates the transition of these characteristics over time into a modern syntactical analysis. Also interesting is the appearance of movement away from POSS-ING and towards ACC-ING, which may be continuing a historical trend centuries old.

5.3 Conclusion

In conclusion, I have described the ACC-ING and POSS-ING constructions and presented the problems inherent in dealing with them. A variety of proposals have been put forth, many of them within Government-Binding theory, but none of them stands uncritiqued. This topic presents an interesting problem for many modern theories of

grammar. The present paper has simply tapped the surface of the dilemmas of POSS-
ING and ACC-ING.

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