Evaluative prenominal possessives in Spanish

Luis Eguren
*Universidad Autónoma de Madrid*

luis.eguren@uam.es

In this talk, the semantic and syntactic properties of Spanish evaluative prenominal possessives (i.e. the affective possessive preceding a proper name (1a), the so-called emphatic possessive (1b), and the possessive in the Old and American Spanish doubled possessive construction (1c)) are thoroughly described, and compared with those of canonical prenominal possessives (2).

(1) a. (Mi) Juan me quiere mucho
    my *John* me *loves* a lot

b. Todos los días *me* bebo una/mi *cervecita*
    *all the days* CL *have a/my* beer-DIM

c. Yo trabajaba aquí *con* la/su *mamá de él*
    *I worked here* with the/his *mum of he*

(2) Su *foto* es muy bonita.
    *his/her/their picture* is very nice

It is proposed that Spanish evaluative possessives, in contrast to canonical prenominal possessives, do not originate as nominal modifiers, and then raise to D (3a), but are all directly merged in the DP-domain (3b), which captures the fact that affective, emphatic and doubling possessives just evaluate the relation between the possessed noun and the possessor, and are not interpreted as complements of the noun.

(3) a. [DP [D Poss] [NP N t₁]] (canonical possessives)

b. [DP Poss [NP N ]] (evaluative possessives)

In order to account for their (partially) different distribution (1), it is further argued that affective, emphatic and doubling possessives are generated in different structural positions within the DP domain.