

## Possessor Raising and BA Construction\*

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In this paper, I discuss a subset of the BA construction and argue that possessor raising (movement) must be involved. Contrary to Huang's (2008) base-generation approach, I show that a multiple possessor example of the BA construction can only be compatible with the movement approach. Furthermore, I argue that it is not true that we can only have inalienable nominals in possessor raising as proposed in the literature. I show that this seemingly obligatory requirement is due to a semantic restriction on the BA construction itself. Once we make use of the recursive  $vP$  projection to circumvent this requirement, inalienable nominals can also be employed.

### 1. Introduction

Huang (2008) proposes a base-generation account for the pseudo-Double Object Construction [pseudo-DOC] in (1). Although *he* ('drink') is usually used as a transitive verb, in this special construction it seems to function as a ditransitive verb. As shown in (1), the verb *he* ('drink') takes two arguments: *Sala* ('Sara') and *san-ping jiu* ('three bottles of wine'). Note that the first argument *Sara* also receives a special Affectee reading in this construction. That is, *Sara* is affected by the event of *Grissom*'s drinking of three bottles of wine. For example, if *Grissom* drinks *Sara*'s three bottles of wine, *Sara* loses some of her possessions.

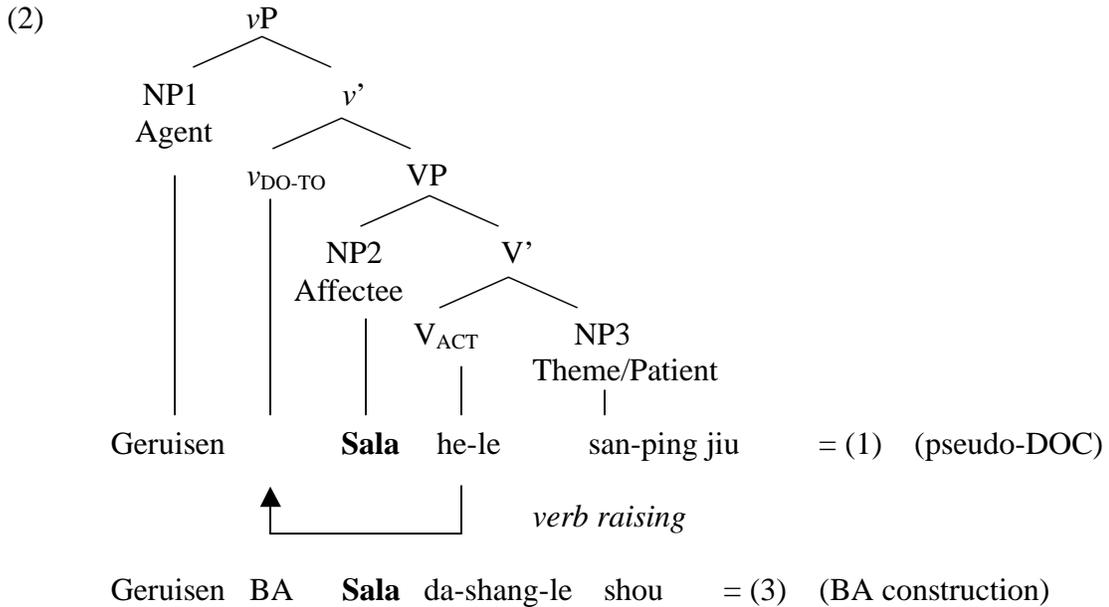
- (1) Geruisen he-le            **Sala**    san-ping            jiu.  
Grissom drink-ASP    Sara    three-CL            wine  
'Grissom drank three bottles of wine on Sara.'

Huang proposes a structure like the one in (2) to explain the Affectee reading on *Sara*. The argument *Sara* (NP2) is base-generated in Spec, VP, where an Affectee theta-role is assigned. In order to get the right word order, the verb has to raise to the  $v$  position, consistent with Huang, Li and Li's (2009) hypothesis that  $v$  in Chinese must be overtly filled. Note that although it is possible to interpret *Sara* (NP2) as the possessor of the *three bottles of wine* (NP3), this is not a necessary reading. For example, (1) is also compatible with a scenario in which *Grissom* and *Sara* go to a bar together, and *Sara* pays for *Grissom*'s wine. Huang argues that the optional possessor reading on *Sara* is

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incompatible with a possessor raising approach, since possessor raising denotes an obligatory possessor reading. If there is a possessor reading, it is simply derived through context.



Moreover, Huang argues that the BA construction in (3) is a subtype of this pseudo-DOC construction. In example (3), *Sara* (NP2) also has to be interpreted as an Affectee. Hence, for Huang, *Sara* in (3) also has to be base-generated under Spec, VP to receive the Affectee theta-role. Unlike the pseudo-DOC example in (2), BA is inserted at the *v* position. Since the *v* head is overtly filled, the verb can just stay in situ.

- (3) Geruisen ba **Sala** da-shang-le shou.  
 Grissom BA Sara hit-hurt-ASP hand  
 ‘Grissom hit Sara on her hand.’

However, in example (3), but not in example (1), NP2 *must* be interpreted as a possessor of NP3. If the BA construction shares the same structure as the pseudo-DOC, it is unclear why there is an obligatory possessor reading on *Sara* in the BA construction under the proposal that the possessor reading depends on context. Because of this obligatory possessor reading in the BA construction, I propose that the pseudo-DOC and BA constructions, although both involve an Affectee projection, have different derivations: base-generation of NP2 in (1) (cf. Huang), but possessor raising of NP2 in (3).

In the following discussion, I will first present a multiple possessor example of the BA construction, which cannot be captured by Huang’s analysis. Then I will show

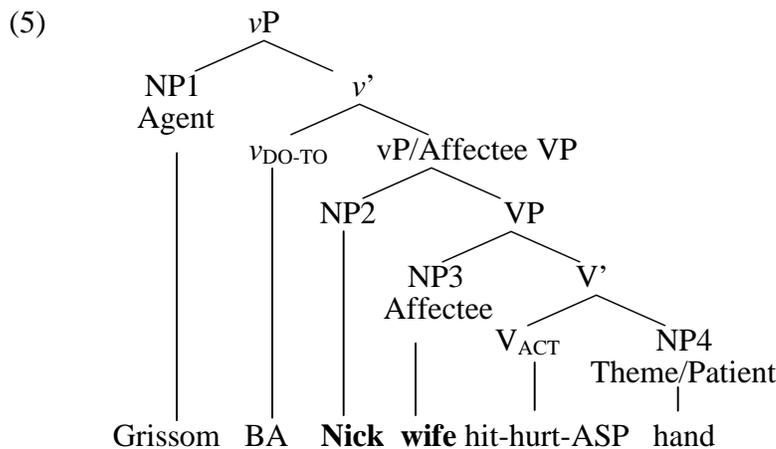
how my proposal can explain this example. I also argue that the obligatory possessor reading on *Sara* is not simply derived from an inalienable nominal pair in (3). Given the proposed analysis, we can also find alienable nominals with an obligatory possessor reading in the BA construction.

## 2. A puzzle

First, consider an example like (4), where we can find a possessor without an Affectee interpretation. This Chinese example is inspired by the multiple accusative construction in Korean (cf. Yoon 1990 and Vermeulen 2005).

- (4) Geruisen ba [NP **Nike**] [NP **taitai**] da-shang-le [NP shou].  
 Grissom BA Nick wife hit-hurt-ASP hand  
 ‘Grissom hurt Nick’s wife’s hand.’

There are two possessor-possessee relations in example (4): *Nick* and his wife, as well as *Nick’s* wife and her hand. *Nick’s* wife receives the Affectee reading in (4) since it is her hand which is hurt. However, *Nick* does not necessarily have to be affected. For example, if *Nick* were not aware of the event of his wife’s hand being hurt, he would not be affected at all. Under Huang’s base-generation account, this particular example cannot be fully explained. Note that in between BA and the verb, there are two NPs now. In order to accommodate both of them, a base-generation approach can either posit a recursive *vP* projection or a recursive Affectee projection to host the NP *Nick*. This is shown in (5). However, no matter which projection is chosen, theta-role assigning problems arise. If the recursive *vP* is chosen, the NP2 *Nick* will receive no theta-role. On the other hand, if the recursive Affectee projection is chosen, now the NP2 *Nick* can get an Affectee theta-role. However, getting the Affectee theta-role means that *Nick* must be obligatorily affected, which is contrary to fact.



A possible way for Huang to circumvent the above two problems is to say that somehow the NP2 *Nick* can form a constituent with the NP3 *wife* and gets the possessor theta-role from it. Although this can solve the theta-role problem, the NP2 *Nick* will end up without Case. Note that if NP2 is part of NP3, a genitive marker *-de* is required, as shown in (6).

- (6) Geruisen da-shang-le [Sala \*(de) shou].  
 Grissom hit-hurt-ASP Sara DE hand  
 ‘Grissom hurt Sara’s hand.’

Hence, this shows that even if the NP2 *Nick* and the NP3 *wife* form a constituent, the NP2 *Nick* cannot get its case checked. There is no *-de* marker in example (4); therefore, there is no Case available. Furthermore, there is evidence showing that the NP2 *Nick* and the NP3 *wife* clearly do not form a constituent. As shown in (7), in between *Nick* and *wife*, we in fact can insert an adverb and a copula.

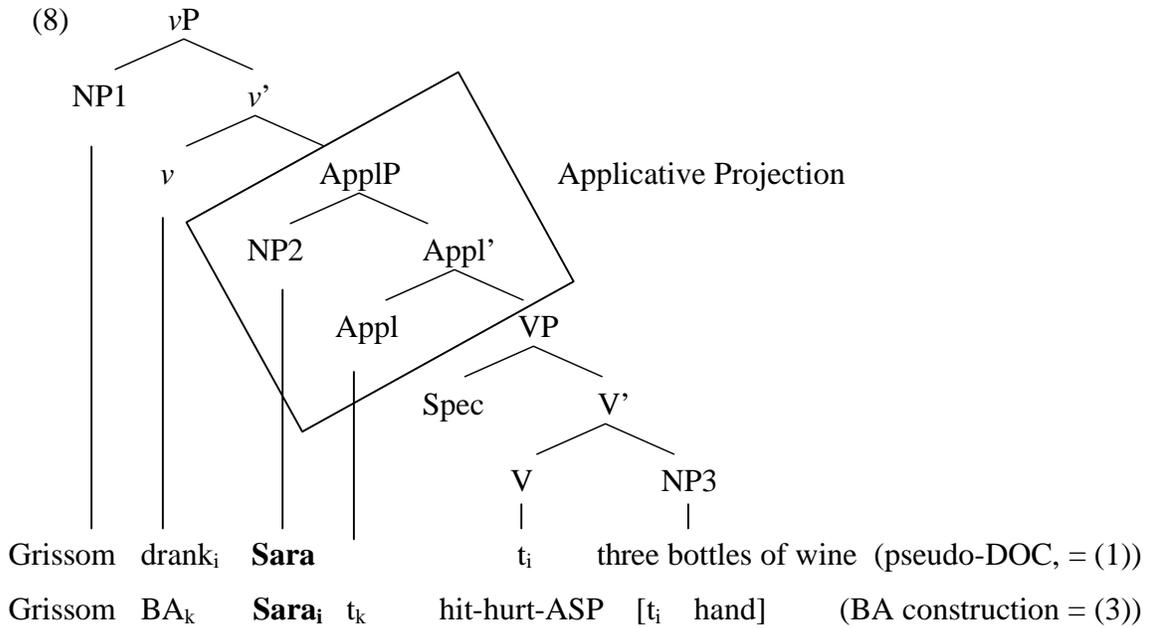
- (7) Geruisen ba [NP Nike] (you shi) [NP taitai] da-shang-le [NP shou]  
 Grissom BA Nick again is wife hit-hurt-ASP hand  
 ‘It is again Nick’s wife whose hand was hurt by Grissom.’

To summarize, the multiple possessor example in (4) is problematic for a base-generation account. Moreover, there are also adjective restriction and resumptive pronoun differences between example (1) and example (3). (See Appendix for details.) If example (1) (pseudo-DOC) and example (3) (the BA construction) share the same underlying structure, these differences are surprising.

### 3. My Proposal

In this section, I will propose an account to distinguish the BA construction from the pseudo-DOC. Because of the Affectee reading, I adopt Huang’s idea that there has to be an applicative projection in both constructions (cf. Tsai 2008 and Pykkänen 2008). But in contrast to Huang, I propose that possessor raising (movement) takes place in the BA construction. The proposed structure is shown in (8). As one can see, the pseudo-DOC basically follows Huang’s proposal. However, for the BA construction, NP2 first merges with NP3 and gets its possessor theta-role from NP3. Then NP2 moves to Spec, ApplP and gets Case from *v*.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> The movement of BA will be discussed in Section 4. Since it is not relevant to our current discussion in this section, I will simply put it aside for now.

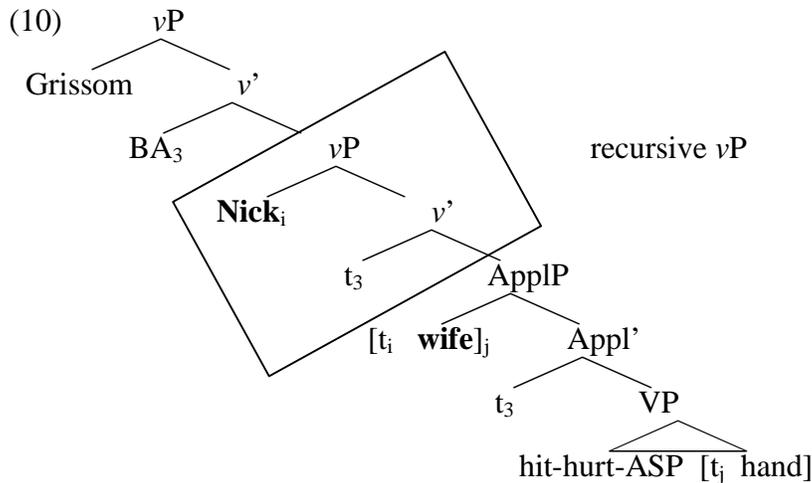


The proposed analysis has the following advantages: First, the optional vs. obligatory possessor reading in the two constructions can be explained. For a pseudo-DOC like example (1), *Sara* is based-generated under Spec, ApplP; hence, the possessor reading is only contextual. But for the BA construction, as in example (3), *Sara* first merges with *hand* and gets a possessor theta-role from it; hence, an obligatory possessor reading is necessary.

Second, the lack of an Affectee interpretation in example (4) can also be explained. The example is repeated here as (9).

- (9) Geruisen ba [NP **Nike**] [NP **taitai**] da-shang-le [NP shou]  
 Grissom BA Nick wife hit-hurt-ASP hand  
 ‘Grissom hurt Nick’s wife’s hand.’

Assuming that recursive vPs are available in Chinese (cf. Sybesma 1999 and Huang, Li and Li 2009), after *Nick* gets the possessor theta-role from *wife*, it raises to the Spec of the recursive vP to check its case. The NP *Nick* only gets the possessor theta-role, hence there is no obligatory Affectee reading on it. By adopting this structure and analysis, there is no theta-role conflict problem and no case problem either, as illustrated in (10).



A prediction can be made under the current analysis: The postverbal NP *hand* in (1), repeated here as (11), should be able to move to a preverbal position. And there should be no need to have a genitive marker *-de* between *Sara* and her hand. This prediction is borne out in (12) (cf. the structure in (10)).

(11)        Geruisen ba **Sala**    da-shang-le    shou.  
               Grissom BA Sara    hit-hurt-ASP    hand  
               ‘Grissom hit Sara on her hand.’

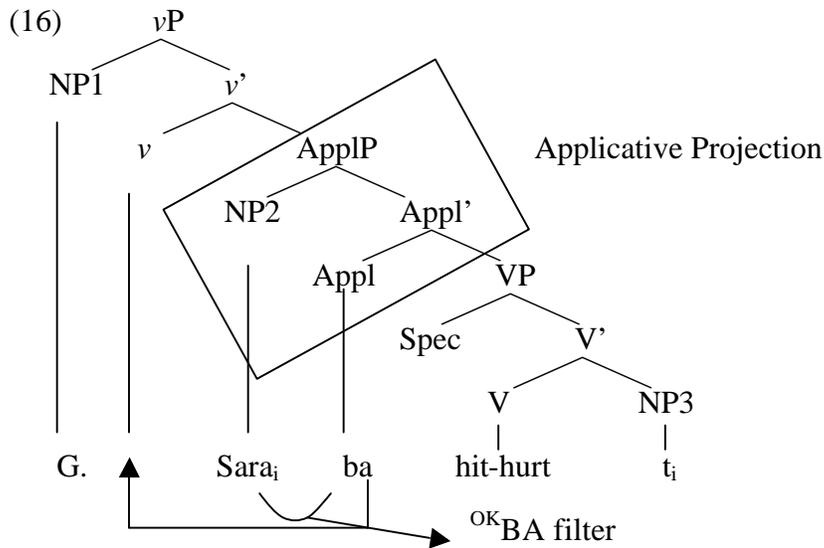
(12)        Geruisen ba **Sala** (de) shou    da-shang-le.  
               Grissom BA Sara        hand    hit-hurt-ASP  
               ‘Grissom hit Sara on her hand.’

With *-de* in between *Sara* and *hand*, this means that *Sara* and *hand* are both under Spec, ApplP. *Sara* gets the possessor theta-role and checks its case with the genitive marker. On the other hand, if there is no *-de* in between, this means that after getting the possessor theta-role from *hand*, *Sara* raises to the Specifier position of the recursive vP and then gets case from the higher *v* head (occupied by BA). Since both derivations are legitimate, the genitive marker *-de* is therefore optional in example (12).

#### 4. More on BA construction

Before proceeding to the conclusion, in this section I will address another issue related to possessor raising in the BA construction. According to the literature (cf. Cheng and Ritter 1988 and Yoon 1990), only inalienable nominals (part-whole or body-part nominals) are possible candidates in the BA construction. Therefore, if the nominals are

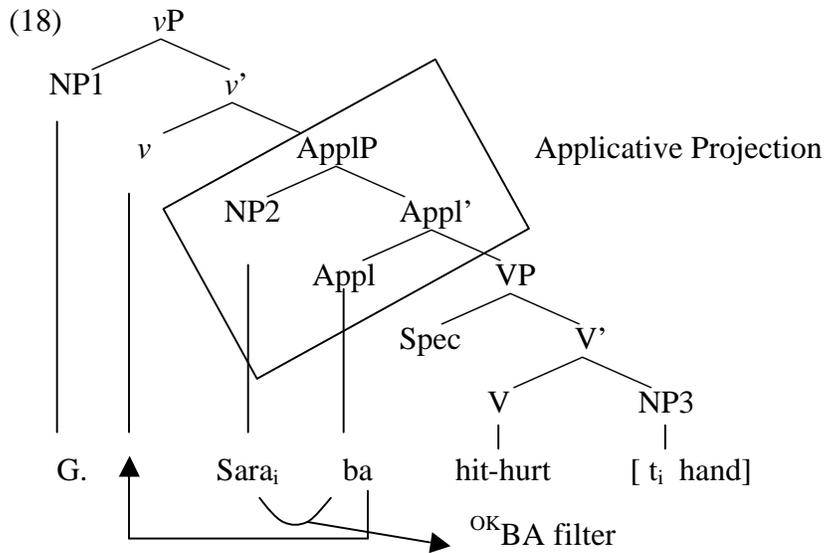




The derivations of example (15) are as follows: First, the verb has to be able to project an Applicative Projection right above VP. And I assume that BA can be inserted at the head position of the ApplP. If BA is inserted, an NP must move to Spec, ApplP to satisfy the thematic properties of BA. In example (15), *Sara* then has to move to Spec, ApplP to receive the Affectee theta-role from BA. Next, we check the BA filter to see if the BA NP is a semantic object of the verb. Since *Sara* is the direct object of the verb, the BA filter is satisfied. Finally, following the assumption that *v* has to be overtly filled in Chinese (cf. Huang, Li, and Li 2009), BA then moves to the head position of vP.

The BA construction involving the possessor raising case is repeated here as (17). And the structure is shown in (18).

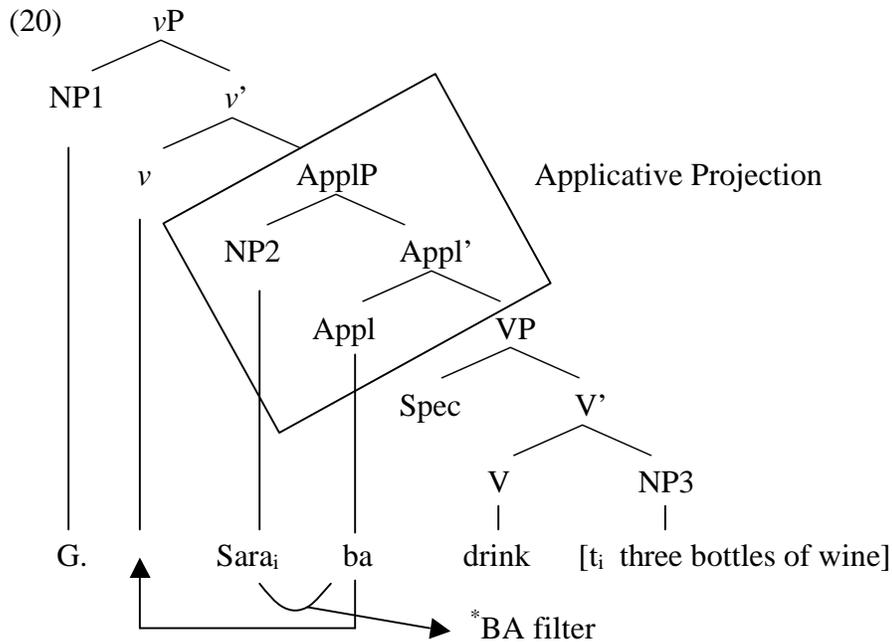
- (17) Geruisen ba Sala da-shang-le shou. (inalienable nominal)  
 Grissom BA Sara hit-hurt-ASP hand  
 ‘Grissom hit Sara on her hand.’



Similar to the example in (15), an applicative projection is also projected, and BA is inserted in (17). After getting the possessor theta-role from *hand*, *Sara* moves to Spec, ApplP to get the Affectee theta-role. Now *Sara* is the BA NP and can also be counted as the semantic object of the verb. This is because if *Sara's hand* is hurt, *Sara* is hurt as well (the subset-superset relation). After the BA filter is satisfied, BA can move to the *v* head.

The example with the alienable nominals are repeated here as (19). The structure is shown in (20).

- (19) \*Geruisen ba Sala he-le san-ping jiu. (alienable nominal)  
 Grissom BA Sara drink-ASP three-CL wine  
 'Grissom drank three bottles of wine on Sara.'

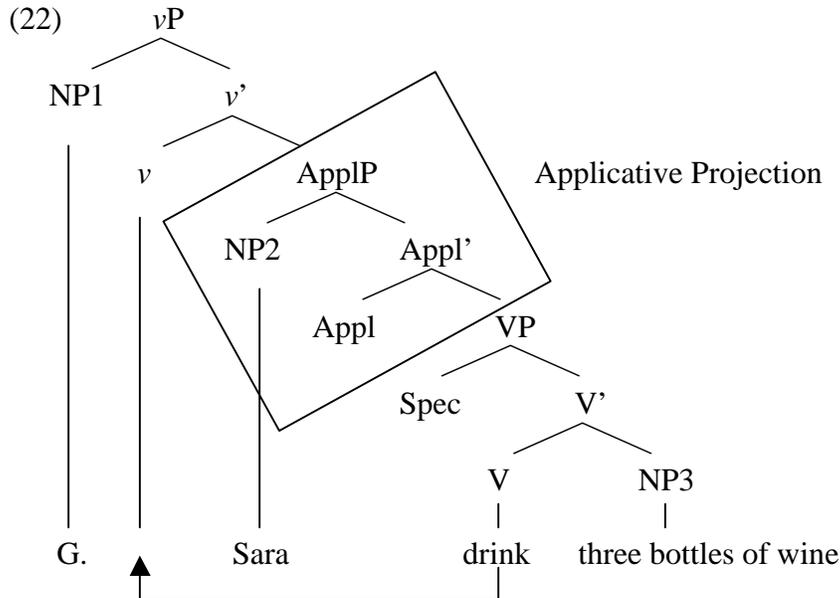


Though everything is almost the same as in example (17), the problem with example (19) is that the BA filter cannot be satisfied. When *Sara* becomes the BA NP, it is apparently not a semantic object of the verb. Drinking three bottles of wine does not entail drinking *Sara*. Hence, this example has to be ruled out.

However, recall that the same pair *Sara-three bottles of wine* is compatible with a pseudo-DOC construction, repeated here as (21).

- (21) Geruisen he-le Sala san-ping jiu. (pseudo-DOC)  
 Grissom drink-ASP Sara three-CL wine  
 ‘Grissom drank three bottles of wine on Sara.’

As shown in (22), *Sara* is base-generated under Spec, ApplP. Hence, no BA filter needs to be satisfied. Example (21) is therefore grammatical.



Based on the current analysis, we can make the following prediction: It should be possible to have alienable nominals in the BA construction by making use of the recursive  $vP$  once the BA filter is satisfied. Furthermore, we should get an obligatory possessor reading on the first NP of this alienable nominal pair. This prediction is borne out in (23).

- (23) a. Geruisen ba Sala san-ping jiu he-le. (alienable nominal, but ok)  
 Grissom BA Sara three-CL wine drink-ASP  
 ‘Grissom drank Sara’s three bottles of wine.’  
 b.  $[_{TP} \text{Grissom } [_{vP} \text{BA}_k [_{vP} \text{Sara}_j [_{\text{AppIP}} [t_j \text{ three bottles of wine}]_i t_k [_{VP} \text{drink } t_i ]]]]]]$

Note that in example (23), both *Sara* and *three bottles of wine* are in preverbal positions. The structure in (23b) shows that *three bottles of wine* is in Spec, ApplP, where it receives the Affectee theta-role. As for the NP *Sara*, it gets the possessor theta-role from *three bottles of wine* and raises to the Spec of recursive  $vP$ . Since *Sara* gets the possessor theta-role from *three bottles of wine*, this explains the obligatory possessor reading reported on *Sara*. Hence, example (23) shows that the possessor reading in the BA construction is not simply caused by inalienable nominals themselves. The possessor reading on the alienable nominals in example (23) can only be derived by the mechanism of possessor raising.

## 5. Conclusion

In this paper, I have shown that the BA construction cannot be subsumed under the pseudo-DOC construction as proposed by Huang (2008). In addition to the Affectee projection, possessor raising (movement approach) has to be involved in the BA construction. I have also demonstrated that the obligatory possessor reading is not simply caused by the appearance of inalienable nominals. Once the BA filter restriction is satisfied, alienable nominals can be used in the BA construction and an obligatory possessor reading is also available.

## APPENDIX

As noted in the literature (cf. Cheng and Ritter (1988), Yoon (1990), Vermeulen (2005)), the possessee ‘hand’ in (3) allows only restrictive modifiers (see (24)), whereas there is no such restriction in (1) (see (25); note that the order between the adjective and the numeral + classifier is changeable).

- (24) a. Geruisen ba **Sala** da-shang-le [ zou [ shou]].  
 Grissom BA Sara hit-hurt-ASP left hand  
 ‘Grissom hit Sara on her left hand.’  
 b. \*Geruisen ba **Sala** da-shang-le [ piaoliang de [ shou]].  
 Grissom BA Sara hit-hurt-AS beautiful hand  
 ‘Grissom hit Sara on her beautiful hand.’
- (25) a. Geruisen he-le Sala [ hen gui de [ san-ping [ jiu]]].  
 Grissom drink-ASP Sara very expensive three-CL wine  
 ‘Grissom drank three very expensive bottles of wine on Sara.’  
 b. Geruisen he-le Sala [ san-ping [ hen gui de [ jiu]]].  
 Grissom drink-ASP Sara three-CL very expensive wine

Notice that the insertion of a resumptive pronoun changes the grammaticality of (24).

- (26) a. Geruisen ba **Sala** da-shang-le [ (\*ta) zou [ shou]].  
 Grissom BA Sara hit-hurt-ASP she left hand  
 ‘Grissom hit Sara on her left hand.’  
 b. Geruisen ba **Sala** da-shang-le [ \*(ta) piaoliang de [ shou]].  
 Grissom BA Sara hit-hurt-ASP she beautiful hand  
 ‘Grissom hit Sara on her beautiful hand.’

See Kuo (2009) for detailed analyses.

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