1 Introduction. In this presentation, I employ evidence from Cochabamba Quechua (Quechuan, Bolivia—see Lastra 1968; van de Kerke 1996) to argue against the idea that all predicative possession constructions cross-linguistically share an underlying source (Freeze 1992; Kayne 1993; den Dikken 1998), with surface variation resulting from movement. Instead, I argue that the Quechua data indicate that predicative possession constructions can vary in terms of where the possessor is first externally merged into the structure (thereby supporting similar conclusions reached for Palestinian Arabic by Boneh & Sichel 2010 and for Germanic by Levinson 2011). Insofar as predicative possession constructions that vary syntactically in this way can be truth-conditionally indistinguishable from each other, this conclusion supports a theory of thematic roles in which these are read off from the output of syntax, rather than being syntactic features rigidly associated with particular structural positions. 2. The data. Cochabamba Quechua has no transitive verb HAVE, in the sense of a transitive verb that conveys a range of alienable and inalienable possession relations. Instead, it has three BE-based possession constructions. Of interest here are the two constructions based around the existential BE verb tiya-, exemplified in (1) and (2) (all data are from original fieldwork carried out in Cochabamba, Bolivia).

(1) Noqa-qta  iskay pana-s *(niy) tiya-n. (2) Noqa-qta iskay pana-s tiya-pu-wa-n.

'I have two sisters.'  

(1) and (2) have in common that they are existential constructions, as shown by the verb root tiya-, and by the fact that the verb displays 3rd person singular default subject agreement (agreeing neither with the 1st person possessor nor with the 3rd plural possessee—see Hastings 2004). Also, the case marking of the possessor and possessee (respectively genitive and nominative) is the same in both. Furthermore, the two constructions appear to be thematically identical, i.e. they can convey the exact same subset of “possession” relations (kinship, permanent ownership, abstract properties, and, with some degree of deviance, body-parts/part-whole relations). The constructions also match up with respect to the subtypes of possession relation that they cannot convey (temporary possession, psychological states, diseases, and physical sensations). For space reasons, only examples involving permanent ownership and diseases are provided here.

(3) Juan-pata wasi-n tiya-n. (4) Juan-pata wasi tiya-pu-wa-n.

Juan-gen house-3poss be-3subj Juan-gen house be-appl-3obj-3subj

‘Juan has a house.’  

(3) and (4) have in common that they are existential constructions, as shown by the verb root tiya-, and by the fact that the verb displays 3rd person singular default subject agreement (agreeing neither with the 1st person possessor nor with the 3rd plural possessee—see Hastings 2004). Also, the case marking of the possessor and possessee (respectively genitive and nominative) is the same in both. Furthermore, the two constructions appear to be thematically identical, i.e. they can convey the exact same subset of “possession” relations (kinship, permanent ownership, abstract properties, and, with some degree of deviance, body-parts/part-whole relations). The constructions also match up with respect to the subtypes of possession relation that they cannot convey (temporary possession, psychological states, diseases, and physical sensations). For space reasons, only examples involving permanent ownership and diseases are provided here.

3. The Present Approach. Despite these morphosyntactic and semantic similarities, I will argue that these two constructions differ in terms of where the possessor argument is first-merged. In particular, I argue that in (1) the possessor is first-merged inside the possessee DP, much as argued for similar constructions in Hungarian by Szabolcsi (1981) and in Japanese by Tsujioka (2002) (there is evidence that, just as in Hungarian and Japanese, the possessor subsequently raises out of the possessee DP in (1), but I do not review this evidence here for space reasons). In (2), on the other hand, the possessor is introduced in the specifier of a high applicative head in the sense of Pylkkänen (2008) (realized by the suffix -pu). The structure of (1) is therefore as (partially) depicted in (7); the structure of (2) is given in (8) (abstracting away from head-finality, and from movement of the object clitic -wa in (2); note I assume a ‘Big DP’ analysis of clitic doubling, although nothing crucial hinges on this).

(7) \[ \text{VP} \text{ tiya-} [\text{DP} \text{ noqa-qta} ] [\text{APPL} \text{ niy} \text{ [NumP iskay pana-s ] }] ] ]
(8) \[ \text{APPL} \text{ [DP [DP noqa-qta] [DP -wa- ] [APPL -pu-appl [VP tiya- [DP iskay pana-s ] ]] ]}] ]

The structures in (7) and (8) yield an immediate account of three core differences between (1) and (2).

(i) The morpheme -pu appears in construction (2), but not in construction (1). This follows from (7)-(8) since -pu is the high applicable morpheme elsewhere in the language, where it has
Possession in Japanese / syntactic structure.

(9) wawqe-y wasi-ta picha-pu-wa-n.
    brother-IPOSS house-ACC sweep-APPL-1OBJ-3SUBJ
    ‘My brother sweeps the house for me.’

(ii) The possessor in (2) must be clitic-doubled, but the possessor in (1) may not be.

(1') Noqa-qta iskay pana-s-ni}* tiya-*(wa)-n. (2') Noqa-qta iskay pana-s tiya-pu-*(wa)-n.
    I-GEN two sister-PL-IPOSS BE-1OBJ-3SUBJ I-GEN two sister-PL BE-APPL-1OBJ-3SUBJ
    ‘I have two sisters.’

This is explained by the structures (7)-(8) because the object of a verb, including an applied object, must be clitic doubled in Cochabamba Quechua, whereas clitic doubling of DP-internal possessors is generally impossible.

(10) Juan noqa-ta reqsi-*n. (11) Juan [noqa-qta tata-y-ta] reqsi-*(wa)-n.
    Juan I-ACC know-1OBJ-3SUBJ Juan I-GEN father-IPOSS-ACC know-1OBJ-3SUBJ
    ‘Juan knows me.’ ‘Juan knows my father.’

(iii) DP-internal possessor agreement is obligatory in (1), but not (2).

This follows from the representation in (7), according to which (1) involves first-merging the possessor inside the possessee DP. This is because DP-internal possessor agreement with DP-internal possessors is obligatory in Cochabamba Quechua.

(12) Noqa Juan-pata tata-*(n)-ta riku-ør-qa-ni.
    I Juan-GEN father-3POSS-ACC see-3OBJ-PAST-1SUBJ
    ‘I saw Juan’s father.’

The fact that there is no such agreement requirement in (2) is accounted for if the possessor is not in fact first-merged internal to the possessee, as claimed by the structure in (8).

Recall that the two constructions are semantically identical in terms of the possession relations they can express. This too can be explained, despite the basic syntactic difference depicted in (7)-(8), assuming (a.) that possession related thematic roles are introduced DP internally, following Szabolcsi (1981,1994), Kayne (1993); and (b.) that argument-introducing heads may be interpreted ‘expletively’ under certain circumstances, following Schaefer (2008); Wood (2012). In other words, such heads may fail to introduce a theta-role so long as the resulting structure successfully composes at the semantic interface. The idea is that pana ‘sister’ in (1) and (2) is interpreted as a relation along the lines of λx∃y[sister-of(x,y)]. This relation can be saturated inside the DP itself, as it is in (1). Alternatively, it can be “passed up the tree” and satiated in spec, ApplP, as it is in (2), so long as Appl itself is interpreted expletively (consistent with this, recall that –pu does not have its usual benefactive meaning in (2)). Such an approach is possible if thematic roles are read off of syntactic structure at LF, in accordance with Kratzer (1996) and others. 4. Against a movement approach. Any movement approach to the alternation between (1) and (2) would have to start from the assumption that the possessor begins the derivation inside the possessee DP, and either stays there, yielding (1), or raises into spec-ApplP, yielding (2) (the ApplP would then be a raising Appl, in the sense of Paul & Whitman 2010). However, such an approach immediately encounters severe difficulties: (i) why isn’t DP-internal possessor agreement obligatory in (2) also, given it is otherwise always obligatory when a possessor is first-merged DP-internally?; (ii) why would this putative movement step make clitic doubling obligatory in (2), when it is impossible in (1)?; (iii) what would motivate the movement step deriving (2), given that a DP-internal possessor is clearly able to be licensed in-situ? 5. Conclusion. The (morphosyntactic and semantic) similarities and the (morphosyntactic) differences between constructions (1) and (2) in Cochabamba Quechua are best reconciled with each other on a theory of argument structure in which theta-roles are not features assigned in particular positions, but rather parts of interpretation “read off” the syntactic structure. Selected References. Lastra, Yolanda (1968) Cochabamba Quechua Syntax. /Schaefer, Florian (2008) The Syntax of Anticausatives. / Tsujioka, Takae (2002) The Syntax of Possession in Japanese. /Wood, Jim (2012) Icelandic Morphosyntax and Argument Structure.