

# Direct vs. indirect construction: the semantics of possession in Bété

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Most studies on the relationship issue in African languages have so far focused on the research towards a unique semantic feature whose presence or absence would determine the choice between two conflicting genitive constructions: the 'direct' construction, which would account for the inalienable possession and the 'indirect' construction that would describe the alienable possession. The current article has two objectives: it first aims at showing that the dichotomy between 'inalienable possession' and 'disposable possession' can be expressed outside the genitive phrase; then, it encourages to abandon the idea that, in the description of the possessive relationship in African languages, there may be a unique semantic feature that would allow to predict different constructions of the genitive phrase.