Genitive Subjects in Hindi-Urdu

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What this talk is about

This talk presents ongoing work.
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I will focus on:

1. copula clauses in Hindi-Urdu with “genitive subjects”; and
2. particularly: the words/phrases/constituents/... marked red and green in the examples below (possessors/possessums):

(1) nina=ka Nina=Gen.M.Sg m A kan house.M.Sg h E be.Pres.Sg

‘Nina has a house.’

(2) ram=ki Ram=Gen.F.Pl tin three bet. I y˜ a daughter.F.Pl h˜ e be.Pres.Pl

‘Ram has three daughters.’
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• the words/phrases/constituents/... marked red and green in the examples below (possessors/possessums):

(1) nina=ka makan hē Nina=Gen.M.Sg house.M.Sg be.Pres.Sg ‘Nina has a house.’

(2) ram=ki tin bəṭiyā hē Ram=Gen.F.Pl three daughter.F.Pl be.Pres.Pl ‘Ram has three daughters.’
Questions to be asked

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I will try to ask (and possibly even answer) the following questions:

- What is the *phrasal* status of the possessorspossessums?
- Do they form a single constituent in the tree? Or are they separate?
- What should we call the *grammatical functions* involved in these sentences?
- How can the observations be explained in a linguistic theory such as Lexical-Functional Grammar (LFG)?
What this talk is not about

I limit myself to copula constructions — complex predicates (CPs) with genitive subjects are not part of this talk.

*vicar ho* ‘thought be’, *irada ho* ‘intention be’

\[(3) \quad \text{ram} = \text{ka} \quad [\text{g}^h \text{ar}]
\]
\[
\text{Ram} = \text{Gen.M.Sg} \quad \text{home.M.Sg}
\]
\[
\text{la}u\text{t-ne} = \text{ka} \qquad \text{vicar} \quad t^h \text{a}
\]
\[
\text{return-Inf.M.Sg.Obl} = \text{Gen.M.Sg} \quad \text{thought be.Past.M.Sg}
\]
\[
\text{‘Ram was thinking of returning home.’} \quad \text{Mohanan (1994)}
\]
Overview

1 Introduction

2 The Hindi-Urdu genitive

3 The locative-possessive connection

4 A remark on Spencer (2008)

5 Towards an LFG analysis
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1. Introduction
2. The Hindi-Urdu genitive
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5. Towards an LFG analysis
Some background

- broad-coverage computational grammar for Hindi-Urdu in development at Konstanz
- theoretical framework: LFG
- embedded in the ParGram ("PARallel GRAMmars") project
- languages currently involved: English, German, French, Chinese, Japanese, Hungarian, Norwegian, Indonesian, **Hindi-Urdu** ...
- grammars based on common design decisions (analyses, features, values, ...
Some background

Short demo
The construction

- Hindi-Urdu: no verb *have*

nina=ka/*=ki

Nina=Gen.M.Sg

m

A

kan

house.M.Sg

h

E

be.Pres.Sg

*Nina has a house.*
The construction

- Hindi-Urdu: no verb *have*
- instead, possession is expressed using a construction involving the copula verb *ho* ‘be’
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- instead, possession is expressed using a construction involving the copula verb *ho* ‘be’
- construction: *possessor (PR) + postposition (P) + possessum (PM) + copula (COP)* (Schmidt 1999, Kachru 2006)

(4) \( \text{nina}=\text{ka}/*=\text{ki} \quad \text{makan} \quad \text{he} \)
Nina=Gen.M.Sg house.M.Sg be.Pres.Sg
‘Nina has a house.’
The construction

- Hindi-Urdu: no verb *have*
- instead, possession is expressed using a construction involving the copula verb *ho* ‘be’
- construction: possessor (PR) + postposition (P) + possessum (PM) + copula (COP) (Schmidt 1999, Kachru 2006)

\[
(4) \quad \text{nina}=\text{ka}/*=\text{ki} \quad \text{makan} \quad h\varepsilon \\
\text{Nina}=\text{Gen.M.Sg} \quad \text{house.M.Sg} \quad \text{be.Pres.Sg} \\
\text{‘Nina has a house.’}
\]

- There is an agreement relation:
  - between the postposition (if inflected) and the PM;
  - between the PM and the copula.
The construction

Different postpositions in use for marking the “PR” (selection):

• complex postposition ke pas 'near':
  \( \text{nina}=\text{ke} \text{pas} \)
  \( \text{Nina}=\text{Gen.M.Sg.Obl} \text{pas} \text{near} \text{saikil bicycle.F.Sg} \)
  'Nina has a bicycle.'

• uninflected postposition ke:
  \( \text{nina}=\text{ke} \text{do} \text{b} \text{e} \text{t.} \)
  \( \text{Nina}=\text{Gen.M.Sg.Obl do two be.Pres.Pl} \text{he} \text{bicycle.F.Sg} \)
  'Nina has two daughters.'
The construction

Different postpositions in use for marking the “PR” (selection):

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  (5)  nina=ke          pas  saikil  he
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The construction

Different postpositions in use for marking the “PR” (selection):

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  ‘Nina has a bicycle.’

- uninflected postposition *ke*:

  (6) \[ \text{nina} = \text{ke} \quad \text{do} \quad \text{bəṭiyā} \quad \text{he} \]
  \[ \text{Nina} = \text{Gen.M.Sg.Obl} \quad \text{two} \quad \text{daughter.F.Pl} \quad \text{be.Pres.Pl} \]
  ‘Nina has two daughters.’
The construction

The choice of the postposition depends on different semantic factors ((in)alienability, sentience of PR, stage-individual-level predication, etc.) (Mohanan 1994, Kachru 2006, Sulger 2011). These factors are not dealt with in this talk.
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• the inflecting postposition *ka/ke/ki*;
• its agreement properties;
• the construction it takes part in;
• the resemblance of that construction with locatives.
Overview

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*ka/ke/ki* — an inflecting genitive case marker

View taken here is the one laid out in Payne (1995) (and also essentially Butt and King (2004)):
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- ka/ke/ki is a genitive case clitic;
- it heads full noun phrases;
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- *ka/ke/ki* is a *genitive case clitic*;
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- it does *not* behave like an adjective-deriving morpheme;
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See e.g. Spencer (2008) for a different view.
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Nominal and clausal genitives

The genitive case marker appears both on the clause level (e.g. PRs) as well as NP-internally:
Nominal and clausal genitives

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(8) clause-level genitive:

\[ \text{nina=ki} \quad \text{baḍi nak} \quad \text{he} \]
\[ \text{Nina=Gen.F.Sg} \quad \text{big.F.Sg} \quad \text{nose.F.Sg} \quad \text{be.Pres.Sg} \]

‘Nina has a big nose.’
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\[ \text{nina}= \text{ki} \quad \text{[baḍi nak] } \text{hē} \]
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(9) NP-internal genitive:
\[ \text{nina}= \text{ki} \quad \text{nak} \quad \text{baḍi } \text{hē} \]
Nina=Gen.F.Sg nose.F.Sg big.F.Sg be.Pres.Sg
‘Nina’s nose is big.’
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‘Nina’s nose is big.’

(10) ram=ki \quad \text{bəṭiyā}

Ram=Gen.F.Pl daughter.F.Pl

‘Ram’s daughters’
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- assume they are *genitive subjects*.
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→ Then the following question arises: How does the genitive phrase become a clausal subject?
More on genitive subjects

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• Copula constructions exhibit an “inversion” pattern: either
genitive (PR) subject or nominative (PM) subject

(11) genitive subject:

\[ \text{nina}=\text{k}\text{a \hspace{1cm} makan \hspace{1cm} h}\text{e} \]

Nina=Gen.M.Sg house.M.Sg be.Pres.Sg

‘Nina has a house.’
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(12) nominative subject:
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\text{house.M.Sg} \quad \text{Nina}=\text{Gen.M.Sg} \quad \text{be.Pres.Sg}
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‘The house is Nina’s.’
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(12) nominative subject:

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\text{mākān} \quad \text{nīna}=\text{kā} \quad \text{hē}
\]

house.M.Sg Nīna=Gen.M.Sg be.Pres.Sg

‘The house is Nina’s.’

→ What accounts for the different word orders?
Intermission: semantics of the genitive

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  - patient of action nominals: \( fehar=ki \text{ tabahi} \) ‘the destruction of the city’
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Location and Possession

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• theoretical syntax: be+loc, be+poss, have predicates originate from the same underlying structure
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- Theoretical syntax: $be + \text{loc}$, $be + \text{poss}$, have predicates originate from the same underlying structure.
- Can we treat Hindi-Urdu genititives just like the locatives?
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• theoretical syntax: be+loc, be+poss, have predicates originate from the same underlying structure

• Can we treat Hindi-Urdu genitives just like the locatives?

• Let’s review the locatives first...
Locatives

Hindi-Urdu locatives are constructed using the copula:
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Hindi-Urdu locatives are constructed using the copula:

(13) cuhə məkən=me̥ hə
rat.M.Sg house.M.Sg=Loc.in be.Pres.Sg
‘The rat is in the house.’
Locatives

Hindi-Urdu locatives are constructed using the copula:

(13) cuha makan=mē he
    rat.M.Sg house.M.Sg=Loc.in be.Pres.Sg
    ‘The rat is in the house.’

(14) cuhe makan=mē hē
    rat.M.Pl house.M.Sg=Loc.in be.Pres.Pl
    ‘The rats are in the house.’
Hindi-Urdu makes use of *locative inversion* (Bresnan and Kanerva 1989, Freeze 1992):
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Hindi-Urdu makes use of *locative inversion* (Bresnan and Kanerva 1989, Freeze 1992):

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(15) cuha makan=mē hē
cuha rat.M.Sg house.M.Sg=Loc.in be.Pres.Sg
‘The rat is in the house.’

(16) makan=mē cuha hē
makan mē cuha house.M.Sg=Loc.in rat.M.Sg be.Pres.Sg
‘There is a rat in the house.’
Locatives

Hindi-Urdu makes use of *locative inversion* (Bresnan and Kanerva 1989, Freeze 1992):

(15) cuha makan=mē hē
    rat.M.Sg house.M.Sg=Loc.in be.Pres.Sg
    ‘The rat is in the house.’

(16) makan=mē cuha hē
    house.M.Sg=Loc.in rat.M.Sg be.Pres.Sg
    ‘There is a rat in the house.’

(Apart from the case marking, this looks *very* similar to the possessives above....)
Locative Inversion

(15) nominative subject:

cuha    makan=mê    he
rat.M.Sg house.M.Sg=Loc.in be.Pres.Sg
‘The rat is in the house.’

(16) locative subject:

makan=mê    cuha    he
house.M.Sg=Loc.in rat.M.Sg be.Pres.Sg
‘There is a rat in the house.’
Locative Inversion

(15) nominative subject:

\[\text{cuha makan} = \text{mē} \quad \text{he} \]
\[\text{rat. M. Sg} \quad \text{house. M. Sg} = \text{Loc. in} \quad \text{be. Pres. Sg} \]

‘The rat is in the house.’

(16) locative subject:

\[\text{makan} = \text{mē} \quad \text{cuha} \quad \text{he} \]
\[\text{house. M. Sg} = \text{Loc. in} \quad \text{rat. M. Sg} \quad \text{be. Pres. Sg} \]

‘There is a rat in the house.’

• essentially a focusing device (Bresnan and Kanerva 1989)
Locative Inversion

(15) nominative subject:
\[
\text{cuha makan=me} \quad \text{he} \\
\text{rat.M.Sg house.M.Sg=Loc.in be.Pres.Sg}
\]
‘The rat is in the house.’

(16) locative subject:
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\text{makan=me cuha he} \\
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• put presentational focus on a theme in a locative construction
Locative Inversion

(15) nominative subject:

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\text{cuha makan=mē he} \\
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(16) locative subject:

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\text{makan=mē cuha he} \\
\text{house.M.Sg=Loc.in rat.M.Sg be.Pres.Sg}
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‘There is a rat in the house.’

• essentially a focusing device (Bresnan and Kanerva 1989)

• put presentational focus on a theme in a locative construction

• either the theme or the location may be realized as the subject
Genitive Inversion??
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(17) locative subject:

\[
\text{makan}=\text{mē} \quad \text{cuha} \quad \text{he} \\
\text{house.M.Sg}=\text{Loc.in} \quad \text{rat.M.Sg} \quad \text{be.Pres.Sg}
\]

‘A rat is in the house.’ ~ ‘There is a rat in the house.’
Genitive Inversion??

(17) locative subject:

makan=mē cuha hē	house.M.Sg=Loc.in rat.M.Sg be.Pres.Sg

‘A rat is in the house.’ ~ ‘There is a rat in the house.’

(18) genitive subject:

nina=ka maken hē
Nina=Gen.M.Sg house.M.Sg be.Pres.Sg

‘A house is of Nadya.’ ~ ‘There is a house of Nadya.’ ~ ‘Nadya has a house.’
Genitive Inversion??

(17) locative subject:
\[
makan=mē\quad cuha\quad hē
\]
house.M.Sg=Loc.in rat.M.Sg be.Pres.Sg

‘A rat is in the house.’ ~ ‘There is a rat in the house.’

(18) genitive subject:
\[
nina=ka\quad makań\quad hē
\]
Nina=Gen.M.Sg house.M.Sg be.Pres.Sg

‘A house is of Nadya.’ ~ ‘There is a house of Nadya.’ ~ ‘Nadya has a house.’

• look identical, down to information-structural alignment
So are genitive just like locative arguments?

Not quite...
So are genitive just like locative arguments?

Not quite...

(19)  * [makan=mē cuha]_{NP}
      rat.M.Sg           house.M.Sg=Loc.in be.Pres.Sg
 'the rat in the house'
So are genitive just like locative arguments?

Not quite...

(19) \* [makan=mē cuha]_{NP}
    rat.M.Sg       house.M.Sg=Loc.in be.Pres.Sg
    ‘the rat in the house’

(20) [ram=ki kītab]_{NP}
    Ram.M.Sg=Gen.F.Sg book.F.Sg
    ‘Ram’s book’
So are genitive just like locative arguments?

Not quite...

(19) * [makan=mē cuha]_{NP}
    rat.M.Sg   house.M.Sg=Loc.in be.Pres.Sg
    ‘the rat in the house’

(20) [ram=ki kītab]_{NP}
    Ram.M.Sg=Gen.F.Sg book.F.Sg
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• within NPs, locative-marked NPs may not modify the head noun
So are genitive just like locative arguments?

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    ‘Ram’s book’

• within NPs, locative-marked NPs may not modify the head noun

→ genitive arguments licensed by nominals, locative arguments licensed by copula?
Overview

1. Introduction

2. The Hindi-Urdu genitive

3. The locative-possessive connection

4. A remark on Spencer (2008)

5. Towards an LFG analysis
A remark on Spencer (2008): Elision?

For those who did not attend Ayesha’s seminar yesterday...
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Spencer (2008):

- *ka/ke/ki* is not a case marker;
A remark on Spencer (2008): Elision?

For those who did not attend Ayesha’s seminar yesterday...

Spencer (2008):

- *ka/ke/ki* is not a case marker;
- it is not a adjectival derivational formative either (since the NPs marked by it do not distribute like adjectives);
A remark on Spencer (2008): Elision?

For those who did not attend Ayesha’s seminar yesterday...

Spencer (2008):

- *ka/ke/ki* is not a case marker;
- it is not a adjectival derivational formative either (since the NPs marked by it do not distribute like adjectives);
- rather: “markers” attached to NPs “which give that NP (or the phrase headed by the marked noun) the external agreement morphosyntax of an adjective: the possessum-agreement construction” (Spencer 2008, p.21)
A remark on Spencer (2008): Elision?

Also: assumes elision of head noun for cases such as (21) (Spencer 2008, p. 16):

(21) nominative subject:

\[ \text{m A kan} \] (house.M.Sg)
\[ \text{nina=ka} \] Nina=Gen.M.Sg
\[ (\text{m A kan}) \] (house.M.Sg)
\[ \text{h E be.Pres.Sg} \]

'The house is Nina's (house).'
A remark on Spencer (2008): Elision?

Also: assumes elision of head noun for cases such as (21) (Spencer 2008, p. 16):

(21) nominative subject:

\[
\begin{array}{l}
\text{makan} \quad \text{nina}=\text{ka} \quad (\text{makan}) \quad \text{he} \\
\text{house.M.Sg} \quad \text{Nina}=\text{Gen.M.Sg} \quad (\text{house.M.Sg}) \quad \text{be.Pres.Sg}
\end{array}
\]

‘The house is Nina’s (house).’
A remark on Spencer (2008): Elision?

Also: assumes elision of head noun for cases such as (21) (Spencer 2008, p. 16):

(21) nominative subject:

makan  nina=ka  (makan)  he
house.M.Sg  Nina=Gen.M.Sg  (house.M.Sg)  be.Pres.Sg

‘The house is Nina’s (house).’

But if you assume elision, then:

1. you also need to figure out exactly how much is elided;
2. you need to account for some special semantics.
A remark on Spencer (2008): Elision?

(22) nominative subject:

yeh nayi kītab ram=ki hē
this new.F.Sg book.F.Sg Ram=Gen.F.Sg be.Pres.Sg

‘This new book is Ram’s.’
A remark on Spencer (2008): Elision?

(22) nominative subject:

\[
\text{yeh nayi kیر tab ram=kɪ hे}
\]

this new.F.Sg book.F.Sg Ram=Gen.F.Sg be.Pres.Sg

‘This new book is Ram’s.’

- \textit{nayi} ‘new’ also part of the elided NP?
A remark on Spencer (2008): Elision?

(22) nominative subject:

\[
yeh \text{nayi} \quad \text{kitab} \quad \text{ram}=\text{ki} \quad \text{he} \\
\text{this new.F.Sg} \quad \text{book.F.Sg} \quad \text{Ram=Gen.F.Sg} \quad \text{be.Pres.Sg}
\]

‘This new book is Ram’s.’

- *nayi* ‘new’ also part of the elided NP?
- semantically odd — the sentence cannot mean ‘This is Ram’s new book.’
A remark on Spencer (2008): Elision?

(23) yeh kītab kya hē?
this book.F.Sg what be.Pres.Sg
‘What is this book?’

Wouldn’t an analysis assuming elision predict that (25) is fine as an answer to (23)?

(Thanks to Rajesh Bhatt for discussion and comments.)
A remark on Spencer (2008): Elision?

(23) yeh kitab kya he?
this book.F.Sg what be.Pres.Sg
‘What is this book?’

(24) yeh kitab ram=ki kitab he
this book.F.Sg Ram.M.Sg=Gen.F.Sg book.F.Sg be.Pres.Sg
‘This book is Ram’s book.’
A remark on Spencer (2008): Elision?

(23)  yeh kitab kya he?
   this book.F.Sg what be.Pres.Sg
   ‘What is this book?’

(24)  yeh kitab ram=ki kitab he
   this book.F.Sg Ram.M.Sg=Gen.F.Sg book.F.Sg be.Pres.Sg
   ‘This book is Ram’s book.’

(25)  ?? yeh kitab ram=ki he
   this book.F.Sg Ram.M.Sg=Gen.F.Sg be.Pres.Sg
   ‘This book is Ram’s.’

Wouldn’t an analysis assuming elision predict that (25) is fine as an answer to (23)?

(Thanks to Rajesh Bhatt for discussion and comments.)
A remark on Spencer (2008): Elision?

(23) yeh kitaab kya he?
this book.F.Sg what be.Pres.Sg
‘What is this book?’

(24) yeh kitaab ram=ki kitaab he
this book.F.Sg Ram.M.Sg=Gen.F.Sg book.F.Sg be.Pres.Sg
‘This book is Ram’s book.’

(25) ?? yeh kitaab ram=ki he
this book.F.Sg Ram.M.Sg=Gen.F.Sg be.Pres.Sg
‘This book is Ram’s.’

• Wouldn’t an analysis assuming elision predict that (25) is fine as an answer to (23)?

• (Thanks to Rajesh Bhatt for discussion and comments.)
A remark on Spencer (2008): Elision?

Also interesting:
A remark on Spencer (2008): Elision?

Also interesting:

(25) nina=ka mukan ram=ka he
Nina=Gen.M.Sg house.M.Sg Ram=Gen.M.Sg be.Pres.Sg
‘Nina’s house belongs to Ram (now).’ (It used to be Nina’s house.)

- you may have a genitive argument inside the subject NP
- once you already have a genitive argument, you may still get a genitive-marked predicate phrase
  → argument against a raising approach (and maybe for elision?)
Overview

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Short answer

Short answer is: I don’t have one yet. Sorry.
Longer answer
Longer answer

- Sure that genitive arguments originate inside nominals (unlike locatives).
Longer answer

• Sure that genitive arguments originate inside nominals (unlike locatives).
• Sure that they may not only occupy a \textit{SUBJ} function (since they may not only be possessors).
Longer answer

- Sure that genitive arguments originate inside nominals (unlike locatives).
- Sure that they may not only occupy a \textsc{subj} function (since they may not only be possessors).
- (Pretty) sure they must be raised out of the nominal to become a clause-level \textsc{subj}.
Longer answer

(26) genitive subject:

\[\text{nina}=\text{ka} \quad \text{makan} \quad \text{he} \]
\[\text{Nina}=\text{Gen.M.Sg} \quad \text{house.M.Sg} \quad \text{be.Pres.Sg}\]

‘Nadya has a house.’
Longer answer

(26) genitive subject:

\[\text{nina}=\text{ka} \quad \text{makan} \quad \text{he} \]
\[\text{Nina}=\text{Gen.M.Sg} \quad \text{house.M.Sg} \quad \text{be. Pres.Sg} \]

‘Nadya has a house.’

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{PRED} & \quad \text{‘ho} <(\uparrow \text{XCOMP})> (\uparrow \text{SUBJ})’ \\
\text{SUBJ} & \quad \text{PRED} \quad \text{‘nina’} \\
& \quad \text{CASE} \quad \text{gen} \quad 1 \\
\text{XCOMP} & \quad \text{PRED} \quad \text{‘makan} <(\uparrow \text{SUBJ})>’ \\
& \quad \text{SUBJ} \quad [ ] \quad 1 \\
& \quad \text{CASE} \quad \text{nom} \\
\end{align*}
\]
Longer answer

(27) nominative subject:

makan  nina=ka  (makan)  he
house.M.Sg  Nina=Gen.M.Sg  (house.M.Sg)  be.Pres.Sg

‘The house is Nina’s (house).’
Longer answer

(27) nominative subject:

makan  nina=ka (makan)  he
house.M.Sg Nina=Gen.M.Sg (house.M.Sg) be.Pres.Sg

‘The house is Nina’s (house).’

• Not sure how to represent that in the f-structure.
Longer answer

(27) nominative subject:

makan nina=ka (makan) he
house.M.Sg Nina=Gen.M.Sg (house.M.Sg) be.Pres.Sg

‘The house is Nina’s (house).’

• Not sure how to represent that in the f-structure.
• How does the genitive get scrambled to the right?
Longer answer

(27) nominative subject:

\[ \text{makan} \quad \text{nina}=\text{ka} \quad (\text{makan}) \quad \text{he} \\]
\[ \text{house.M.Sg} \quad \text{Nina}=\text{Gen.M.Sg} \quad (\text{house.M.Sg}) \quad \text{be.Pres.Sg} \]

‘The house is Nina’s (house).’

- Not sure how to represent that in the f-structure.
- How does the genitive get scrambled to the right?
- And if it originates in \text{XCOMP}, what ends up as \text{SUBJ}?
Thank you!

(And thanks to Qaiser Abbas, Rajesh Bhatt, Miriam Butt, Ghulam Raza for feedback.)
Bibliography I


Spencer, Andrew. 2008. The possessum-agreement construction or ‘Does Albanian have a genitive case?’. Manuscript, University of Essex.
