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Possession

This chapter describes three varieties of possessive construction: 1) NP-internal possessive construction (§4.1), 2) predicative possessive construction (§4.2), and 3) substantival possessives (§4.3). The predicative construction is used to establish a relationship of possession, while the NP-internal construction presupposes the possessive relationship (Dixon 2010b:256). Substantival possessives may serve either function.

Within these possessive constructions, the nature of the possessor does not influence the structure in any way. The construction maintains the same structure whether the possessor is a common noun, pronoun, proper noun, or a kin term, or whether it is animate or non-animate, human or non-human. The nature of the possessive relationship, in terms of time or permanence, also does not affect the structure. As for the possessed item, no distinction is made between alienable and inalienable nouns.

In addition to marking NP-internal, predicative, and substantival possession, the genitive marker -an is also used to mark the underlying subject of a nominalized complement clause (§10.2.2.1).

4.1 NP-internal possessive construction

NP-internal possession is realized in two ways, as described below. In both constructions, the possessor precedes the possessed item, and the possessed item is the head of the NP. The possessive construction within an NP may be used to express a wide range of relationships, some of which go beyond mere possession. It may express ownership (4.3), whole-part relationship (4.6), kinship relationship (4.1), an attribute (4.2), or association (4.4).

1. Juxtaposition: The possessor and the possessed item are simply juxtaposed within the NP. This involves no additional marking, besides the ordering of elements. The possessor may be a common noun or proper noun, as in the following examples.

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If the possessor is expressed as a pronoun, then non-nominative forms are used (as described in §3.1.1). As with common nouns and proper nouns, the two elements are simply juxtaposed, with the possessor preceding the possessed item.

(4.5) \text{muu} \quad \text{jaktu} \\
1SG.NNOM \quadshirt \quad ‘my shirt’

(4.6) \text{ta} \quad \text{tsem} \\
2SG.NNOM \quad eye \quad ‘your eye’

(4.7) \text{mac} \quad \text{dowlat} \\
1PL.NNOM \quad country \quad ‘our country’

(4.8) \text{wef} \quad \text{pić} \\
3PL.NNOM.DIST \quad cat \quad ‘their cat’

This way of marking possession may sometimes lead to ambiguity; when two nouns are juxtaposed, they could potentially be interpreted as a possessor followed by a possessed item, or as a modifier noun followed by a head noun. For example, the two-noun sequence in (4.9) may be understood as Alima’s teacher or as a teacher named Alima; in (4.10) the two possible interpretations are Tilu’s reins or reins made of gold.
2. The pronominal genitive construction: The genitive marker -an is attached to the end of the possessor NP, followed by the non-nominative pronoun which agrees (in person and number, and deixis, if applicable) with the possessor, and then followed by the possessed item. This construction is less ambiguous than the juxtaposition construction above, in that: 1) the noun to which the genitive marker attaches is clearly marked as a possessor, and 2) the non-nominative pronoun preceding the possessed item specifies the person and number of the possessor.

(4.11)  
\[\text{kurač-an wi dest} \]
\[\text{Keerash-GEN 3SG.NNOM.DIST friend} \]
\[\text{‘Keerash’s friend’} \]

(4.12)  
\[\text{mu jay-an wi tcur} \]
\[\text{1SG.NNOM sister-GEN 3SG.NNOM.DIST husband} \]
\[\text{‘my sister’s husband’} \]

(4.13)  
\[\text{batco-ef-an wef skit} \]
\[\text{child-PL.NNOM-GEN 3PL.NNOM.DIST play} \]
\[\text{‘children’s play/game’} \]

(4.14)  
\[\text{kalo-ef-an wef wux} \]
\[\text{sheep-PL.NNOM-GEN 3PL.NNOM.DIST grass} \]
\[\text{‘sheep’s grass’} \]

If the possessor is expressed as a pronoun, the possessor pronoun is in the non-nominative form and still takes the genitive marker -an, followed by the same pronoun in non-nominative form repeating the person and number information of the possessor, which is then followed by the possessed item.

(4.15)  
\[\text{mu-an mu orzu} \]
\[\text{1SG.NNOM-GEN 1SG.NNOM hope} \]
\[\text{‘my hope’} \]
4.2 Predicative possessive construction

Besides the NP-internal possessive construction, there is also a predicative possessive construction. Sarikoli lacks a verb ‘have’ and uses another strategy for establishing a possessive relationship predicatively: it employs the existential predicate jost ‘exist’ or its negative counterpart nist, in combination with the CS (copula subject) argument NP which is headed by the possessed item. As existential predicates, jost and nist can only take a single core argument, which is nominative. The possessor is marked as a possessor within the NP, in the non-nominative form plus the genitive marker -an, rather than as an A argument. Semantically, these possessive clauses are expressed as ‘[the possessed item] exists’ or ‘[the possessed item] does not exist’, as shown in the following examples:

\[(4.19)\]
\[
\begin{array}{lll}
\text{wi-an} & \text{harabo} & \text{jost} \\
3SG.NNOM.DIST-GEN & \text{vehicle} & \text{be.ipfv} \\
\end{array}
\]

‘He has a vehicle.’ (lit. Of his, there is a vehicle.)

\[(4.20)\]
\[
\begin{array}{lll}
\text{wi-an} & \text{harabo} & \text{nist} \\
3SG.NNOM.DIST-GEN & \text{vehicle} & \text{neg.be.ipfv} \\
\end{array}
\]

‘He does not have a vehicle.’ (lit. Of his, there is no vehicle.)

As with the NP-internal construction, the predicative possessive construction covers a number of relationships, including ownership (4.21), whole-part relationship (4.22), association (4.23), and kinship relationship (4.24) & (4.25). Attributes are generally not expressed through this construction; the NP-internal construction is the preferred way to state that someone has a certain attribute. (4.24) & (4.25) show that a numeral or interrogative word tsund ‘how many’
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may be added to the CS argument NP to indicate how many items are possessed.

(4.21)  
\[
\text{maɕ-an stawr nist} \\
1PL.NOM-GEN yak NEG.be.IPVF
\]
‘We do not have yaks.’ (lit. Of ours, there is no yak.)

(4.22)  
\[
ta-an dandun jost = o \\
2SG.NOM-GEN tooth be.IPVF = Q
\]
‘Do you have teeth?’ (lit. Of yours, are there teeth?)

(4.23)  
\[
mu-an i swol jost \\
1SG.NOM-GEN one question be.IPVF
\]
‘I have a question.’ (lit. Of mine, there is a question.)

(4.24)  
\[
tamaɕ-an tsund batɕo jost \\
2PL.NOM-GEN how.much child be.IPVF
\]
‘How many children do you(pl) have?’ (lit. Of yours(pl), how many children are there?)

(4.25)  
\[
wɛf-an haroj batɕo jost \\
3PL.NOM.DIST-GEN three child be.IPVF
\]
‘They have three children.’ (lit. Of theirs, there are three children.)

Proper nouns and common nouns followed by the genitive marker -an may also act as the possessor in this construction:

(4.26)  
\[
tursun-an pul nist \\
Tursun-GEN money NEG.be.IPVF
\]
‘Tursun does not have money.’ (lit. Of Tursun’s, there is no money.)

(4.27)  
\[
rajon-an ruqt baron jost \\
Rayon-GEN red dress be.IPVF
\]
‘Rayon has a red dress.’ (lit. Of Rayon’s, there is a red dress.)

(4.28)  
\[
di batɕo-an ato ano nist \\
3SG.NOM.PROX child-GEN father mother NEG.be.IPVF
\]
‘This child does not have a father and mother.’ (lit. Of this child’s, there are no father and mother.)
4.3 Substantival possessives

The substantival possessive is formed by attaching the genitive marker -an to a non-nominative NP, as in (4.31) - (4.34). A substantival possessive is the head of an NP rather than just a modifier within an NP; it is used independently, without a possessed item acting as the head of the NP.

(4.31)  
\[
\text{jad} \quad \text{muu-an} \\
3SG.NOM.PROX \quad 1SG.NNOM-GEN
\]
‘This is mine.’

(4.32)  
\[
\text{muu-an} \quad \text{mas} \\
1SG.NNOM-GEN \quad \text{also}
\]
‘Mine, too.’

(4.33)  
\[
\text{ta-an} \quad \text{az} \quad \text{wi-an} \quad \text{lɔwɔr} \quad \text{veiŋ}s \\
2SG.NNOM-GEN \quad \text{ABL} \quad 3SG.NNOMDIST-GEN \quad \text{big} \quad \text{be.PRF}
\]
‘Yours is bigger than hers. (Evidential/New information)’

(4.34)  
\[
\text{tamaɕ-an} \quad \text{muu = ri} \quad \text{χuɕ} \\
2PL.NNOM-GEN \quad 1SG.NNOM=DAT \quad \text{happy}
\]
‘I like yours(pl).’

Substantival possessive forms may also be derived from common nouns, as in (4.35) & (4.36), and proper nouns, as in (4.37) & (4.38) by attaching the genitive marker -an to the possessor.

(4.35)  
\[
\text{jad} \quad \text{χɛvd} \quad \text{pie-an} \\
3SG.NOM.PROX \quad \text{milk} \quad \text{cat-GEN}
\]
‘This milk is the cat’s.’
A substantival possessive may function as the subject of an intransitive clause (4.39), subject or object of a transitive clause (4.40), copula subject (4.41), copula complement (4.42), or even an indirect object of a ditransitive clause (4.43) & (4.44).

(4.39)  
\[ zuroχon-an \text{ mas na məwɡ} \]
Zurohon-GEN also NEG die.PFV
‘Zurohon’s has not died, either.’

(4.40)  
\[ mɯ-an \quad a = wi-an \quad \chiɯg \]
1SG.NNOM-GEN ACC = 3SG.NNOM.DIST-GEN eat.PFV
‘Mine ate his.’

(4.41)  
\[ mɯ \quad nabus-an \quad \text{eng } \chilet \]
1SG.NNOM grandchild-GEN SUPL soft
‘My grandchild’s is the softest.’

(4.42)  
\[ juu \quad ktub-χejl \quad dzɯl \quad \text{batɕo-ɛf-an} \]
3PL.NOM.DIST book-PL.NOM small child-PL.NNOM-GEN
‘Those books are for little children.’

(4.43)  
\[ wɛf-an = ir \quad xats \quad na \quad \text{do = an} \]
3PL.NNOM.DIST-GEN = DAT water NEG give.PFV = 1SG.PFV
‘Let us not give water to theirs.’
(4.44)  
\[
\begin{align*}
nur & \quad \chiu-an & \quad kan=an, \\
today & \quad \text{REFL.NNOM-GEN} & \quad \text{do.IPfv} = \text{1PL.IPfv} \end{align*}
\]
\[
\begin{align*}
\text{wef-an} & = \text{ir} & \quad \text{uz} & \quad \text{digar} & \quad \text{maθ} & \quad \text{wɔxt}
\\
3\text{PL.NNOM.DIST-GEN} & = \text{DAT} & \text{again} & \text{other} & \text{day} & \text{time}
\end{align*}
\]
\[
\begin{align*}
zwod & = an \\
pull.out.IPfv & = \text{1PL.IPfv}
\end{align*}
\]
‘Let us do our own today, and make time for theirs another day.’