

# ROMANIAN POSSESSIVES: ADJECTIVES OR PRONOUNS? A COMPARATIVE PERSPECTIVE

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## 1. The Problem

1.1. As often noticed, Romanian has both Genitive personal pronouns and possessive adjectives (henceforward PA), forms with pronominal meaning and adjectival agreement:

(1)	a <sub>1</sub> .	<i>cartea</i> / book.the	<i>cărțile</i> / books.the	<i>câinele</i> / dog.the	<i>câinii</i> dogs.the	<i>băiatului</i> boy.the.gen
	a <sub>2</sub> .	<i>cartea</i> / book.the	<i>cărțile</i> / books.the	<i>câinele</i> / dog.the	<i>câinii</i> dogs.the	<i>lui</i> his
	b <sub>1</sub> .	<i>cartea</i> / book.the	<i>cărțile</i> / books.the	<i>câinele</i> / dog.the	<i>câinii</i> dogs.the	<i>băiatului</i> boy.the.gen
	b <sub>2</sub> .	<i>cartea</i> book.the(FEM.SG)	<i>sa</i> his/her.FEM.SG	/ <i>cărțile</i> books.the (FEM.PL)		<i>sale</i> his/her.FEM.PL
		<i>câinele</i> dog.the(MASC.SG)	<i>său</i> his/her.MASC.SG	/ <i>câinii</i> dogs.the (MASC.PL)		<i>săi</i> his/her.MASC.PL

It is the latter which have always represented a theoretical difficulty through their paradoxical adjectival and pronominal properties.

Other Romance languages have also been described as having both possessive adjectives and personal pronouns in the Genitive, but their distribution is clearly different: for instance, in French possessives are pre-nominal and function as definite determiners, while personal pronouns in the Genitive are post-nominal, marked by the Genitive Preposition DE:

(2)	a.	<i>mon livre</i> my book	(French)
	b.	<i>livre de moi</i> book of mine	

The two French phrases in (2) are not synonymous (cf. Milner 1982). The Genitive pronoun is specialized for certain theta-role, like Agent, so that one reading of (2b) may be ‘book authored by me’; in contrast (2a) is ambiguous, allowing for the interpretation of *moi* both as a Possessor and an Agent.

The theoretical problem raised by PAs is what we might call the “possessive paradox”: why forms which function as pronouns should have the morphology and (in many languages) the distribution of adjectives?

**1.2. The aim of the paper** is to propose an account of the “possessive paradox”, starting from a more detailed presentation of Romanian data, against the background of recent minimalist theory (Baker & Vinokurova 2010, Chomsky 2000, 2001, 2009, Pesetsky & Torrego 2007). The analysis will briefly be extended to French as well as to the PAs of Slavic languages.

The analysis starts from the obvious empirical fact that PAs alternate with nominal or pronominal Genitives in realizing Possessors and other arguments of nouns, and pursues the intuition that arguments of nouns undergo adjectivization in contexts where the Genitive as a structural case cannot be licensed. Adjectivization and the assignment of the Genitive case are alternative means of showing the syntactic dependence of one DP (the argument) on another (the head). PAs are viewed as mixed categories, specifically, derivationally created “adjectivized” DPs. Adjectivization by-passes the problem of Case-licensing, since adjectives do not need case and may share the case of the noun they modify. In licensing a PA, it is essential that the possessed NP and the Possessor DP find themselves in a sufficiently local configuration permit agreement (feature sharing).

After this succinct introduction, in sections 2–5 we propose a detailed analysis of Romanian PAs, taking advantage of earlier work on Romanian Genitives. Romanian is a relevant case for understanding PAs in as much as in Romanian PAs and Genitive pronouns as well as Genitive DPs have the same range of interpretations and the same distribution; this helps us focus on the particular morphosyntactic features which are responsible for the impossibility of Gen assignment with the subsequent adjectivization of the respective DPs.

In section 6 we briefly examine French, regarding two of its properties: a) possessive adjectives are licensed in a position different from nominal Genitives or strong pronominal Genitives (compare: *le livre de Jean* ‘John’s book’, *son livre* ‘his book’); b) French PAs are definite determiners<sup>1</sup>.

## 2. Romanian Possessive Adjectives

Romanian Genitive or Genitive-like pronominal forms exhibit an irregular paradigm. The personal pronouns have genitival forms only for the 3<sup>rd</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> person. In contrast, PAs are available for persons 1-to-5. This raises the problem of why sixth person PAs should be missing, and of whether this gap is accidental or it is a reflex of a deeper property.

A significant fact for the analysis that follows is that both Genitival pronouns and PAs appear either as “bare”, when they immediately follow the head noun bearing the suffixal definite article, or they are preceded by the *genitival article* AL, in all the other contexts (see for details Cornilescu 1992, 1995, 2003, Vasilescu 2005/2008, GBLR 2010).

- |     |    |                    |    |              |            |
|-----|----|--------------------|----|--------------|------------|
| (3) | a. | <i>caietul</i>     |    | <i>lui</i>   |            |
|     |    | notebook.the       |    | his          |            |
|     | b. | <i>un caiet</i>    |    | <i>al</i>    | <i>lui</i> |
|     |    | a notebook         | AL | his          |            |
|     | c. | <i>caietul</i>     |    | <i>său</i>   |            |
|     |    | notebook.the(MASC) |    | his/her.MASC |            |

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<sup>1</sup> This analysis may also be extended to Slavic possessive adjectives, which may be DP- and noun-based (cf. Corbett 1987). The licensing mechanism for both is the same as in French or Romanian, even if at first sight Slavic pronominal PAs appear to be invariably marked for Genitive case instead of showing case-concord with the modified noun. Noun-based PAs show case-concord just Romanian PA do.

- d. *un caiet* *al* *său*  
a notebook(MASC) AL his/her.MASC

(4)	Nom Personal Pronoun	Possessive adjective	Genitive Personal Pronoun
Person 1	<i>eu</i>	<i>cartea mea</i>	
Person 2	<i>tu</i>	<i>cartea ta</i>	
Person 3	<i>el</i>	<i>cartea sa</i>	<i>cartea lui</i>
	<i>ea</i>		<i>cartea ei</i>
Person 4	<i>noi</i>	<i>cartea noastră</i>	
Person 5	<i>voi</i>	<i>cartea voastră</i>	
Person 6	<i>ei, ele</i>		<i>cartea lor</i>

Let us start the analysis by surveying the adjectival vs. pronominal properties of these forms.

### 2.1. Adjectival Properties of Possessive Adjectives

A. Morphologically, possessives are four form adjectives; moreover the morphological material they exhibit is identifiable as adjectival; compare:

- (5)
- |    |                                 |                                |                                 |                                |
|----|---------------------------------|--------------------------------|---------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| a. | <i>meu</i><br>my.MASC.SG        | <i>mea</i><br>my.FEM.SG        | <i>mei</i><br>my.MASC.PL        | <i>mele</i><br>my.FEM.PL       |
| b. | <i>greu</i><br>hard.MASC.SG     | <i>greă</i><br>hard.FEM.SG     | <i>grei</i><br>hard.MASC.PL     | <i>grele</i><br>hard.FEM.PL    |
| c. | <i>nostru</i><br>our.MASC.SG    | <i>noastră</i><br>our.FEM.SG   | <i>noștri</i><br>our.MASC.PL    | <i>noastre</i><br>our.FEM.PL   |
| d. | <i>albastru</i><br>blue.MASC.SG | <i>albastră</i><br>blue.FEM.SG | <i>albaștri</i><br>blue.MASC.PL | <i>albastre</i><br>blue.FEM.PL |

Furthermore, they exhibit the same case homonymy pattern as regular adjectives: in the masculine they have the same form for all cases (Nom/Acc/Gen/Dat), but they show case variation in the singular feminine, where the form of the Gen/Dat is different from that of the Nom/Acc:

- (6)
- |                  |   |   |                                  |
|------------------|---|---|----------------------------------|
| a <sub>1</sub> . | <i>caietul</i><br>notebook.the(MASC)    | <i>meu</i><br>my.MASC.SG                      |                                  |
| a <sub>2</sub> . | <i>exercițiul</i><br>exercise.the(MASC) | <i>greu</i><br>hard.MASC.SG                   |                                  |
| b <sub>1</sub> . | <i>coperta</i><br>cover.the             | <i>caietului</i><br>notebook.the.GEN(MASC)    | <i>meu</i><br>my.(GEN).MASC.SG   |
| b <sub>2</sub> . | <i>soluția</i><br>solution.the          | <i>exercițiului</i><br>exercise.the.GEN(MASC) | <i>greu</i><br>hard(GEN).MASC.SG |
| c <sub>1</sub> . | <i>cartea</i><br>book.the(FEM)          | <i>mea</i><br>my.FEM.SG                       |                                  |
| c <sub>2</sub> . | <i>problema</i><br>problem.the(FEM)     | <i>greă</i><br>hard.FEM.SG                    |                                  |

d <sub>1</sub> .	<i>coperta</i> cover.the	<i>cărții</i> book.the.GEN(FEM)	<i>mele</i> my.GEN.FEM.SG
d <sub>2</sub> .	<i>soluția</i> solution.the	<i>problemei</i> problem.the.GEN(FEM)	<i>grele</i> hard.GEN.MASC.SG

B. As is probably obvious by now, the clearest adjectival property from a syntactic perspective is number, gender and case concord with the modified noun.

(7)	a.	<i>băiatul</i> boy.the(MASC.SG.NOM)	<i>meu</i> my.MASC.SG.NOM
	b.	<i>băieții</i> boys.the(MASC.PL.NOM)	<i>mei</i> my.MASC.PL.NOM
	c.	<i>problema</i> problem.the(FEM.SG.NOM)	<i>mea</i> my.FEM.SG.NOM
	d.	<i>problemele</i> problems.the(FEM.SG.NOM)	<i>mele</i> my.FEM.PL.NOM

C. Distributionally speaking, the adjectival character of PA is not so obvious in Romanian on account of the genitival article, but it is clear in languages like (standard) Italian (examples from Longobardi 1994):

(8)	a.	<i>il</i>	<i>vecchio</i>	<i>Camaresi</i>	(Italian)
		the	old	Camaresi	
	b.	<i>il</i>	<i>mio</i>	<i>Camaresi</i>	
		the	my	Camaresi	

In still other languages (French), possessives are definite determiners:

(9)	a.	<i>mon</i>	<i>livre</i>	(French)
		my	book	
	b.	<i>le</i>	<i>livre</i>	
		the	book	

In Romanian too, cliticized PAs may function as definite determiners, this being one of the few contexts where PAs and genitival pronouns do not show the same behavior; in such cases, PAs are added to the indefinite, often truncated indefinite kinship nouns, in what looks like a genuine Romanian construct state construction:

(10)	a.	<i>tatăl</i>	<i>lui</i>	/	<i>ei</i>	/	<i>său</i>
		father.the(MASC.SG)	his		her		his/her.MASC.SG
	b.	<i>tac-su</i>		/	<i>*tac-lui</i>		
		father=his/her MASC.SG			father=his		

Longobardi (1994) parametrizes languages into those where possessives are determiners (French, English) and those where they are adjectives (Italian).

Given the morphology of Romanian PAs, many researchers have categorized them as adjectives: GA 1963: 155–159, Hristea 1984: 230, Avram 1986: 131–134, GBLR 2010:

121–126. In a more general analysis of Romance possessive pronominals, Ihsane (2008) also discusses Italian possessives as adjectives.

## 2.2. Pronominal Properties

On the other hand syntactic and semantic arguments overwhelmingly tilt the balance in favor of analyzing possessives as pronouns, i.e. DPs. An excellent presentation of the DP-properties of Romanian PAs is available in Dobrovie-Sorin & Giurgea (2010), from whom some of the following facts are drawn.

A. Possessives are assigned theta roles, a DP property. Recall that adjectives *assign* theta roles, rather than being theta-marked. In particular, PA thus license event nominalizations, like Genitive personal pronouns and Genitive DPs:

- (11) *Venirea*                      *sa*        /        *lui*        / *la putere s-a petrecut acum doi ani.*  
 coming.the (FEM.SG) his/her.FEM.SG his        in power took place ago two years  
 “His coming to power took place two years ago”

This may indicate that the PA merges as a complement of the deverbal noun and only later assumes the form of an adjective.

B. Variation for Person is a strikingly pronominal property, and it is indeed unusual for adjectives, which are lexical categories, to exhibit variation for Person, a functional, D-property:

- (12) *câinele*                      *sur*                      *al*                      *meu/tău/său/nostru/vostru/\*-*  
 dog.the(MASC.SG)        grey.MASC.SG        AL        my/your/his/her/our/your/\*.MASC.SG

C. *Functional competition with Genitive DP.* As already noticed PAs may replace Genitive DPs, moreover, since, at least in event nominalization there is only one Genitive position, PAs are in complementary distribution with lexical and pronominal Genitives:

- (13) a. *casa*                      *Mariei*  
          house-the        Maria-the.OBL(=GEN/DAT)  
       b. *casa*                      *mea*  
          house-the        my.FSG
- (14) a. *distrugerea oraşului de către duşmani*  
          destruction.the city.the.GEN by enemies  
       b<sub>1</sub>. *\*distrugerea lui a oraşului*  
          destruction.the his AL city.the.GEN  
       b<sub>2</sub>. *\*distrugerea sa a oraşului*  
          destruction.the(FEM.SG) his/her.FEM.SG AL city.the.GEN  
       c. *distrugerea operei chiar de el însuşi*  
          destruction.the work.the.GEN right by him himself  
       d<sub>1</sub>. *\*distrugerea lui a operei*  
          destruction.the his AL work.the.GEN  
       d<sub>2</sub>. *\*distrugerea sa a operei*  
          destruction.the(FEM.SG) his/her.FEM.SG AL work.the.GEN  
       d<sub>3</sub>. *\*distrugerea lui Ion a operei*  
          destruction.the GEN Ion AL work.the.GEN

This goes to show that, in Romanian, the syntax of PAs is that of Genitive phrase.

D. *Binding Theoretic Evidence*. The strongest evidence for DP status is binding theoretic. In spite of their adjectival morphology, possessives behave like *referential phrases* (bind theoretic pronouns). It is revealing to compare PA and ethnic adjectives. Both appear to realize some theta role (say, Agent) in the lexical structure of the head noun, but their behavior under Binding conditions is very different. Ethnic adjectives behave like bona fide adjectives regarding binding, i.e., categorically they are APs or NPs (cf. Fábregas 2007). An essential empirical fact is that, unlike ethnic or other thematic adjectives, PAs can function as *antecedents* of reflexive pronouns, satisfying Condition A of Binding Theory. Recall that only argumental referential DPs may antecede reflexives in a local domain (the governing category):

- (15) a. *opinia* *noastră* *despre noi înșine*  
 opinion.the(FEM) our.FEM.SG about ourselves  
 b. *\*opinia* *americană* *despre ei înșiși*  
 opinion.the(FEM) American.FEM.SG about themselves  
 c. *opinia* *americanilor* */lor* *despre ei înșiși*  
 opinion.the American.the.GEN their about themselves

Similarly, notice the following contrast in Italian, where possessive and ethnic adjectives occupy the same adjectival position, but only the former can antecede reflexives:

- (16) a. *il* *nostro* *giudizio* *su* *noi stessi* (Italian)  
 the our.MASC.SG opinion about ourselves  
 ‘our opinion about ourselves’  
 b. *\*il* *Americano* *giudizio* *su* *sè stessi*  
 the American opinion about themselves

E. Furthermore, as insightfully remarked by Dobrovie & Giurgea 2010, in Romanian possessives may take secondary predicates, a property possible only for arguments:

- (17) a. *o* *poză* *a* *mea* *blond*  
 a picture(FEM) AL my.FEM.SG blond.MASC.SG  
 ‘a picture of me when I was blond’
- (18) a. *\*vizita americană* *înarmat* *până în dinți*  
 visit.theAmerican armed to the teeth  
 b. *invazia americanului* *înarmat* *până în dinți*  
 invasion.the American.the.GEN armed to the teeth  
 c<sub>1</sub>. *vizita lui* *înarmat* *până în dinți*  
 visit.the his armed to the teeth  
 c<sub>2</sub>. *vizita sa* *înarmat* *până în dinți*  
 visit.the(FEM) his/her.FEM.SG armed to the teeth

The possessor may control a small clause subject; this is a property typical of argumental DPs. On the other hand the contrast between *lui* and *sa* ((18c<sub>1</sub>) vs (18c<sub>2</sub>)) shows that *sa* behaves like an adjective, copying the  $\phi$ -features of the possessed object.

F. Finally, a Genitive pronoun/possessive adjective, but not a thematic adjective may antecede an appositive relative clause (pronoun):

- (19) *Ce să mai spunem de disputa noastră,*  
 what SUBJ still say.1PL about dispute.the(FEM) our.FEM.SG  
*care ne înțelegeam înainte atât de bine*  
 which got-along(1PL) before so well  
 ‘Not to mention the dispute between us, who used to get along so well.’

To conclude, as stressed by Dobrovie-Sorin & Giurgea 2010, the evidence in favor of the DP status of PAs is decisive. Given this amount evidence, other researchers have categorized possessives as pronouns, i.e, DPs. Furthermore, PAs have been claimed to be pronouns in the Genitive case (Berceanu 1971: 130, Vasilescu 2005/2008, Vasilescu 2007, Dobrovie-Sorin & Giurgea 2010).

Inside Romanian, this solution, in a sense, makes matters worse, given that these DPs may appear to bear two cases. Thus, if PAs are analyzed as Genitive pronouns, the paradoxical result is that, given their case-agreement with the possessee, the PA is twice marked for case: it would be a Genitive (inherently), which is further marked for case by agreement with the possessee noun. An analysis of this type is developed in Dobrovie Sorin & Giurgea 2010.

- (20) a<sub>1</sub>. *grație intervenției sale* (outer DAT + inner GEN)  
 thanks to intervention.the.DAT(FEM) his/her.FEM.SG.DAT  
 a<sub>2</sub>. *grație intervenției lui / ei*  
 thanks to intervention.the.DAT his her  
 b<sub>1</sub>. *coperta cărții sale* (outer GEN+ inner GEN)  
 cover.the book.the.GEN(FEM) his/her.FEM.SG.DAT  
 b<sub>2</sub>. *coperta cărții lui / her*  
 cover.the book.the.GEN his/her  
 c. *coperta sa / coperta lui / ei*  
 cover.the(FEM) his/her.SG.FEM.NOM / cover.the his/her

Generative literature on Romance has also mostly categorized possessives as DPs, usually ignoring the adjectival agreement problem (see for instance, Zribi Hertz 2003, Giorgi & Longobardi 1991, Valois 1991, etc.) A notable exception is Ihsane (2008), who specifically argues that, from a morphological categorial perspective, Romance possessives may be, DPs, APs and clitic heads. In her view, adjectival/determiner status is indicated by the pre-nominal position of PAs in contrast with the post-nominal position of Genitive pronouns, as well as their agreement with the head noun:

- (21) a. *mon fils* / *ma fille*  
 my.MASC.SG son my.FEM.SG daughter  
 b. *le fils de Pierre* / *la fille de Pierre*  
 the son DE Pierre the daughter DE Pierre

As already apparent, from a comparative perspective, both analyses make sense: in French possessives are determiners, therefore, pronouns, while in Italian they are adjectives.

### 2.3. Result

1. Analyses which view possessives as adjectives face serious problems in accounting for the DP features regarding binding properties, as well as for the competition between GenDPs (lexical and pronominal) and possessives.

2. Analyses which view them as (Genitive) DPs cannot account for agreement with the head noun and for the adjectival morphological suffixes on the possessives. At the same time, differences in distribution between Genitive DPs and PAs are unexpected if both are Genitive DPs.

Hence the possessive paradox.

## 3. Briefly on Romanian Genitive Syntax

### 3.1 Some Properties of Genitive DPs

Since PAs have the distribution of GenDPs, it is incumbent on us to spell out the analysis of Romanian Genitives that we adopt. What is crucial is that in our view the genitival article AL is created derivationally, and its structure presupposes going through certain steps, in particular undergoing a process of agreement with the head noun. PAs, normally occurring with AL, like all the other Genitives will go through the same derivational steps. This will secure the complementary distribution (in Romanian) of PAs and genitival DPs.

#### 3.1.1. Two Genitive Functions (Benveniste 1972, Barker 1995)

As generally acknowledged, the Gen case has two interpretations in UG, both available to Genitive DPs and PAs. In the first place, it is the case of the Possessor expressing *DP internal possession*, i.e., it is associated to a particular very abstract theta role (see Giorgi & Longobardi 1991).

- (22) *echipa lui Ion*      */echipa lui*      *echipa sa*  
team.the GEN Ion      team.the his      team.the(FEM) his/her.FEM.SG

Secondly, the Gen is the case of the internal or external argument of a nominal head (the Objective Genitive and the Subjective Genitive, as insisted upon by Benveniste 1972):

- (23) a. *distrugerea zidului*      */lui*      */sa*      (Theme)  
destruction.the(FEM) wall.the.GEN his his/her.FEM.SG  
b. *vizita preşedintelui*      */lui*      */sa*      (Agent)  
visit.the(FEM) president.the.GEN his his/her.FEM.SG

Both functions contribute to shaping the grammar of Genitives across languages.

#### 3.1.2. Possessor Subject Languages vs. Possessee Subject languages

Extensive research on possessive phrases (e.g., Szabolcsi 1984, 1994, Kayne 1994, Gueron 1985, den Dikken 2006) has shown that possessive phrases should be viewed as including a predicative relation between the possessor and the possessee. Recall that a possessive phrase is a DP internal possessee+possessor construction which will be called possessive DP.

Ouhalla (2009), for instance, distinguishes *two types of languages* in terms of the choice of the subject in possessee+possessor construction. First, there are *Possessor Subject languages* (English, Hungarian, Amharic, etc.); in this case the possessive DP includes a



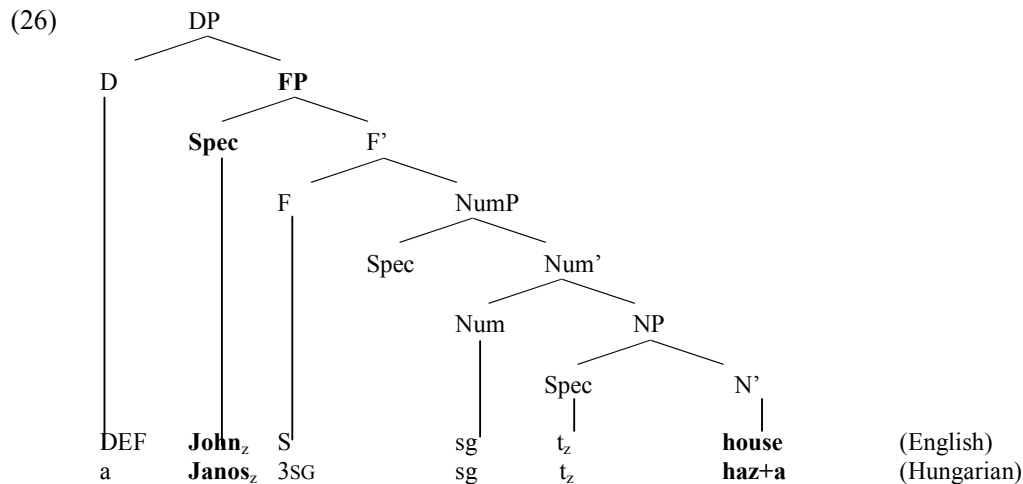
possessor in subject position, while the possessee is the predicate. The analogy with the finite subject + predicate clause structure cannot be missed in languages like English:

- (24) a. *John criticized this book.*  
 b. *John's criticism of this book*

The clausal parallelism is strengthened in languages like Hungarian, which exhibit Person Agreement between the possessee-predicate and the possessor-subject; a suffix on the possessee copies the Person feature of the Possessor, as in the following examples. This may surely be construed as a form of Subject-Predicate Agreement.

- (25) a. *a (z) (en) haz-a-Ø-m* (Hungarian, *apud* Szabolcsi 1984)  
 DEF 1SG house-POSS-SG-1SG  
 'my house'  
 b. *a Janos haz-a-Ø-Ø*  
 DEF John house-POSS-SG-3SG

To account for the syntax of Possessor Subject languages, Zribi-Hertz (2003: 143) adopts the following structure:



The representation in (26) is straightforward. The FP projection provides a landing site for the subject. The F projection contains a Person feature (in addition to a Poss/Gen feature) in some languages (Hungarian), but not in all. According to Zribi-Hertz, in English the noun raises up to Number, while in Hungarian it further raises up to F where it inflects for Person with the possessor in [Spec, FP].

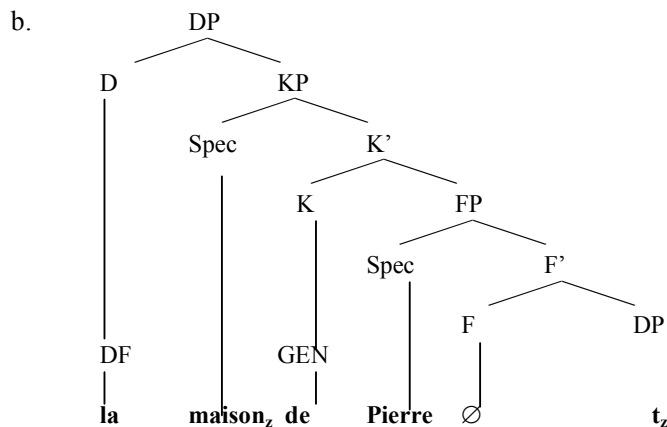
Secondly, there are languages whose possessive DP-phrases exhibit the order possessee + possessor, i.e., they are *Possessee Subject languages* (Hebrew, Moroccan Arabic, Romance languages etc.). Ouhalla notices that Possessee initial DPs often contain Dative or Genitive (locative, directional) prepositions, of the *belong* type; this suggests the existence of a *prepositional small clause*.

- (27) a. (had) *l-ktub* *dyawl Nadia* (from Ouhalla 2009)  
 (this) the-book.**PL** of.**PL** Nadia  
 ‘these Nadia’s books’  
 b. *la maison de Pierre*  
 the house of Pierre

Again, the existence of a clausal construction is strongly suggested by the agreement of the prepositional head with the Possessum, which is now the subject, as in examples (27a) (with the agreement feature in bold.) We retain that there is a class of agreeing prepositions in UG; we tentatively suggest that the Romanian genitival article AL should also be analyzed as an agreeing preposition as well.

As to the relation between these types of language, some researchers assume that all languages are underlyingly of the Possessor Subject type; all possessive phrases would involve the same core set of projections, but in some languages, an operation of Predicate Raising (rendered visible by the insertion of linkers like the French *de*, as in den Dikken 2006) would produce the possessee first order. In the same line of thought, Zribi Hertz (2003) assumes that the structure in (26) could be a common denomination for the representation of possessive phrases in UG and, following Kayne, postulates a rule of Possessee Raising, a rule very similar to relativization, which fronts the Possessum to a position above the Possessor [Spec, KP] which continues to be in [Spec, FP] (Koopman 2006) Her analysis of the French example in (28a) is shown in (28b). Notice that the possessum initially functions as a *predicate*.

- (28) a. *la maison de Pierre*  
 the house DE Pierre



Following Ouhalla (2009), we adopt a more direct relation between what you get and what you see, assuming a Possessum subject underlying prepositional small clause, headed by a ‘belong’ type (locative, directional) preposition (BEL), as in Ouhalla’s analysis of the example in (29).

- (29) a. (had) *l-ktub* *dyawl Nadia*  
 (this) the-books of.PL Nadia  
 ‘these Nadia’s books’

- b. ...D...P[BEL]<sub>i</sub> [ XP [[POSSESSUM] [ t<sub>i</sub> POSSESSOR ] ] ]

In the present analysis, Romanian is a *Possessee first language*, and the subject predicate relation is implicit in the Agreement of the Possessor, as part of the predicate, with the Possessee subject. This is the most likely interpretation of the agreement between the genitival article, as part of the predicate, with the possessee phrase, acting as a small-clause subject. We propose to analyze the Romanian Genitival article as an agreeing preposition, on the model of Arabic above.

- (29) a. *aceste cărți ale Nadiei*  
           this.F.PL book.F.PL AL.F.PL Nadia.GEN

A second Romance property valid for the analysis of Romanian is that possessive phrases (even though sharing the predicative structure visible in languages like English) further **involve an operation of Possessee Raising**.

Thirdly, Romanian shares with other Romance languages the fact that the Genitive is, at least in part, prepositional. It has been proposed (Grosu 1988, Cornilescu & Nicolae 2009) that the genitival article includes a P in its structure, specifically the descendent of the locative preposition *ad* (for the etymology of the genitival article AL, see the survey in Stan 2010). In Romanian, the locative directional meaning of A was apparent in the older stages of the language.

In the analysis below, the possessee subject small clause is derivationally created. This is required in as much as the Genitive DP, depending on its theta role, will be projected either as a complement (*destruction of the city*) or as a specifier (*vizita lui Ion* visit.the GEN John ‘John’s visit’ vs. *vizitarea lui Ion* visiting.the GEN John ‘John’s visiting’), so the Genitive checking small clause is part of the functional domain of the possessive DP.

### 3.2. A Prepositional Case Valuation Strategy

In previous work, we have shown that, despite appearances, the evolution of the Romanian DP leads to the result that Romanian employs a prepositional case valuation strategy, employing the Romance Ps A(D) and DE, the first P, being reinforced by agreement with the possessee.

Thus the syntactic evolution of the Romanian Genitive has largely been driven by the grammaticalization of a **Person vs. Property Parameter** (cf. Kolliakou 1999), with the following noticeable results.

A. The use of **distinct prepositions** differentiating between Genitives with <e>-type denotations, headed by A (person Genitives) and Genitives with <e, t> denotations headed by DE (property Genitives), as illustrated below:

- (31) a. *un bun conducător de oști*  
           a good leader DE armies  
           ‘a good leader of armies’  
       b. *conducătorii a două mari popoare*  
           leaders.the A two big nations  
           ‘the leaders of two big nations’

This contrast between A/DE Genitives is an essential interpretative contrast that cuts across other differences.

B. A second manifestation of the Person/Property contrast is the supplementary use of inflectional case marking for a subset of <e> type Genitives (those headed by flexible determiners). Property Genitives are always uninflected even for feminine nouns (the only nominal stems which are inflected for the Genitive in the nominal stem), as apparent in (32d). Romanian has thus developed an inflectional Genitive (so called because the possessor DP bears *genitive morphological case on its determiner*), illustrated in (32a), (32b) and (32d), alongside of a prepositional Genitive (32c).

- (32)
- |                  |                                     |                              |                                   |                                   |                               |                       |                       |
|------------------|-------------------------------------|------------------------------|-----------------------------------|-----------------------------------|-------------------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|
| a.               | <i>fata</i><br>daughter.the         | <i>mică</i><br>small         | <i>a</i><br>AL                    | <i>boierului</i><br>boyar.the.GEN |                               |                       |                       |
| b.               | <i>fata</i><br>daughter.the         |                              | <i>boierului</i><br>boyar.the.GEN |                                   |                               |                       |                       |
| c.               | <i>nepoata</i><br>granddaughter.the |                              | <i>a</i><br>A                     | <i>doi</i><br>two                 | <i>bunici</i><br>grandparents | <i>foarte</i><br>very | <i>bogați</i><br>rich |
| d <sub>1</sub> . | <i>rochia</i><br>dress.the          | <i>fetei</i><br>girl.the.GEN |                                   |                                   |                               |                       |                       |
| d <sub>2</sub> . | <i>rochia</i><br>dress.the          | <i>unei</i><br>a.GEN         | <i>fete</i><br>girl.GEN           |                                   |                               |                       |                       |
| d <sub>3</sub> . | <i>*rochie</i><br>dress.the         | <i>de</i><br>DE              | <i>fete(i)</i><br>girl.GEN        |                                   |                               |                       |                       |

C. The development of a (*multiple*) *agreement system* by the creation of the genitival article AL, visibly made up of the preposition A and the definite article L. When the possessive phrase is headed by AL, (the definite article in) AL agrees with the possessee in gender and number, while its selection over A reflects the morphological properties of the possessor. AL-phrases characteristically show multiple agreement. The use of a genitival article, i.e. of a supplementary definite article agreeing with the possessee is found in (other) Balkan languages as well (see for instance, the analysis of Albanian in Turano 2002). Note that in Romanian the definite article is adjoined to the person Genitive preposition, rather than being an independent agreement marker (identical with the definite article, as Albanian).

- (33) *aceste* (DEF.FEM.PL) *case* *ale* (DEF.FEM.PL) *unui* (MASC.SG.GEN) *boier* (MASC.SG)  
 these houses AL a boyar  
 ‘these houses of a boyar’

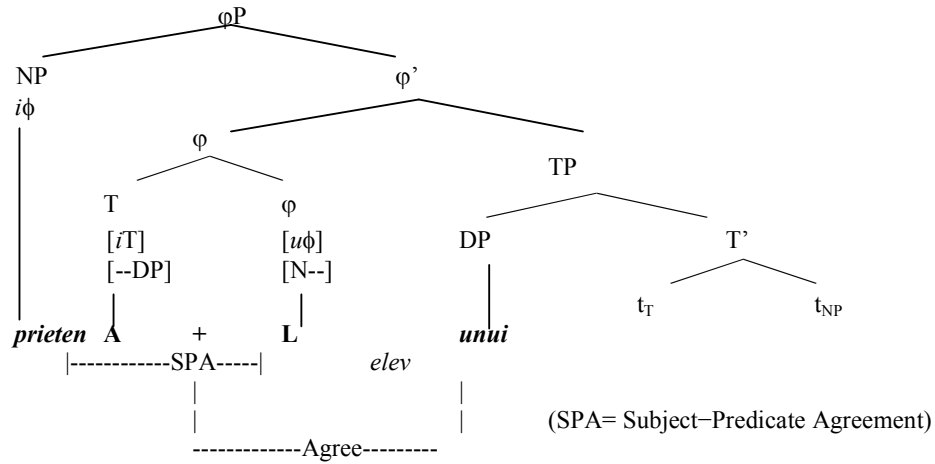
### Results

1. AL is a functional element derivationally composed of the functional preposition A and the agreement marker L (as first suggested in Cornilescu 2003).

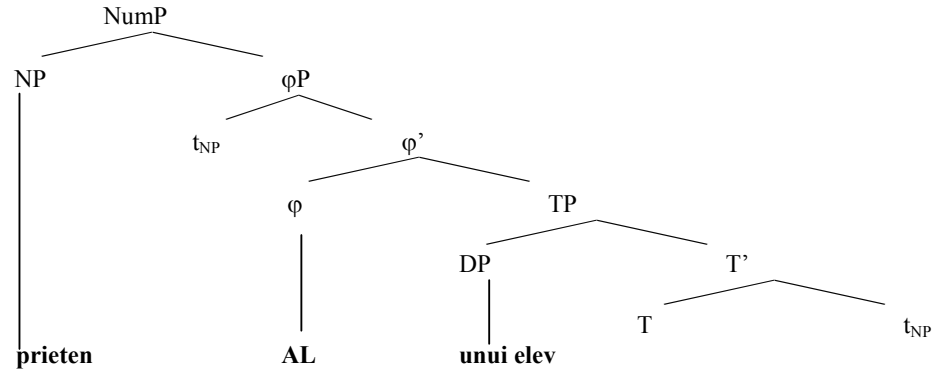
2. Modern (and Contemporary) Romanian exhibits a strong contrast between person denoting and property denoting Genitives, a contrast which is the result of the evolution of Romanian. Some of the Person Genitives are inflectional introduced by the genitival article AL. As already noticed, in contexts where it immediately follows a noun inflected by the definite article, the inflectional Gen occurs on its own (31b) above. We have thus identified the varieties of Romanian Genitive forms listed below. PAs can only substitute for inflectional Genitives:



(iii)



(iv)



### Comments

A. In (i), the Genitive phrase receives its theta role. The noun *prieten* is relational, so the Genitive appears as its complement.

B. In (ii), structural Case is checked: the DP which is [*u*T] (Pesetsky & Torrego 2004) deletes this feature against the preposition A which spells out the [*i*T] feature of the T-head. By assumption, functional Ps, which are mostly employed as a case assigners, are [*u*T] themselves, differing from lexical Ps which are [*i*T]. If structural case is the nominal counterpart of a Tense head, then functional Ps realize this T-head and get its [*i*T] feature, as suggested in (ii).

C. Movement to the higher Agree head is primarily required to satisfy the c-selection property of the functional head A, which requires a DP complement. Secondly Possessee raising is required as part of NP-Movement to [Spec, NumP], since in Romance NPs raise at least up to Num (Dimitrova-Vulchanova & Giusti 1998, Cinque 1993, 2004). **When the head NP is in [Spec, AgrP], there is agreement between the subject and the predicate of the small clause headed by the Gen assigning agreeing preposition.** Hazout (2004) has argued that Subject Predicate Agreement is required independently from Agree. This is the step where there is Gender-Number agreement between the head possessee NP and the agreeing preposition AL, the definite article contained in AL sharing the Gender-Number features of the head NP. Furthermore, when AL has valued its features it may presumably

project its Genitival affix N – on its complement DP. One may view this as a form of Agree, where the [*uN*--] feature of AL is matched by the [*iN*--] feature of the Gen DP.

The Syntax of the Romanian Gen phrase is thus an instance of multiple agreement.

D. In (iv) the possessee (head NP) raises to [Spec, NumP]. Finally the Gen phrase is characterized as an Agr Phrase and the genitival AL is thus an Agr head i.e., a determiner or pronoun in the characterization of Déchaine & Wiltschko (2002).

#### 4. On the Internal Structure of Possessive Adjectives

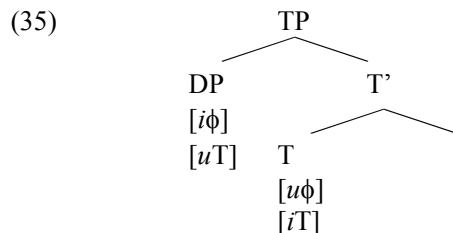
##### 4.1. Analysis in a Nutshell

In short, the analysis that we propose makes the following points:

A. *Possessives are mixed categories*. Like most pronouns, possessives have a complex internal structure; moreover they represent a mixed category, namely a pronoun embedding an adjective. The dual analysis, if correct, stands a better chance to account for the mixed properties exhibited by possessives (see above, section 2.).

B. *Adjectivization is a last resort strategy that a DP selects when it cannot get Case in the regular fashion*, that is, by deleting its Case feature against the matching feature of a (Tense endowed) functional head (*invazia germană a Cehoslovaciei* invasion.the german AL Czechoslovakia.the.GEN ‘the German invasion of Czechoslovakia’). Adjectivization and Genitive case assignment are alternative means of indicating the dependence of a DP on a nominal head.

C. Technically, the assumption that we make is that structural Case (*uT*) can be realized on an NP/DP matrix only if the latter is “non-defective”, that is,  $\phi$ -complete. Structural case assignment, as initially proposed by Pesetsky & Torrego, relies on the complementarity of  $\phi$ -features and Tense features. When this complementarity fails, features do not match, and the [*uT*] feature cannot be realized



Plausibly, this is a matter of Case realization (morphology), rather than Case assignment (in the GB terminology, recently revived by Pesetsky 2010). The Case feature cannot be realized on an incomplete  $\phi$ -matrix. Case is not the only feature whose realization requires a complete  $\phi$ -matrix. One more examples is definiteness. In Romanian definiteness cannot be realized on “defective” invariable adjectives. Even if in definite DPs, definiteness must be realized on the highest prenominal adjective; if the latter is “deficient” (for instance the adjective *ditamai* ‘very big’ below is invariable for gender and number), the article surface on the noun – see the examples in (36). Similarly, in Romanian, Accusative clitics can only double DPs that have all their grammatical features specified. Bare quantifiers, unspecified for gender, cannot be doubled by Accusative clitics (37a).

- (36) a. *frumoasele* (G: FEM, N: PL, +def) beautiful.the case (FEM.PL.) houses

- b.     \**ditamaile* (G: -, N: -, \*def)             *case* (FEM.PL.)  
           very-big.the                               houses
- c.     *ditamai* (G: -, N: -)                   *casele* (FEM.PL, +def)  
           very-big                                 houses.the
- (37) a.     \**Pe nimeni nu l-am văzut.*     *(nimeni – G: -)*  
           PE nobody not him=(I)have     seen
- b<sub>1</sub>.   *Pe niciunul nu l-am văzut.*  
           PE no one not   him=(I)have     seen     *(niciunul – G: MASC)*
- b<sub>2</sub>.   *Pe niciuna nu am văzut-o.*     *(niciuna – G: FEM)*  
           PE no one not (I)have   seen=her.

Essentially, we claim that Romanian PAs, like all referential pronouns, have a very complex Person-Number structure, while Gender is unspecified, so that a structural Genitive feature, either is not present or cannot be realized. When this happens, Case is not valued, so that adjectivization is called for, as an alternative case valuation strategy, which will be referred to as *Case concord*. By means of an Agree relation, the possessor copies the gender, number and Case of the possessee, with Person and Number as inherent features.

#### 4.2. On the Featural Make-up of Possessives

Ever since Postal (1969), pronouns have been considered Determiners which have an NP restriction (for a recent discussion on Romanian, see Giurgea 2010), sometimes overt:

- (38)
- |    |           |
|----|-----------|
| DP | └───┘     |
| D  | NP        |
| we | linguists |
| us | women     |

The major nominal categories are D(eterminer) and Num(ber) (cf. Borer 2005, Tănase-Dogaru 2009, among many). It has been correctly argued, however that for personal pronouns at least, Person and Number should be fused into one category, with a much more complex feature structure. The special status of Number with pronouns is well known and has for a long time been reflected in the analysis of personal pronouns into six rather than three persons (cf. Bloomfield 1933, Benveniste 1972).

It is thus known that plural pronouns represent ‘groups of non-identical entities’, as illustrated in (39) for the 4<sup>th</sup> Person (first person plural):

- (39) a.     the speaker and only one hearer  
       b.     the speaker and more than one hearer  
       c.     the speaker, one hearer and somebody else who is not present  
       d.     the speaker, one hearer and several persons who are not present  
       e.     the speaker, more than one hearer and somebody else who is not present  
       f.     the speaker, more than one hearer and several persons who are not present

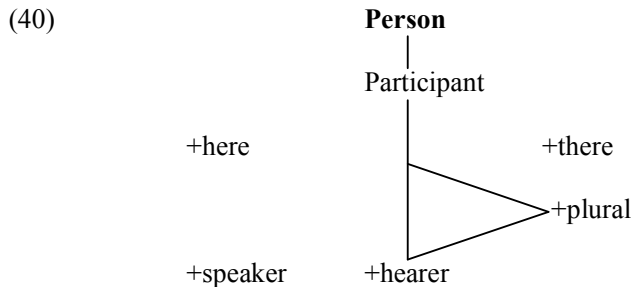
The proper characterization of pronoun interpretation requires the introduction of other features as well. The complex feature structure of pronouns extends far beyond the six persons



view; there is empirical evidence for other contrasts as well (even when we ignore the difference between referential pronouns and bound variable, on which see Kratzer 2009).

**Person** is the most relevant and highest ranked category for pronouns, other features which are activated in context organizing as sub-features under the Person node. As already seen, Number and Person are inherent and syncretic for pronouns. Person thus consists of more basic (independent) components which pronouns may share with other categories. Such a view regarding Person has often been proposed (Harley & Ritter 2002, Vasilescu 2005/2008, Beninca & Poletto 2005, Bianchi 2006 among many). The meaning components considered have to do with deixis, speech act roles and other discourse considerations, person hierarchies, anaphoric relations.

For illustration, we mention a rather well-motivated proposal, with respect to Romance data, regarding the components of the Person system from Beninca & Poletto (2005). They propose a three-dimensional layered system, as in (30) below.



Interestingly, they suggest several strategies for uncovering these semantic components: (a) one is the extension of one pronominal form from one person to another, always in an implicational hierarchy (for instance the S-vowel reflexive form may be extended from the third person to the 4<sup>th</sup>, 5<sup>th</sup>, 6<sup>th</sup>, signaling a contrast between the “here” persons (1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup>) and the “there” persons in the respective dialects; (b) one may investigate the homonymy of the pronominal and, especially, the verbal system, under the hypothesis that a given form (either pronominal or verbal) can extend from one person to another only when the two forms have at least one component in common. Given that the feature composition of each person is complex, we expect the existence of more than one extension path.

Person components may be uncovered by examining the two categories that show person variation: pronouns and verb forms. In the particular case of Romanian, it also seems to be rewarding to investigate both the verbal and the pronominal forms.

One relevant feature is the [ $\pm$  **deictic**] feature. This is a feature which distinguishes between what is conventionally present in the domain of discourse, and what is not. An empirical argument in favor of the *here/there* contrast is provided by the etymology of 3<sup>rd</sup> person personal pronouns, derived from ‘non-proximate’ demonstrative pronouns, indicating an object located far from the speaker, hence not included in the ‘here’ space that includes the speaker (see also Benveniste 1972). The first distinction separating third persons and the others is thus akin to the semantic notion [here].

The high rank of the deictic feature in the system is apparent in that it may obviate lower ranked features, such as Number in the first place. The importance of this contrast is apparent in the homonymy of the verbal system:

- (41) (a) [HERE](1,2, 4, 5) [THERE] (3 and 6)  
*cânt* (I sing) *cântă* (*el, ei, ele*) (he/she/they sing(s))  
*cânți* (you<sub>SG</sub> sing) *cântăm* (we sing)  
*cântați* (you<sub>PL</sub> sing)
- (b) *mă spāl* / *te speli* *se spală*  
me<sub>Acc</sub> wash you<sub>Acc</sub> wash him/her/they<sub>Acc</sub> wash  
/ *ne spălăm* / *vă spălați*  
we<sub>Acc</sub> wash you<sub>Acc</sub> wash  
‘I/you/we/you wash myself/yourself/ourselves/yourself’  
‘He/she/they wash(es) himself/herself/themselves’
- (c) *să vin/vii/venim/veniți* *să vină*  
SUBJ come-1<sup>st</sup>/2<sup>nd</sup>/4<sup>th</sup>/5<sup>th</sup> SUBJ come-3<sup>rd</sup>/6<sup>th</sup>
- (d) *aș/ai/am/ați veni* *ar veni*  
I/You/We/You would come He/She/They would come

The constitutive attribute [Person] itself is manifest in the maximally distinct forms, 1 and 6, homonymous in the other conjugations of the Romanian verb. It is also possible that this homonymy represents the feature [discourse participant] which has opposite values for the 1 vs. 6 persons

- (42) [PERSON]  
[DISCOURSE PARTICIPANT]  
*văd* (1, 6)  
+discourse participant – discourse participant  
*vezi, vedem, vedeți* (2, 4, 5) *vede* (3)

Interestingly, Dobrovie Sorin & Giurgea 2010 notice an extension of the morpheme *-ră* (Old Romanian: *luai, luași, luă, luăm, luat, luară, vs. Modern Romanian: luai, luași, luă, luarăm, luarăți, luară*), from the 6<sup>th</sup> to the 4<sup>th</sup> Person. While the authors interpret this as evidence for the independence of Number from Person, an equally plausible view, in line with what is generally known about the semantics of the plural forms of the personal pronouns, is to say that Persons 4–6 encode a [Group] feature (Kratzer 2009).

Given the complexity of Number in pronouns, we adopt the view that Person and Number form one D category with Number on a different tier from deixis. Notice that (morphologic) gender is subordinated to non-deictic person: *eu* (1), *tu* (2), *noi* (4), *voi* (5) vs. *el* (3 MASC), *ea* (3 FEM), *ei* (6 MASC), *ele* (6 FEM).

An implicational result is also important. Through their discourse role (participants) Person 1, 2, 4, 5 are also always [+Human, +Personal], and referential gender (semantic gender) is *always specified, even if the specification is contextual (pragmatic)*. Such is not the case for 3<sup>rd</sup> person pronouns.

#### 4.3. The Relation between Person and Definiteness

Since, as already mentioned, at least in some languages Personal Pronouns are definite determiners, it is of interest to clarify the relation between Person and Definiteness. Some researchers equate Person and Definiteness, claiming that Definiteness is in fact the [Person] feature, as in Lyons (1999). A recent plea for this equivalence is Longobardi (2008). Among other things he claims that Proper Names and Pronouns both go to the D position because they share the feature of Person. In his view it is the personhood of proper names that entails movement to D (definiteness).

A different view, against the conflation of Person and Definiteness, is Bernstein (2008). She argues, somehow, in the opposite direction, that the English morpheme *th-* (present in demonstratives – *this*, *that*, personal pronouns – *they*, the definite article – *the*) is actually a 3<sup>rd</sup> person morpheme, rather than a morpheme associated with definiteness. The case can persuasively be made for English, where (a) the definite article occurs in [–specific] contexts where it can be replaced by an indefinite, as in (43), and (b) even demonstratives have indefinite readings (Ionin 2006), as shown among other things by their possible occurrence in *there* sentences (signaling hearer-new information, example from Bernstein 2008: 215), as in (44):

- (43) a. *When I visit Egypt next year, I hope I won't have to go to **the/a** hospital.*  
       b. *When I visit Egypt next year, I plan to **the/a** beach.*  
       c. *When I visit Egypt next year, I plan to attend **the/a** circus.*
- (44) *I met **this** strange guy on the subway last night. (= a strange guy)*

Moreover, English *th*-pronouns may be used non-referentially; as shown by Déchaine & Wiltschko (2002), these pronouns may be used as non-referential variables, as well as bound variables:

- (45) ***They** say Smith is doing very well.*
- (46) a. *Somebody lost **their** hat.*  
       b. *Everyone thinks **they** are right.*

Bernstein's conclusion is as follows: "I have discussed and illustrated that the most common features associated with many *th-* forms, deixis and definiteness – do not exceptionlessly characterize some of the forms and do not characterize others at all. My specific claim will be that what characterizes English *th*-forms is the encoding of 3<sup>rd</sup> person" (Bernstein 2008: 217).

The specific proposal she makes for English *th-* is as follows:

- (47) English *th-* is a (3<sup>rd</sup>) person marker unspecified for gender and number: *th* displays the person of an associated noun or noun phrase, or that of a DP external referent.

In the case of lexical DPs consisting of the determiner element +noun, the *th*-initial determiner element expresses the DP's 3<sup>rd</sup> person feature, never overtly expressed on the noun, as the examples in (48) illustrate.

- (48) a. [<sub>DP</sub> the<sub>3rd</sub> book(s)]  
       b. [<sub>DP</sub> that/this<sub>3rd</sub> book]  
       c. [<sub>DP</sub> these/those/them<sub>3rd</sub> books]

“I take as indirect the fact that these examples may also convey definiteness” (Lyons 1999: 313), where definiteness and person are conflated, and associated with D. As seen in fact *th*-forms may be indefinite. The proposal in (47) is compatible with Vergnaud & Zubizarreta’s (1992: 613) claim that the complementation relationship between D (*the*) and N is an agreement relation of *token* (D) to *type* (N). What Bernstein is suggesting is that the token-type relationship may be one of 3<sup>rd</sup> person agreement on D.

### Result

We conclude that Person and Definiteness are independently needed (both, for instance may be agreement categories, operating in different ways). At the same time they are **implicational concepts**, in the sense that Person may be associated with definiteness, even if the opposite is clearly not true. For instance, definiteness on an adjective does not entail the presence of a Person feature.

As to PAs, they are not necessarily definite. In Romanian they freely occur in DPs headed by indefinite determiners; moreover they appear in possessive partitive construction, where the Genitive is known to be indefinite (see Cornilescu 2006).

- (49) a. *un prieten al său*  
a friend(MASC) AL his/her.MASC.SG  
b. *un prieten de-al său*  
a friend(MASC) DE-AL his/her.MASC.SG

PAs function as definite Determiners, in languages where the D head *is* always associated with both [Person] and [Definiteness] (as the case is in French).

## 5. Gender and Case Assignment

### 5.1. What a Possessive Looks Like

Romanian is a good language to investigate PAs, since in Romanian Genitive pronouns and PAs have the same distribution (slightly different from that of lexical Genitives), and it is not immediately clear why such competitive forms should coexist.

Recall the main hypotheses we are investigating:

A. Possessives represent a mixed category, specifically they are pronouns (DPs) embedding an adjective. This dual analysis, if correct, stands a chance to account for the mixed properties exhibited by possessives.

B. Adjectivization is a last resort strategy that a DP selects when it cannot get/realize Genitive Case in the regular fashion.

C. Technically, the assumption that we make is that structural Case cannot be realized on an NP/DP matrix if the latter is “defective”, i.e.,  $\phi$ -incomplete.

The starting point of the analysis is a comparison of Genitive personal pronouns and PAs, which will show in what way the latter are “defective”.

- (50) a. *băiatul Mariei*  
boy.the Maria.GEN  
*fata lui Ion*  
girl.the GEN Ion

- b. *băiatul ei*  
 boy.the her  
*fata lui*  
 girl.the his
- c. *băiatul său*  
 boy.the(MASC) his/her.MASC.SG  
*fata sa*  
 girl.the(FEM) his/her.FEM.SG

The difference between the two pronominal forms lies in the semantic contribution of the restriction NP with which the D(pronoun) agrees in order to value its  $\phi$ -features.

The pronoun *ei* ‘her’ (50b) is fully specified for Person/Number (3<sup>rd</sup>) and Gender (feminine), which it gets by Agree with the nominal restriction. Presumably, grammatical Number is also inherited by Agree with the nominal restriction. The gender specified by the restriction is that of the referent of the pronoun, therefore the gender of the possessor. In sum, Genitive pronouns have fully specified set of grammatical  $\phi$ -features.

Consider PAs (*său, sa, săi, sale*) now (examples in (50c)). The restriction says nothing beyond the Person/Number of the possessor. In particular, Gender is shared with the possessee, the possessor’s gender being unspecified. The  $\phi$ -matrix of the D is incomplete, lacking gender specification. By assumption, a structural case feature may not be realized, even if introduced in the matrix of the PA.

- (51) a. DP  
 D NP  
 [ $\mu$ +Fem] [iFem]  
 [iP3] [ $\mu$ +P3]  
**ei**
- b. DP  
 D NP  
 [iP3] [Ø]  
 [**uGender**]  
**s-V**

Even if PAs include a nominal restriction, the N head is not completely  $\phi$ -specified, so the  $\phi$ -features of D remain (partly) uninterpretable and unvalued. If the structural case feature [ $\mu$ T] may only be inserted and valued and realized only in matrices that have complete valued  $\phi$ -features, it will follow that these forms cannot check structural case in the regular fashion. A different licensing strategy is required: they will be case licensed by Agree with a category which is [ $i\phi$ ] and which bears case. This category can only be a Noun (the possessee).  $\phi$  and case licensing occur in the same Agree configuration.

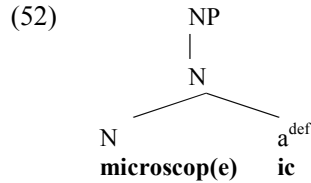
*Adjectivization* is thus the specification of the number/gender/Case of the possessee on the possessor DP, which looks like an adjective, morphologically speaking.

## 5.2. Deriving Possessives

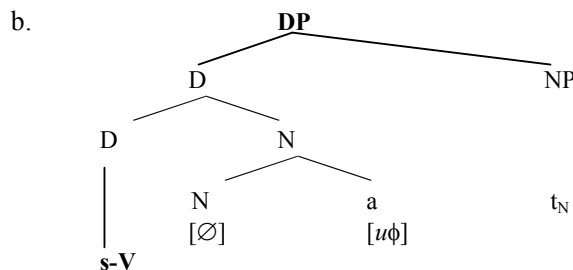
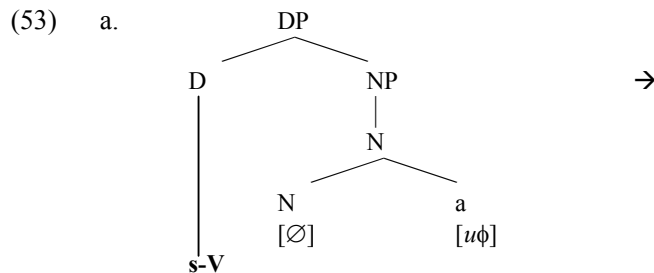
In our analysis, the possessor is projected as a DP, which morphologically turns into an adjective, by activating an adjectival suffixal head projected on its nominal restriction. What is special is allowing the N to project and NP after it has merged with the adjectival suffix, whose role is to insert set of uninterpretable  $\phi$ -features, required for concord. Such a derivation is legitimate, since, in minimalist theory, merge simply specifies that when two categories  $\alpha$ ,  $\beta$  merge under a node,  $\delta$ ,  $\delta$  is one of the two categories (Chomsky 2004). The label assigned to the newly formed category is that of the element which s-selects the other and

which further selects by Merge. Since clearly in the  $[\delta [N, A]]$  structure it is the N that further projects the essential D layer,  $\delta$  is N in the adjectivization operation.

A similar proposal was made for relational adjectives in Fábregas (2007). A relational adjective looks like (52) below, where  $a^{def}$  is a defective adjectival head, in the sense this head has little semantic (selectional) contribution. Recall that the semantics of relational adjectives derives from the semantics of the noun. As a result the projecting category is the Noun rather than the Adjective.



We therefore adopt and adapt Fábregas' analysis to Romanian PAs. For PAs, the presence of an adjectival head is required for capturing the generalization regarding adjectival affixes, across possessive and lexical adjectives in Romanian (see above). At the same time, as extensively shown above, PAs include a Determiner (pronoun), a category which is clearly projected by the Noun, not the adjective. It is the N in a structure like (52), (53) which will project its label, projecting and extending it to a full DP and generating the pronoun. The assumed internal structure of a PA as indicated below. The adjectival suffix is simply the carrier of unvalued  $\phi$ -features, valued when the DP derivationally comes to Agree with the possessed Noun.

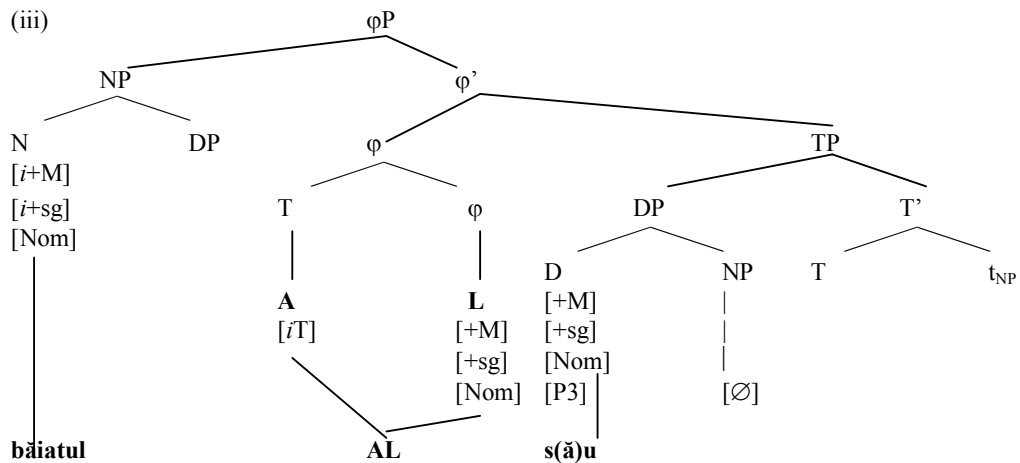
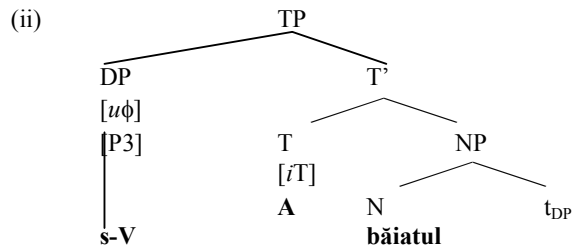
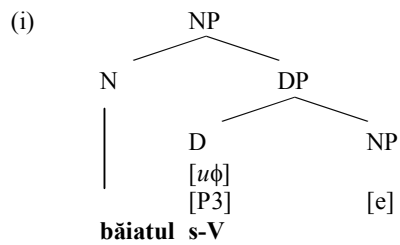


In what follows we will ignore the details of this internal structure, and simply refer to the PA and its features. In the particular case of Romanian, the  $\phi$ -features and case of the PA are transmitted through the  $\phi$ -head AL. Importantly, the presence of AL in the PA phrase

indicates that the PA (a DP) goes through the same derivational steps required for the creation of AL. We sketch the contrastive derivation of a PA and of a Genitive personal pronoun.

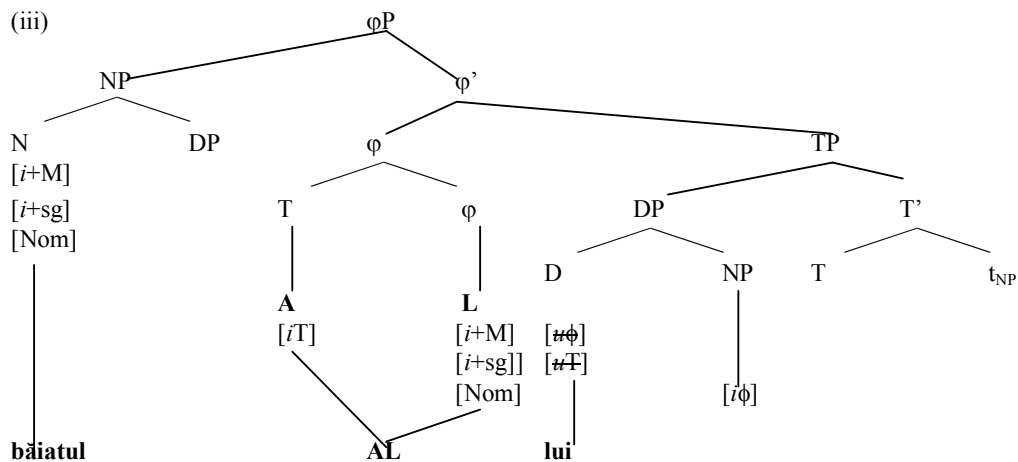
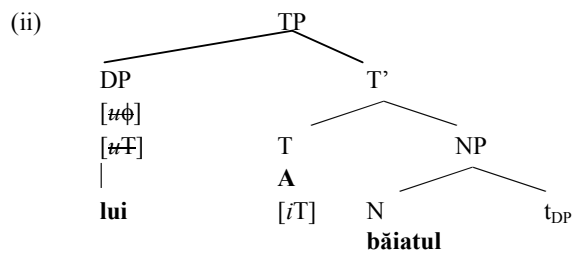
- (54) a. *băiatul său*  
 boy.the(MASC) his/her.MASC.SG  
 ‘his/her boy’  
 b. *băiatul lui*  
 boy.the his  
 ‘his boy’

(55) *băiatul său*



(i)

```
graph TD
    NP1[NP] --- N[N]
    NP1 --- DP[DP]
    N --- baiatul[băiatul]
    DP --- D[D]
    DP --- NP2[NP]
    D --- plus[+acc]
    D --- uT[uT]
    D --- lui[lui]
    NP2 --- iPhi[iφ]
```



1. In (55i), the PA DP regularly merges as a complement, in need of being licensed. In (55ii), the incomplete  $\phi$ -matrix of the PA, prevents it from valuing and realizing the Genitive feature assigned by A.

3. The derivation of the genitive pronoun is similar to that of the lexical Genitive DP discussed above (see section 3.). The crucial difference is apparent in (56i), namely, the NP



restriction of this pronoun is fully specified. This allows for the presence and then valuation of the structural case feature [*uT*], as in (56ii).

It is easy to notice in (56iii) that at the point where -L merges, the features of the Genitive D have been valued and marked for Deletion so that the features of the possessed head NP are shared only by the  $\phi$ -head -L. This accounts for the different morphological agreement of the two pronouns: the PA (*al său*) fully agrees with the possessed subject. In the PA configuration, AL agrees with the possessed NP, while the Genitive pronoun agrees with the possessor.

### Conclusion

Adjectivization is thus a means of case licensing a DP which does not have a  $\phi$ -complete matrix and does not have a structural Case feature. Adjectivization is also a means of getting a  $\phi$ -complete matrix and Case for the respective possessor DP, by employing feature sharing in an Agree configuration.

### 5.3. An apparent problem

While the hypothesis that Romanian PA forms are  $\phi$ -incomplete and need to be  $\phi$ - and case licensed by the adjectivization strategy naturally follows from the difference between the features of the Genitive personal pronouns, as different from those of PA, this raises the important issue of how structural case is possible for first and second person forms more generally, as long as we hold that structural case features are only realized when the NP/DP is  $\phi$ -complete, and it is known the personal pronouns in the 1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup>, 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> Person are not gender specified. Third-person personal pronouns differ in that they exhibit regular grammatical number and gender features which they get from their complete nominal restriction. Indeed this might be the grammatical/semantic component that differentiates non-deictic forms from deictic ones. Deictic pronouns need contextual help for full specification. We may assume that through their discourse participant feature, first and second person pronouns differ from the third in being endowed with a [Person/human] feature, which is an inherent feature and which counts or may count as a grammatical gender feature, making the first and second person gender complete. Through the combination of deixis and personal gender, a specific masculine or feminine specification will emerge. Notice that when they are in positions of agreement, the equally-gender-unspecified bare quantifiers require default agreement (MASC, SG), while personal pronouns (Persons 1, 2, 4, 5) require gender-specified agreement. This shows that their  $\phi$ -matrix is specified in context.

- (47) a. *Cineva*      *a*      *fost*    *jefuit*    /      ??*jefuită*.  
           someone    has    been    robbed.MASC    robbed.FEM  
       b. *Eu*      *am*      *fost*    *jefuit*      /      *jefuită*.  
           I        has    been    robbed.MASC    robbed.FEM

It thus appears that persons 1, 2, 4, 5 are subject to dual treatment. On the one hand, their morphology is not gender specified. This allows them to follow the adjectivization strategy when it is available, i.e., for completing their grammatical  $\phi$ -matrix and for getting case.

On the other hand, through their deictic nature, they are context bound and receive referential gender. In this case, their matrix is  $\phi$ -complete and they are candidates for structural case valuation (this is how they get the other cases valued, as well).

Given the complexity of their gender/number specification, their complex computation and the requirement of complete  $\phi$ -specification for structural case valuation, this complexity

is avoided when a different strategy is available (case concord), that is, when they depend on a noun. Thus, compare:

- (58) a. *Pe mine m-a văzut* (**Differential Object Marking, structural Case assignment**)  
 PE me me=has seen  
 ‘He/She saw me’  
 b. *Eu am fost văzută* (**gender specified first person, structural Case**)  
 I have been seen.FEM  
 ‘I(FEM) was seen’  
 c<sub>1</sub>. *casa băiatului meu* (**1 person, not gender specified**)  
 house.the boy.the.GEN(MASC) my.MASC.SG.GEN  
 c<sub>2</sub>. *casa fetei mele*  
 house.the girl.the.GEN(FEM) my.FEM.SG.GEN

#### 5.4. Conclusions

1. Possessive adjectives are pronouns bearing adjectival suffixes. This accounts for their dual pronominal-adjectival nature.
2. Being categorized as DP accounts for their theta theoretic and binding theoretic properties, as well as for their substituting for Genitive DPs, lexical and pronominal.
3. Their adjectival morphology explains their overt adjectival agreement with the head N.
4. Genitive Case assignment and adjectivization are alternative means of showing the dependence of a DP on another one.
5. Number and Person are syncretic (and semantic) so that the only grammatical number features of Possessive pronouns is the one they get by agreement with the possessee.

#### 6. Some French Facts

The analysis above can easily be extended to French. French is of interest in as much as PAs and lexical or pronominal Genitives occupy obligatory distinct positions in the DP, and, moreover, since the French DP accommodates more than one Genitive phrase, it is of interest to see which position is held by PAs.

We briefly review certain properties of the French DP, necessarily (over)simplifying the picture.

One may say that the Person/Property parameter is apparent in French, in that the Possessor Genitive, necessarily a Person Genitive, has properties that sharply contrast with the other argumental Genitives (cf. Milner 1982).

#### Definiteness

In the first place, a) Possessor phrases are understood as *definite*, providing the containing DP with a definite article; b) when it is pronominal, the Possessor phrase *must assume the adjectival possessive form* and may not appear as a prepositionally DE-marked pronominal Genitive, while other argumental Genitives have DE-pronominal counterparts (see examples below); c) PAs are definite determiners.

- (59) a. *le fils de Pierre* (French, from Milner 1982)  
 the son DE Pierre  
 b. *?\*un fils de Pierre*  
 a son DE Pierre

- c.     *\*le fils de lui*  
           the son DE him
- d.     *son*                   *fils*  
           his.MASC.SG     son (MASC.SG)
- (60) a.     *un livre de moi (Agent)*                vs.     *mon*                *livre (Possessor)*  
           a book DE my                               my.MASC.SG     book(MASC.SG)
- b.     *un fils de moi (Agent)*                vs.     *mon*                *fils*  
           a son DE my                               my.MASC.SG     son(MASC.SG)

#### ***Distribution of pronominal possessors***

There is a strikingly different distribution of nominal Genitive and pronominal Possessor Genitives. Pronominal Possessor Genitives occur in pre-nominal position and moreover assume the role of definite determiners. In contrast nominal Genitive DPs occur in post-nominal position and are indifferent to definiteness.

- (61) a.     *le fils de Jean*   (French)  
           the son DE John
- b.     *son*                               *fils*  
           his/her.MASC.SG     son(MASC.SG)
- c.     *fiul lui Ion*   (Romanian)  
           son.the GEN John
- d.     *fiul*                               *său*  
           son.the(MASC.SG)     his/her.MASC.SG

#### ***More than one Genitive in the same DP: Possessors are always higher***

French has been described as a language that has more than one Genitive position, allowing the simultaneous occurrence of Agent > Theme or Possessor > Theme, or Possessor > Agent, and even Possessor > Agent > Theme. A generalization that has been known for a long time is that when two Genitives combine and one of them is a Possessor, the Possessor is always the higher argument in the structure (surfacing in final position) and the two Genitives are *strictly ordered* (examples from Milner 1982):

- (62) a.     *le portrait de Rembrandt du collectionneur*                (Agent>Possessor)  
           the portrait DE Rembrandt DE-the collector
- b.     *le portrait d'Aristot du collectionneur*                (Theme> Possessor)  
           the portrait DE Aristotle DE-the collector
- (63) a.     *\*le portrait du collectionneur de Rembrandt*  
           the portrait DE-the collector DE Rembrandt
- b.     *\*le portrait du collectionneur d'Aristot*  
           the portrait DE-the collector DE Aristotle

In contrast, two lexical Genitives, neither of which is a Possessor are not ordered:

- (64) a.     *la version de la 9<sup>e</sup> de Karajan*  
           the version DE the ninth     DE Karajan

- b. *la version de Karajan de la 9<sup>e</sup>*  
the version DE Karajan DE the ninth

This description converges with the Possessivization Hierarchy proposed by Giorgi & Longobardi (1991) who show that when there are two nominal arguments in a DP, it is the highest in the thematic hierarchy which may be pronominalized:

- (65) a. *son* *portrait* *de Rembrandt*  
his/her.MASC.SG portrait(MASC.SG) DE Rembrandt  
b. *son* *portrait* *d'Aristot*  
his/her.MASC.SG portrait(MASC.SG) DE Aristotle  
c. *\*son* *portrait* *du collectionneur*  
his/her.MASC.SG portrait(MASC.SG) DE-la collector  
(bad if *son* is Theme or Agent; the only admissible interpretation is that *the collector* is Theme).

While the distribution of French Genitives is a delicate issue, much discussed in the literature (Milner 1982, Valois 1991, Kolliakou 1999, Kupferman 1994), what counts in the present context is the preference of the Possessor Genitive or the PA for the higher structural position.

#### *A possible analysis*

Like Romanian, French employs the two case licensing strategies: Agree and Case concord. Like Romanian. Case concord is employed for possessives, which are specified as [Person, Definite], but are not gender specified, on the model of the Romanian first and second person possessives.

Accepting that the French DP looks like the English one, and accepting that the head NP raises up to NumP (cf. Cinque 1993, 2004), given the distribution of Genitive phrases above, it appears that prepositional DE genitives are licensed like their Romanian counterparts in the lower AgrGenP, while higher Possessors, i.e., the PAs, are licensed in the higher PossP. This is in line with suggesting that, at least when there are two arguments inside the DP, the Possessor DP (i.e., the PA) *merges in specifier position*. This allows Concord between the specifier PA and the nominal head, very early, even at merge. After concord, when the NP phrase has reached [Spec, NumP] and the Poss head merges, the PA is attracted to [Spec, PossP] to value the [Person] feature of Poss rather than Genitive Case. Zribi-Hertz (2003) also claims that Possessor phrases raise to PossP to check the Person, not Case. Romance languages, which have a PossP, differ from English in that the Poss head is [*u*Person], rather than [*u*Case].

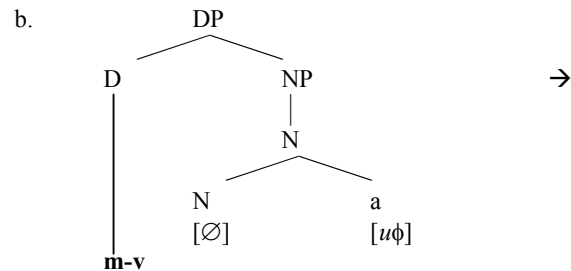
- (66) D PossP NumP AgrGenP NP  
[idef] *son* <sub>NP</sub>*portrait* *de Rembrandt* <sub>t<sub>NP</sub></sub>  
[*u*+def]

Finally the PA is attracted to the [Spec, DP] position, valuing its [*u*+def] feature.

A detailed analysis is given below. A PA like *mon* is again inherently specified for [+D, Person1, Human], *u*+definite], and unspecified for grammatical gender. Thus, *mon* is  $\phi$ -incomplete. Again it may be assumed that the restriction is empty, or, at most, deficient, which

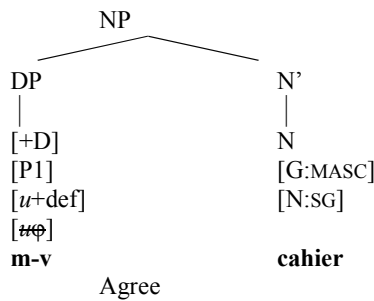
is why an adjectival suffix is selected. The internal structure of the PA is the same as in Romanian.

- (67) a. *mon* *cahier*  
my.MASC.SG notebook(MASC.SG)

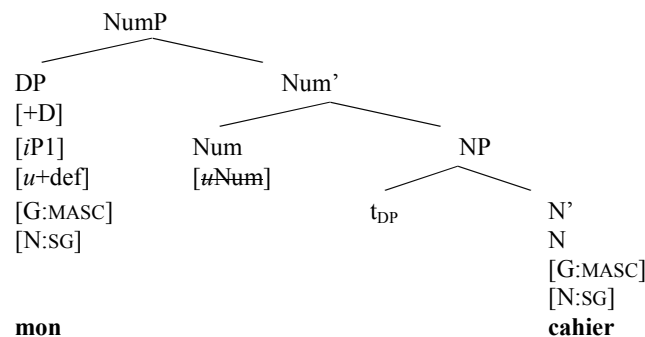


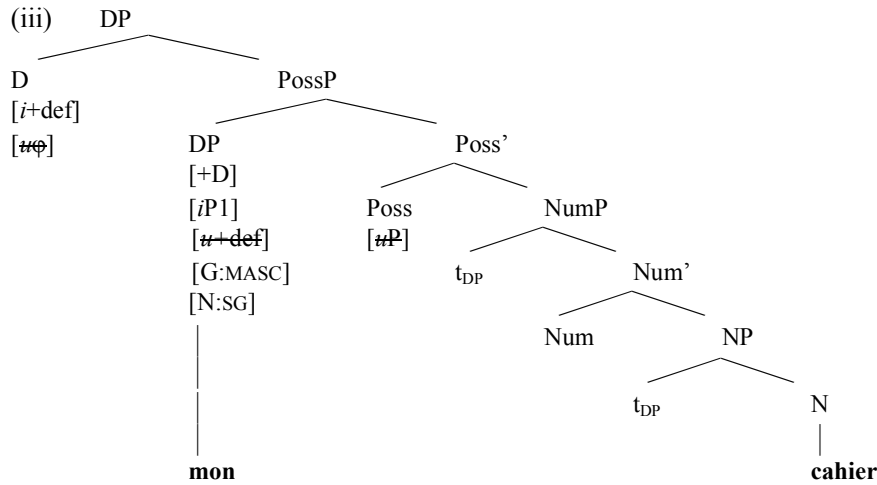
Ignoring irrelevant details, a phrase like *mon cahier* goes through a brief derivational history. For reasons that we have explained, the Possessor phrase is preferably projected in specifier position. This allows Adejctivization to take place right away. As suggested by Zribi Hertz (2003), in derivations where the PA precedes the head NP, it is the PA which raises to [Spec, NumP]. Since the PA has valued its Number feature, it can check the [*u*Number] feature of the Num head (see (68ii)). From here on, the PA is attracted to Spec PossP to value the [*u*Pers] head and the to Spec, DP to delete its own [*u*+def] feature (see (68iii)).

- (68) (i)



- (ii)



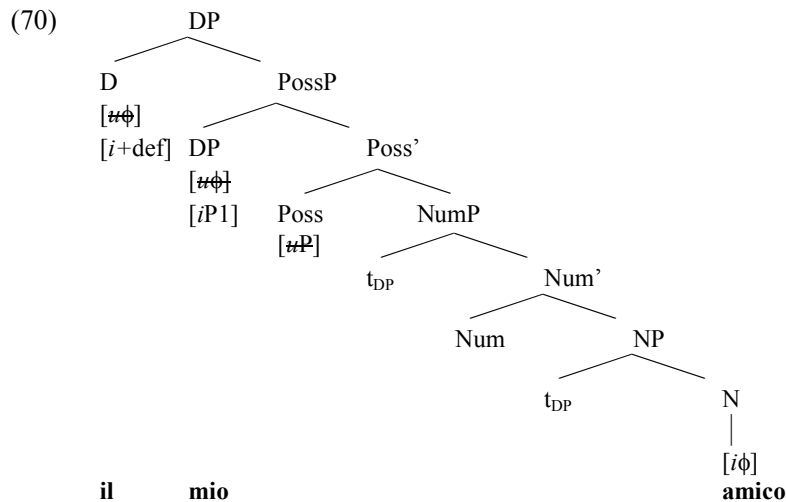


### Remarks

1. If the PA is a complement, the derivation follows the steps of Romanian until the adjectivization step in  $\phi$ P small clause configuration. Subsequently, the PA targets [Spec, NumP] and the derivation continues as above.

2. Italian is minimally different. [Person] does not automatically entail definiteness, just as in English or Romanian. The Italian adjectives checks Person against the Poss head, but a determiner is required to spell out the [idef] feature in D. Otherwise Italian and French possessives are similar:

(69) *il mio amico*  
the my.MASC.SG friend(MASC.SG)



## 7. Conclusions

1. Pronominal possessive adjectives should be viewed as mixed categories, namely as DPs headed by an adjectivized noun.

2. The empirical problem of these pronouns is that they have a deficient, probably empty restriction, so that the whole DP is  $\phi$ -incomplete. In particular, gender of the possessor is not provided, and number is indirectly supplied by the specification of one of the six persons on the D-head.

3. Adjectivization is in the first case a strategy of completing the  $\phi$ -matrix of the DP.

4. Certain features, like structural Case and definiteness, cannot be realized on DPs that are  $\phi$ -incomplete. Consequently, the Case of possessive DPs can only be realized through concord with the head noun. Adjectivization of a pronoun (or of a noun in Slavic languages) is a last resort strategy of Case-licensing in DPs.

5. Assignment of the Genitive and adjectivization are both formal means of showing the dependence of one DP on another.

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