

# Genitive Construction and Dissimilation in Afaan Oromoo

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## Abstract

This paper attempts to describe Afaan Oromoo genitive construction. This paper is divided into 6 sections. The first section is an introduction to Afaan Oromoo genitive construction. Section 2 is discusses possessive genitives of Afaan Oromoo; the concern of this section is alienable possessive (ALP) and inalienable possessive (IAP) of Afaan Oromoo. Section three discusses descriptive genitive of the language. Section 4 deals with problem areas of genitive of genitives of Afaan Oromoo. Section 5 proposes solutions for problems of genitive of genitives. Section six concludes the paper.

## Keywords:

genitive, possessive, descriptive, alienable, inalienable

# 1 Introduction

The genitive construction usually associated to ownership of something. In Afaan Oromoo the genitive case is

The genitive construction usually associated to ownership of something; it is often described as possessive case. But, close investigation shows that genitive construction includes possession, source, origin and description among other things; that is to say all issues concerning genitive case are not explainable in terms of possession. Therefore, genitive construction is treated in different ways in literature; it is often typed into various categories including possessive, subjective, source, origin, objective, partitive and descriptive genitive (?). Some researchers categorize genitive construction into two main categories; namely, possessive and descriptive genitive; these two main categories are further subdivided into subcategories as alienable and inalienable possessions, metaphorical, generic descriptive genitives (Rosenbach, 2006; Gebregziabher, 2012).

The discussion of subjective, objective, source, material and partitive genitive is also common. Subjective and objective genitives are used when a noun is derived from a verb and modified by another dependent noun. If the dependent noun (modifier noun of the main noun) expresses the main noun that is derived from the original verb, it is claimed to be a subjective genitive; but, if the dependent noun (genitive) expresses the object of the main verb, the genitive is said to be objective genitive. In subjective genitive an action or idea is set forth as proceeding from the noun in subject position (Greenlee, 1950, 68). The subjective genitive expresses about the nature of subject of a sentence. It does't refer to possession.

In Afaan Oromoo subjective and objective genitives cannot be distinguished morphologically or syntactically; they are expressed in the same with construction. Thus, subjective and objective genitives are distinguished semantically. Therefore, context is the main determining factor in this case.

- (1) ፌ  
nam-ni                      isa jaal-at-a  
man(people)-NOM him love-MID-3MSS  
'People loves him.'

- (2) ፌ  
inni            nama            jaal-at-a  
he.NOM man(people) love-MID-3MSS  
'He loves people.'

- (3) ፌ  
jaalala nama-a  
love    man(people)-GEN

'People's love or love of people.'

As shown above *jaalala* 'love' is derived from the verb *jaalata* 'loves'. The dependent is *nama* 'people' in this context. The dependent *nama* express the subjective genitive on the bases of example (1) provided that people loves him. If we take into consideration example (2), *jaalala namaa* 'people's love' is also subjective genitive as long as *inni* 'he' dedicated to welfare of humanity. But if we are talking about general observation love of human being for human being, *jaalala namaa* 'love of people' becomes objective genitive.

Moreover, a source can be expressed by a genitive case (Greenlee, 1950, 69).

- (4)     ⲁ  
          caama   bona-a  
          drought summer-GEN  
          'summer drought'

- (5)     ⲁ  
          lolaa   ganna-a  
          flood winter-GEN  
          'winter flood'

In (4) *bona* 'summer' is considered to be the source of drought; and in (5) *ganna* 'Winter' happens to be the source of flood. In both cases genitive is marked by lengthening the final short vowels of the corresponding nouns, *bona* and *ganna* respectively.

In order to clarify source genitive, let us consider the following examples:

- (6)     ⲁ  
          buna   Kafaa  
          coffee Wallaggaa.GEN  
          'Kafaa coffee'

- (7)     ⲁ  
          k'amadii Arsii  
          wheat    Arsii.GEN  
          'Arsii Wheat'

- (8)     ⲁ  
          hoolaa Wolayitaa  
          sheep   Harar.GEN

'Wolayita sheep'

Examples given in (6-8) are source genitives. (6) expresses coffee is from *Kafaa*; the sources of wheat and bull are also expressed in the same way, namely from *Arsii* and *Wolayitaa* respectively. Because the dependent nouns in (6-8) have long final vowels, the genitive is marked by null morpheme.

Materials of which a thing is made can be expressed by the genitive case (Greenlee, 1950, 69).

- (9)     <sub>∘</sub>  
          siree sibiilaa  
          bed iron.GEN  
          'iron bed'
- (10)    <sub>∘</sub>  
          foon hoolaa  
          meat sheep.GEN  
          'mutton'
- (11)    <sub>∘</sub>  
          mana dagaa  
          house stone.GEN  
          'stone house'

In (9), the material from which a bed is made, in (10) a type of meat and in (11), a material from which a house is built are expressed by genitive *sibiilaa* 'iron', *hoolaa* 'sheep' and *dagaa* 'stone' respectively.

Not only materials of which a thing is made but also a purpose a material for which it is planned may be expressed by genitive. In this case word order is the reverse of examples given in (9-11).

- (12)    <sub>∘</sub>  
          siibiila siree  
          iron bed.GEN  
          'bed iron'
- (13)    <sub>∘</sub>  
          foon hoolaa  
          meat sheep.GEN  
          'meat sheep'

- (14)     <sub>ḥ</sub>  
           ḍagaa manaa  
           stone house.GEN  
           'house stone'

As shown above word order of genitive phrases given in (12-14) are the reverse of examples given in (9-11) to show that purpose and material genitives are expressed not only morphologically but also syntactically.

A whole thing from which only a part is to be focused may expressed by genitive construction known as the partitive genitive (Greenlee, 1950, :69). Although most partitive constructions refer to a quantity or amount, some are used to indicate quality or behavior.

- (15)     <sub>ḥ</sub>  
           halkan walakkaa  
           night half.GEN  
           'middle of the night'

- (16)     <sub>ḥ</sub>  
           lit'a           gannaa  
           beginning winter.GEN  
           'beginning of winter'

- (17)     <sub>ḥ</sub>  
           baha gannaa  
           end winter.GEN  
           'end of winter'

- (18)     <sub>ḥ</sub>  
           barii Dilbataa  
           dawn Sunday.GEN  
           'dawn of the Sunday'

The above given examples indicate time. In (15), *halkan walakkaa* 'middle of the night' indicates not only amount of time (which is roughly 6 hours) but also quality or behavior linked to middle of the night which is silent and fearsome. Similarly, (16-18) indicate amount of time as well as behaviors associated with *lit'a gannaa* 'beginning of winter', *baha gannaa* 'beginning of winter' and *barii Dilbataa* 'dawn of the Sunday'. In the beginning of winter farmers prepare themselves for farming season. By contrast end of winter is associated with new year celebrations and time of happiness and joy. Dawn of the Sunday is also linked with time of rest, worship

and socialization.

In Afaan Oromoo, genitive constructions marked in six ways:

(1) A noun ending in long vowel marked by null morpheme. For example, in *mana Jiraataa* 'Jiraataa's house' the dependent (possessor) *Jiraataa* has long final vowel; therefore, there is no overt genitive marking in such case. That is to say the possessor *Jiraataa* doesn't show any morphological change to indicate genitive construction.

(2) If a noun ends with a short vowel, we mark genitive case by lengthening the short vowel (Gragg, 1976; Gobena, Hagos, & Meyer, 2019, 183). For example, in *mana namaa* 'a man's house', *nama* 'man' has final short vowel in absolute form; the final short vowel becomes long in genitive construction.

(3) If a noun ends in consonant, we mark the genitive construction by suffixation of *-ii* (Gobena et al., 2019). For example in *wark'ii ilkaanii* 'golden teeth' the noun *ilkaan* 'teeth' ends with *n*, to which the genitive mark *-ii* is suffixed. A noun that got its vowel long is interpreted as the possessor of a noun that precedes it.

(4) The genitive can be made by placing the pronoun *kan* 'whose' between the head and dependent (possessor) nouns; for example *mana kan k'ottuu* 'a farmers's house' (Gragg, 1976, 183). In Meca dialect the pronoun *kan* is used for both masculine and feminine genders. But in *Harar*, *Borena* and *Tullama* dialects *kan* shows masculine while *tan* shows feminine gender. For example, *mana tan ishee* 'her house'.

(5) Genitives of genitives which are not final retain their absolute form (Owens, 1985, 104).

(6) By applying dissimilation rule to genitive of genitives;

(19)     ┌  
          mana nama-a  
          house man-GEN  
          'a man's house'

(20)     ┌  
          mana nama Jimmaa  
          house man Jima.GEN  
          'Jima man's house'

(20) is a genitive of (19). In (19), the dependent noun *namaa* 'man' has final long vowel to mark genitive construction. In genitive of a genitive shown in (20), *na-*

*maa* loses its final long vowel where another namely, *Jimmaa* becomes the second dependent.

(6) Genitive construction can also be indicated by possessive pronouns. For example,

- (21)     <sub>1</sub>  
          mana koo  
          house my  
          'my house'
- (22)     <sub>1</sub>  
          mana kee  
          house your  
          'your house (sing)'
- (23)     <sub>1</sub>  
          mana ishee  
          house her  
          'her house'
- (24)     <sub>1</sub>  
          mana isaa  
          house his  
          'his house'
- (25)     <sub>1</sub>  
          mana keenya  
          house our  
          'our house'
- (26)     <sub>1</sub>  
          mana keessan  
          house your  
          'your house (pl)'

In this paper I categorize genitive construction into two types: possessive and descriptive genitives. Descriptive genitives are genitive constructions which are not possessives (Rosenbach, 2006).

## 2 Possessive Genitives

Genitive construction often employed to express possession (Greenlee, 1950, 68). In Afaan Oromoo, possessive genitive can be expressed either morphologically or syntactically.

- (27)     <sub>1</sub>  
          mana Tolasaa  
          house Tolasa.GEN  
          'Tolasa's house'
- (28)     <sub>1</sub>  
          Tolasaa-n     mana qab-a  
          Tolasa-NOM house has-3MSS  
          'Tolasa has a house.'
- (29)     <sub>1</sub>  
          obboleessa Boontuu  
          brother     Bontu.GEN 'Bontu's brother'
- (30)     <sub>1</sub>  
          Boontuu-n     obboleessa qab-di  
          Bontu-NOM brother     has-3FSS  
          'Bontu has brother.'

As shown in the above examples possessive genitives in (27) and (29) are expressed morphologically while (28) and (30) are expressed syntactically using verb to have *qaba/qabdi*.

Possessive genitive is categorized into two types: alienable (APG) and inalienable possessions (APG) (Gebregziabher, 2012).

### 2.1 Alienable Possessive Genitive (APG)

Alienable possessions refers to possessions which have not fixed semantic relationships between the possessor and the possessed nouns (Gebregziabher, 2012). That is to say alienable possessions can freely change ownership. These include materials such as car, house, computer, book, etc.

- (31)     <sub>1</sub>  
          kitaaba barataa  
          book     student.GEN  
          'student's book'
- (32)     <sub>1</sub>  
          konkolaataa barsiisaa  
          car             teacher.GEN  
          'teacher's car'



- (33)     ⚭  
           bilbila shamarree  
           phone girl.GEN  
           'girl's phone'

These examples indicate morphological APG. APG can be expressed syntactically by employing the verb to have *qab-*.

- (34)     ⚭  
           Barataa-n     kitaaba qab-a  
           student-NOM book   has-3MSS  
           'A student has a book.'
- (35)     ⚭  
           Barsiisaa-n   konkolaataa qab-a  
           teacher-NOM car           has-3MSS  
           'A teacher has car.'
- (36)     ⚭  
           shamarree-n bilbila qab-di  
           girl-NOM   phone has-3FSS  
           'A girl has phone.'

These are genitive constructions expressed syntactically by employing the verb to have *qaba/qabdi*.

Concerning definite morpheme, APG is symmetrical with analytical (syntactic) APG. For example, the definite marker can get attached to the main noun in morphological APG.

- (37)     ⚭  
           kitaab-icha barataa  
           book-DEF student.GEN  
           'a student's book/lit. a student's the book'
- (38)     ⚭  
           konkolaat-icha barsiisaa  
           car-DEF       teacher.GEN  
           'a teacher's car/lit. a teacher's the car'
- (39)     ⚭  
           bilbil-icha   shamarree  
           phoone-DEF girl.GEN  
           'a girl's phone/lit. a girl's the phone'

In the above examples all the head nouns are marked for definite; and, all are grammatically correct.

The dependent noun in the possessive genitive can also be marked for definite-

ness.

- (40)     <sub>z</sub>  
           kitaaba     barat-ichaa  
           book-DEF student.GEN.DEF  
           'the student's book'

Both the head noun and the dependent nouns may also be marked for definiteness in Afaan Oromoo.

- (41)     <sub>z</sub>  
           bilbil-icha     shamarr-ittii  
           phoone-DEF girl.GEN.DEF  
           'the girl's phone/lit. the girl's the phone'

Similarly, analytic APG allows for the complement of the verb to have to be marked for definite.

- (42)     <sub>z</sub>  
           barataa-n     kitaab-icha k'ab-a  
           student-NOM book-DEF has-3MSS  
           'A student has the book.'
- (43)     <sub>z</sub>  
           barsiisaa-n     konkolaat-icha k'ab-a  
           teacher-NOM car-DEF     has-3MSS  
           'A teacher has the car.'
- (44)     <sub>z</sub>  
           shamarree-n bilbil-icha k'ab-di  
           girl-NOM     phone-DEF has-3FSS  
           'A girl has the phone.'

As shown above head nouns of genitive construction which are complements of the verb to have permits for the definite morpheme *-icha* to get attached to theme.

The head noun of the APG can be a genitive construction.

- (45)     <sub>z</sub>  
           kitaaba herreega-a     barataa  
           book     maths-GEN student.GEN  
           'student's maths book'
- (46)     <sub>z</sub>  
           barataan kitaaba herreegaa     qab-a  
           student     book     maths.GEN has-3MSS  
           'A student has maths book.'

As shown above in (43) and (44) the head noun is a genitive construction. In genitive structure such as shown in (43), *kan* 'of' can be added.

- (47)     <sub>1</sub>  
           kitaaba kan barataa  
           book   of   student.GEN  
           'student's book/book of a student'
- (48)     <sub>1</sub>  
           kitaaba herreega-a kan barataa  
           book   maths-GEN of   student.GEN  
           'student's maths book/maths book of a student'

The word *kan* is added after the head noun. In the analytic structure shown below the word *kan* 'of' can be optionally added. In this case it is not 'student's book of maths' but 'book of maths' as shown below.

- (49)     <sub>1</sub>  
           barataan kitaaba kan herreegaa qab-a  
           student book   of   maths.GEN has-3MSS  
           'A student has a book of maths.'

If the head noun is modified by an adjective or a quantifier, the morphological ALP need the insertion of *kan* 'of' to be grammatical while the analytic structure of ALP doesn't.

- (50)     <sub>1</sub>  
           \*kitaaba guddaa barataa  
           book   big    student.GEN  
           'student's big book'
- (51)     <sub>1</sub>  
           kitaaba guddaa kan barataa  
           book   big    of   student.GEN  
           'student's big book'
- (52)     <sub>1</sub>  
           \*kitaab-ilee lama barataa  
           book-PL   two   student.GEN  
           'student's two books'

- (53)     ⌊  
           kitaab-ilee lama kan barataa  
           book-PL two of student.GEN  
           'student's two books'

(47) and (49) are ungrammatical because the head nouns of the possessive genitives are modified by an adjective and a quantifier. But, (48) and (50) are grammatical because the head nouns of the genitives are modified and the word *kan* 'of' is inserted preceding the dependent nouns.

By contrast, the analytic APG is grammatical if modified by an adjective or a quantifier without an addition of the word *kan* 'of' as shown below.

- (54)     ⌊  
           barataa-n     kitaaba guddaa k'ab-a  
           student-NOM book big has-3MSS  
           'A student has a big book.'
- (55)     ⌊  
           barataa-n     kitaab-ilee lama k'ab-a  
           student-NOM book-PL two has-3MSS  
           'A student has two books.'

As far as morphological ALP is concerned the more modifier stuff is added, the less the genitive construction becomes transparent and the less grammatical the structure would be.

- (56)     ⌊  
           \*kitaaba herreega-a guddaa barataa  
           book maths-GEN of big student.GEN  
           'student's big maths book/big maths book of a student'
- (57)     ⌊  
           kitaaba herreega-a guddaa kan barataa  
           book maths-GEN of big of student.GEN  
           'student's big maths book/big maths book of a student'
- (58)     ⌊  
           \*kitaaba herreega-a guddaa sana barataa  
           book maths-GEN of big that student.GEN  
           'student's that big maths book/that big maths book of a student'
- (59)     ⌊

kitaaba herreega-a guddaa sana kan barataa  
 book maths-GEN of big that of student.GEN  
 'student's that big maths book/that big maths book of a student'

As shown above (56) and (58) are less acceptable because in (56) an adjective *guddaa* 'big' is added to the already heavy main noun *kitaaba herreegaa* 'maths book' as a result of which the meaning of ALP becomes less transparent. The same case is true with (58) where an adjective *guddaa* 'big' and a demonstrative *san* 'that' are added. But if the word *kan* 'of' is inserted preceding the dependent noun as shown in (57) and (59), both possessive genitives become acceptable.

As compared to morphological ALP analytic ones remain grammatically acceptable whether or not an adjective or a demonstrative added to modify the main noun of the genitive.

- (60)     ⌊  
           barataa-n     kitaaba herreegaa     guddaa k'ab-a  
           student-NOM book     maths.GEN big     has-3MSS  
           'A student has a big maths book.'
- (61)     ⌊  
           barataa-n     kitaaba herreegaa     guddaa sana k'ab-a  
           student-NOM book     maths.GEN big     that has-3MSS  
           'A student has that big maths book.'

In the analytic ALP, the word *kan* 'of' can be optionally inserted preceding the verb to have *k'ab-* 'has'.

- (62)     ⌊  
           barataa-n     kitaaba kan herreegaa     guddaa k'ab-a  
           student-NOM book     of maths.GEN big     has-3MSS  
           'A student has a big book of maths.'
- (63)     ⌊  
           barataa-n     kitaaba kan herreegaa     guddaa sana k'ab-a  
           student-NOM book     of maths.GEN big     that has-3MSS  
           'A student has that big book of maths.'

If the complement of the verb to have is not a genitive itself, the word *kan* 'of' cannot be used in the analytic ALP.

- (64)     ⌊  
           \*barataa-n     kitaaba kan guddaa k'ab-a  
           student-NOM book     of big     has-3MSS  
           'A student has a big book.'
- (65)     ⌊

\*barataa-n      kitaaba kan guddaa sana k'ab-a  
 student-NOM book   of   big      that has-3MSS  
 'A student has that big book.'

## 2.2 Inalienable Possessive Genitive (IPG)

Inalienable genitives (IPG) are possessive cases which forms a fixed semantic relationship between the possessor and the possessee; kinship and body part possessive genitives are considered to be prototypes of IPG (Gebregziabher, 2012, 161).

(66)      ሥ  
              abbaa gurbaa  
              father boy.GEN  
              'a boy's father'

(67)      ሥ  
              rifeensa hintala-a  
              hair      girl-GEN  
              'a girl's hair'

As shown in (66), the possessor or the dependent noun is *gurbaa* 'boy' while the possessee is *abbaa* 'father'. In this the possessor and the possessee form fixed semantic relationship in the sense that the former is defined relative to the latter or vice versa.

Similarly, in (67) the noun *rifeensa* 'hair' is defined in relation to the possessor which happens to be a specific individual. Body parts inherently require to be part of somebody (Gebregziabher, 2012, 161).

In Afaan Oromoo IPG is expressed in the same as APG be it morphological or syntactic as shown below.

### APG

(68)      ሥ  
              mana hintala-a  
              house girl-GEN  
              'a girl's house'

(69)      ሥ  
              hintall-i    mana k'ab-di  
              girl-NOM house has-3FSS  
              'A girl has house.'

## IPG

- (70)     ሷ  
         rifeensa hintala-a  
         hair      girl-GEN  
         'a girl's hair'
- (71)     ሷ  
         hintall-i   rifeensa k'ab-di  
         girl-NOM hair      has-3FSS  
         'A girl has hair.'

In Afaan Oromoo, the main noun of the IPG can be modified by another IPG.

- (72)     ሷ  
         abbaa gurbaa  
         father boy.GEN  
         'a boy's father'
- (73)     ሷ  
         abbaa abbaa      gurbaa  
         father father.GEN boy.GEN  
         'a boy's father's father'
- (74)     ሷ  
         abbaa eessuma/abeeraa gurbaa  
         father uncle.GEN      boy.GEN  
         'a boy's uncle's father'
- (75)     ሷ  
         abbaa abbaa      eessuma/abeeraa gurbaa  
         father father.GEN uncle.GEN      boy.GEN  
         'a boy's uncle's father's father'

As shown in (73), the head noun of IPG is modified by another similar noun *abbaa* 'father'. In (75), the head noun of the possessive genitive is modified by another possessive genitive, namely *abbaa eessuma/abeeraa* 'uncle's father'.

The above extended IPG can be expressed syntactically as shown below.

- (76)     ሷ

gurbaa-n    abbaa k'ab-a  
 boy-NOM father has-3MSS  
 'A boy has father.'

(77)    ሷ  
 gurbaa-n    abbaa abbaa            k'ab-a  
 boy-NOM father father.GEN has-3MSS  
 'A boy has father's father.'

(78)    ሷ  
 gurbaa-n    abbaa eessuma/abeeraa k'ab-a  
 boy-NOM father uncle.GEN            has-3MSS  
 'A boy has uncle's father.'

(79)    ሷ  
 gurbaa-n    abbaa abbaa            eessuma/abeeraa k'ab-a  
 boy-NOM father father.GEN uncle.GEN            has-3MSS  
 'A boy has uncle's father's father.'

It is natural to modify the dependent noun (possessor) in IPG.

(80)    ሷ  
 abbaa gurb-icha-a  
 father boy-DEF-GEN  
 'the boy's father'

(81)    ሷ  
 rifeensa hintal-ittii  
 hair        girl-DEF.GEN  
 'the girl's hair'

In IPG, modifying the head noun by a determiner is less acceptable in Afaan Oromoo.

(82)    ሷ  
 \*abb-icha    gurbaa  
 father-DEF boy.GEN  
 'a boy's the father'

(83)    ሷ



\*rifeens-icha hintala-a  
 hair-DEF girl.GEN  
 'a girl's the hair'

(84) ሷ  
 \*abb-icha gurb-icha-a  
 father-DEF boy-DEF-GEN  
 'the boy's the father'

(85) ሷ  
 \*rifeens-icha hintal-ittii  
 hair-DEF girl-DEF.GEN  
 'the girl's the hair'

In (83) and (83) head nouns of the corresponding alienable possessives are modified by the definite marker *-icha* 'the'. In both cases alienable possessives are less acceptable. In (84) and (85) both the head and dependent nouns are modified by definite markers *-icha*, *ittii*; yet, the phrases fail to be alienable possessive construction.

In Afaan Oromoo, the possessor noun can be modified by an adjective and definite marker.

(86) ሷ  
 obboleessa gurbaa diim-aa  
 brother boy red-M.GEN  
 'a red boy's brother'

(87) ሷ  
 harka hintala diim-tuu  
 hand girl red-F.GEN  
 'a red girl's hand'

(88) ሷ  
 gurbaa diim-aa-n obboleessa k'ab-a  
 boy red-M-NOM brother has-3MSS  
 'A red boy has brother.'

(89) ሷ  
 \*hintala diim-tuu-n harka k'ab-di  
 girl red-F-NOM hand has-3FSS 'A red girl has hand.'

(90) ሷ

hintala diim-tuu-n harka bareed-duu k'ab-di  
 girl red-F-NOM hand beautiful-F has-3FSS  
 'A red girl has a beautiful hand.'

As shown in (86) and (87) dependent nouns are modified by adjectives. But as shown in (89) head noun of a body part cannot be expressed analytically unless modified by an adjective while kinship possessive genitives can be expressed analytically without being modified by adjective as shown in (88).

Moreover, the possessor in IPG can be modified by an adjective, definite marker and demonstrative pronouns.

- (91) ɿ  
 obboleessa gurb-icha diim-aa  
 brother boy-DEF red-M.GEN  
 'the red boy's brother'
- (92) ɿ  
 obboleessa gurb-icha diim-aa sana-a  
 brother boy-DEF red-M that-GEN  
 'that (the) red boy's brother'
- (93) ɿ  
 harka hintal-ittii diim-tuu  
 hand girl-DEF red-F.GEN  
 'the red girl's hand'
- (94) ɿ  
 harka hintal-ittii diim-tuu sana-a  
 hand girl-DEF red-F that-GEN  
 'that (the) red girl's hand'

In (90) and (92) the dependent noun or the possessors are modified both by adjective and definite marker; and, in (91) and (93) the head nouns are modified by adjective, definite marker and demonstrative.

IPG can be expressed both analytically and morphologically. Therefore, analytic counterparts can be shown below.

- (95) ɿ  
 gurb-ich-i diim-aa-n obboleessa k'ab-a  
 boy-DEF-NOM red-M-NOM brother has-3MSS  
 'The red boy has brother'

- (96)     <sub>i</sub>  
gurb-ich-i        diim-aa-n    sun obboleessa k'ab-a  
boy-DEF-NOM red-M-NOM that brother    has-3MSS  
'That (the) red boy has brother'
- (97)     <sub>i</sub>  
hintal-ittii diim-tuu-n harka bareed-duu k'ab-di  
girl-DEF.F red-F-NOM hand beautiful-F has-3FSS  
'The red girl has a beautiful hand.'
- (98)     <sub>i</sub>  
hintal-ittii diim-tuu-n sun harka bareed-duu k'ab-di  
girl-DEF.F red-F-NOM that hand beautiful-F has-3FSS  
'That (the) red girl has a beautiful hand.'

### 3 Descriptive Genitive

1. how do descriptive genitives differ from possessive genitives?
2. Are descriptive genitives syntactic, morphological or compounds?
3. How do descriptive genitives differ from N + N sequences?

Descriptive genitive is not an NP but usually a noun. Genitive constructions in which the possessor functions as a determiner have NP status and they denote a specific entity. Possessive genitives expand nominals into noun phrases. Semantically, possessive genitives specify (in)definiteness and establish reference within the NP (Rosenbach, 2006, 82). In contrast the dependant in descriptive genitives is not an NP but usually a noun. The semantic difference between determiner genitives and descriptive genitives as discussed above are reflected in different positions in Afaan Oromoo noun phrases. Word order in the noun phrase is iconically determined in that any element contributing to the denotation of the head noun is positioned adjacent to the head, while anything contributing to the reference of the noun phrase will be most distantly located away from the head noun (Rosenbach, 2006, 81).

Therefore descriptive genitives are themselves not full NPs but nouns or nominals and, in contrast to determiner genitives, they denote properties and not specific entities. Semantically, the dependent in descriptive genitives contributes to the denotation of the head noun, not to the specification of it. The dependant noun has a classifying function in such genitives. As a classifier, the dependent is not referential and does not refer to a specific referent.

In Afaan Oromoo, the head can be separately determined by definite article or by other reference tracking devices in possessive genitives.

- (99)     <sub>i</sub>  
           mana citaa  
           house straw.GEN  
           'a straw house'
- (100)   <sub>i</sub>  
           mana-icha citaa  
           house-DEF straw.GEN  
           'the straw house'
- (101)   <sub>i</sub>  
           mana cit-icha-a  
           house straw-DEF-GEN  
           'the straw house'
- (102)   <sub>i</sub>  
           \*mana-icha cit-icha-a  
           house-DEF straw-DEF-GEN  
           'the straw house'

(99) is a descriptive genitive where both the head and dependent nouns are not modified by definite article. (100) and are also acceptable; in these phrases either the head or dependent nouns are modified by definite article. (102) is less acceptable may be because both head and dependent are modified in the same phrase.

- (103)   <sub>i</sub>  
           mana nama-a  
           house mana-GEN  
           'Someone's house/lit. a mana's house'
- (104)   <sub>i</sub>  
           mana nam-icha-a  
           house mana-DEF-GEN  
           '(the) someone's house/lit. (the) mana's house'

Semantically, the possessor *namaa* 'man's' in (103) functions like the definite article, specifying the referent of the NP. In this example *namaa* specifies whose house it is, namely someone's. From a cognitive-pragmatic and semantic point of

view the possessor can be viewed as an 'anchor' that narrows down the referent of the NP (Rosenbach, 2006, 80). In Afaan Oromoo, the dependent can be modified by definite article or demonstrative pronouns as discussed earlier in APG and IPG sections.

In Afaan Oromoo the possessor can be postmodified and can be headed by a final determiner and demonstratives. Descriptive genitives can also be posmodified by demonstrative.

(105)     ፈ  
          mana citaa  
          house straw.GEN  
          'a straw house'

(106)     ፈ  
          mana citaa         sana  
          house straw.GEN that  
          'that straw house'

(107)     ፈ  
          mana nam-icha   sana-a  
          house mana-DEF that-GEN  
          'that (the) someone's house/lit. that (the) mana's house'

As shown in (106), the demonstrative *sana* 'that' has short final vowel; it is not marked for genitive case; it is the dependent *citaa* 'straw's' that is marked for genitive case to show that the dependent is not NP, but N. But the dependent in (107) is NP because the demonstrative *sanaa* is marked for genitive case while the dependent *citaa* 'straw' is not; this shows that the dependent in possessive genitive is an NP.

### 3.1 Are Descriptive Genitives Syntactic Phrases or Compounds?

To know Whether or not descriptive genitives are syntactic phrases or compounds, we need to consider three criterion. These are coordination test, modification of the dependent and head nouns (Rosenbach, 2006, 83).

In terms of coordination test, we need to see if descriptive genitives allow a third element to be inserted between the head and dependent nouns. If a third element is allowed to be inserted between them or elements are allowed to freely move, descriptive genitives are proved to be syntactic phrases. But if a third element is not allowed to be inserted between head noun and possessor, or constituent elements are not allowed to freely move, then they are considered to be compounds.

In Afaan Oromoo, descriptive genitives pass coordination test. Let us observe the following material descriptive genitives.

- (108)     <sub>i</sub>  
           mana daga       fi   k'ork'oorroo  
           house stone.GEN and iron-sheet.GEN  
           'stone and iron sheet house'
- (109)     <sub>i</sub>  
           mana citaa       fi   dok'ee  
           house straw.GEN and mud.GEN  
           'straw and mud house'
- (110)     <sub>i</sub>  
           aannan saʔa-a       fi   gaala-a  
           milk   cow-GEN and camel-GEN  
           'goat and camel milk'

In (105) and (106) dependent nouns indicate materials from which head nouns are built; that is in (105) a house is built from stone and iron sheet while in (106) a house is built from straw and mud. In (107) milk is produced from goat and camel.

To make clear that descriptive genitives are not compounds we can further test if material descriptive genitives shown above can be converted into purpose genitives as shown below.

- (111)     <sub>i</sub>  
           daga   fi   k'ork'oorroo mana-a  
           stone   and iron-sheet   house-GEN  
           'stone and iron sheet for house'
- (112)     <sub>i</sub>  
           citaa   fi   dok'ee mana-a  
           straw and mud   house-GEN  
           'straw and mud for house'
- (113)     <sub>i</sub>  
           saʔa   fi   gaala   aannan-ii  
           cow   and camel milk-GEN  
           'goat and camel for milk'

As shown above constituent elements of descriptive genitives freely move to show that they are not compounds but syntactic phrases.

The second test whether or not the dependent is separately modified by definite article. If an N + N genitive construction is a compound, then it should not be

possible to separately modify the dependent. But in Afaan Oromoo dependent in the N +N can be modified as shown below.

- (114)     <sub>i</sub>  
           mana citaa  
           house straw.GEN  
           'straw house'
- (115)     <sub>i</sub>  
           mana cit-icha-a  
           house straw-DEF-GEN  
           'house of the straw'
- (116)     <sub>i</sub>  
           aannan gaala-a  
           milk   camel-GEN  
           'camel's milk'
- (117)     <sub>i</sub>  
           aannan gaal-icha-a  
           milk   camel-DEF-GEN  
           'milk of the camel'

The ability to intervene between the dependent and the head noun is the strongest test whether or not descriptive genitive is a compound or syntactic phrase (Rosenbach, 2006, 85). In Afaan Oromoo, the definite article can intervene between the head and dependent nouns as shown in the following examples.

- (118)     <sub>i</sub>  
           foon sangaa  
           meat ox-GEN  
           'ox's meat'
- (119)     <sub>i</sub>  
           foon-icha sangaa  
           meat-DEF ox-GEN  
           'the meat of ox'
- (120)     <sub>i</sub>  
           sangaa foon-ii  
           ox       meat-GEN

'meat's ox'

- (121)    <sub>2</sub>  
          sang-icha foon-ii  
          ox-DEF meat-GEN  
          'the ox of meat'

In the above examples not only the head and dependent exchanged orders but also heads are modified by definite articles; thus intervening between the head and dependent nouns. These examples proves that descriptive genitives are syntactic phrases, not compounds.

### 3.2 Genitive of Genitives

The focus of this section is genitive of genitive with a special emphasis on descriptive ones. Descriptive genitive of genitive construction in this language is a new development. I think it is relevant to give a brief background of current development of Afaan Oromoo. Although Afaan Oromoo is an important language of wider communication in Ethiopia, it has't been given a chance to develop until very recently (Bulcha, 1997, 326). Since the fall of the Derg regime in 1991, prohibition on the use of Afaan Oromoo has been legally removed. Afaan Oromoo has got its official recognition altogether with other languages of Ethiopian nations and nationalities. Consequently, Afaan Oromoo has become a fast growing language in Ethiopia. It has become the official working language of Oromiya Regional State. Afaan Oromoo has been promoted to language of mass media and medium of instruction from grade 1-8. Afaan Oromoo is taught as a subject in high schools. This indigenous language is a medium of instruction and given as a field of study in Teacher's Training Colleges in Oromiya Regional State. Teaching Afaan Oromoo in Ethiopian Higher Education has started. Currently, Afaan Oromoo is offered as a field of study for BA, MA and PhD level at different universities of Ethiopia. Afaan Oromoo is studied as academic discipline in many Ethiopian government universities; namely Addis Ababa University, Jimma University, Haromaya University, Adama University, Wallaga University, Dilla University, Mettu University, etc.

One of the visible positive effect that the change in language policy of Afaan Oromoo brought about is a high demand of naming different bureaus, places, institutions, schools, universities, cities, professions, etc of Oromiya Regional State. This naming demand brought unprecedented construction and use of descriptive genitive of genitives. In this paper I focus on naming patterns of bureaus of Oromiya Regional State.

In Oromiya Regional State, we observe different constructions of genitive of genitives. The descriptive genitive can be simple or complex depending on the number of dependent nouns in the noun parse. A genitive of genitive with two dependents is considered to be simple whereas a structure with more than two



dependents is considered to be complex. The more the number of dependents in the construction, the more complicated would be form and meaning of the genitive structure.

The following genitive of genitives are simple.

(122)     <sub>1</sub>  
           Biiroo Barnoota-a       Oromiyaa  
           bureau education-GEN Oromiya.GEN  
           'Oromiya Education Bureau'

(123)     <sub>1</sub>  
           Biiroo K'onna-a         Oromiyaa  
           bureau agriculture-GEN Oromiya.GEN  
           'Oromiya Agriculture Bureau'

(124)     <sub>1</sub>  
           Biiroo Daladala Oromiyaa  
           bureau trade       Oromiya.GEN  
           'Oromiya Trade Bureau'

As shown in (122-124) the head noun is *biiroo* 'bureau'. All instances have two dependent nouns each. In all cases the second dependent *Oromiyaa* is farther from the head noun than the second dependent noun. The first dependent describes the head noun while the second dependent describes the noun phrase *biiroo barnootaa* 'education bureau' for example.

The following is more complex than the above given examples.

(125)     <sub>1</sub>  
           eegumsa fayyaa  
           security health  
           'health security'

(126)     <sub>1</sub>  
           Biiroo Eegumsa Fayyaa  
           bureau security health.GEN  
           'Health bureau'

(127)     <sub>1</sub>  
           Biiroo Eegumsa Fayyaa       Oromiyaa  
           bureau security health.GEN Oromiya.GEN  
           'Oromiya Health bureau'

As shown above (125) is a descriptive genitive by itself where the dependent *fayyaa* 'health' describes the head *eegumsa* 'security'. In (126), the descriptive genitive shown in (125) modifies the head *biiroo* 'bureau'. In this example, we the NP modifies the head noun *biiroo* 'bureau' because *eegumsa* 'security' doesn't form an NP with the head noun as separated from *fayyaa* 'health'. Although the head noun is followed by three nouns, it has only two modifier dependents, *eegumsa fayyaa* and *Oromiyaa*.

The following example is more complex than (127).

- (128)     <sub>i</sub>  
 Interpiraayizii Ijaarsa     Hojii-wwan Bishaan Oromiyaa  
 enterprise     construction work-PL     water     Oromiya.GEN  
 'Oromiyaa Water Works Construction Enterprise'

We can break this genitive nouns phrase into its component parts.

- (129)     <sub>i</sub>  
 Interpiraayizii  
 enterprise     c  
 'Enterprise'
- (130)     <sub>i</sub>  
 Hojii-wwan Bishaan-ii  
 work-PL     Water-GEN  
 'Water Works'
- (131)     <sub>i</sub>  
 Ijaarsa     Hojii-wwan Bishaan  
 construction work-PL     water     Oromiya.GEN  
 'Water Works Construction'
- (132)     <sub>i</sub>  
 Ijaarsa     Hojii-wwan Bishaan Oromiyaa  
 construction work-PL     water     Oromiya.GEN  
 'Oromiya Water Works Construction'

This genitive of has head noun *interpiraayizii* 'enterprise'. The first dependent noun that follows the head noun is *ijaarsa* 'construction' which is followed by the noun phrase dependent *hojiwwan bishaanii* 'water works'. The last dependent noun is of course *Oromiya*.

### 3.3 Dissimilation Rule and Economy in Genitive of Genitives

In this section we discuss rules of descriptive genitive of genitive construction in Afaan Oromoo. In Afaan Oromoo if a genitive is modified by a genitive the preceding genitive morpheme is removed if the preceding dependent has final short vowel. If the preceding dependent noun has final long vowel, dissimilation rule doesn't apply. The dissimilation rule is triggered by economy of derivation. The evidence for the dissimilation rule comes from three facts: construction of possessive genitives, causative verb derivation and inflectional suffixes such as plural markers. Before we get into detail discussion of this points, let us identify the problem.

The problem is that descriptive genitive of genitive construction is not rule based. Specifically, the place of the genitive marker is not consistent as shown below.

(133)     <sub>z</sub>  
Biiroo Barnoota-a     Oromiyaa  
bureau education-GEN Oromiya.GEN  
'Oromiya Education Bureau'

(134)     <sub>z</sub>  
Biiroo Barnoota Oromiyaa  
bureau education Oromiya.GEN  
'Oromiya Education Bureau'

(135)     <sub>z</sub>  
Biiroo Daladala Oromiyaa  
bureau trade     Oromiya.GEN  
'Oromiya Trade Bureau'

In (133), the first dependent that is *barnoota-a* 'education' is marked for genitive. But in (134) and (135), the same dependent is not marked for genitive; yet, all these instances are used by different people in written texts. So, which is one is correct the first dependent with long vowel as in (133) or with short vowel as in (134) and (135)? What rule should we follow?

Let us closely investigate how the genitive marker behaves in the following possessive genitive formation naturally.

(136)     <sub>z</sub>  
mana nama-a  
house man-GEN  
'someone's house'

In this example, the genitive marker is attached to noun of *nama* 'man'. What happens if the dependent *nama* 'man' is marked for definite?

- (137)     <sub>i</sub>  
           mana nam-icha-a  
           house man-DEF-GEN  
           'The man's house'

In this case the genitive marker *-a* removed from noun *nama* 'man' and attached to the definite morpheme *-icha* 'the'.

Let us keep on constructing the phrase by adding the demonstrative *sana* 'that'.

- (138)     <sub>i</sub>  
           mana nam-icha sana-a  
           house man-DEF that-GEN  
           '(That)The man's house'

- (139)     <sub>i</sub>  
           \*mana nam-icha-a     sana-a  
           house man-DEF-GEN that-GEN  
           '(That)The man's house'

In this case once again the genitive morpheme moves away from the definite marker final position to demonstrative *sana* as a suffix.

## 4 Problems Related to Genitive of Genitive in Afaan Oromoo

### 4.1 Introduction

Many researchers agree that Afaan Oromoo is one of a widely spoken indigenous language in Africa (Bulcha, 1997). This indigenous language is a lingua franca in many parts of Ethiopia, southern half of Ethiopia in particular (Bulcha, 1997, 326). Although it is an important language of wider communication in Ethiopia, Afaan Oromoo has't been given a chance to develop until very recently. Since the fall of the Derg regime in 1991, prohibition on the use of Afaan Oromoo has been legally removed. Afaan Oromoo has got its official recognition altogether with other languages of Ethiopian nations and nationalities. Consequently, Afaan Oromoo has become a fast growing language in Ethiopia. It has become the official working language of Oromiya Regional State. Afaan Oromoo has been promoted to language of mass media and medium of instruction from grade 1-8. Afaan Oromoo is taught as a subject in high schools. This indigenous language is a medium of

instruction and given as a field of study in Teacher's Training Colleges in Oromiya Regional State (Disasa, 2013: 3080). Teaching Afaan Oromoo in Ethiopian Higher Education has started. Currently, Afaan Oromoo is offered as a field of study for BA, MA and PhD level at different universities of Ethiopia. Afaan Oromoo is studied as academic discipline in many Ethiopian government universities; namely Addis Ababa University, Jimma University, Haromaya University, Adama University, Wallaga University, Dilla University, Mettu University, etc.

Because Afaan Oromoo is a working language in Oromiyaa Regional State, all government bureaus use Afaan Oromoo noun phrases for the purpose of naming their respective offices. Almost all bureaus use descriptive genitive constructions for this purpose. We can mention the following names of bureaus for instance.

Biiroo Bishaaniifi Inarjii Oromiyaa 'Oromiya Water and Energy Bureau' Inter-piraayizii Ijaarsaa Hojiiwwan Bishaan Oromiyaa 'Oromiya Water Works Construction Enterprise' Biiroo Barnootaa Oromiyaa/Biiroo Barnoota Oromiyaa 'Oromiya Education Bureau' Biiroo Eegumsa Fayyaa Oromiyaa 'Oromiya Health Bureau' Abbaa Taayitaa Galliwwan Oromiyaa 'Oromiya Revenues Bureau' Biiroo Qonnaa Oromiyaa 'Oromiya Bureau of Agriculture' Biiroo Daldala Oromiyaa 'Oromiya Trade Bureau' Caffee Mootummaa Naannoo Oromiyaa 'Caffee' of Oromiyaa National Regional State' Mana Murtii Waliigalaa Oromiyaa 'Supreme Court of Oromiya'

The Flexibility of genitive in Afaan Oromoo Example Signaling koomee durba amuruu 'a physical attribute' obboleessa koo isa hangafa 'a blood relationship' abbaa manaa Uumee 'a non-blood relationship' alaqaa barreessituu 'a hierarchical relationship' hiriya barataa 'a social relationship' garee Biiftuu 'membership' beeksisa dhaabaa 'performance' mana Jaalataa 'ownership' gadda uummataa 'emotional state' ergaa abbaashee 'origin' kitaaba abbaashee isa jalqabaa 'human creation' dhimma biyyaa 'topic' dhibee namichaa 'suffering/undergoing' meeshaa manaa 'containing' huccuu bardheengaddaa 'the time of' foddaa gamoo 'constituent part charjerii komputeraa 'associated part' madda odeeffannoo 'cause' midhaa waraanaa 'result'

The genitive determiner and pronoun system in Afaan Oromoo:

Person, Gender, Number Possessive Determiner Possessive Pronoun 1st person singular (all genders) koo (kitaabakoo) koo (kun kooti)

1st person plural (all genders) keenya (kitaabakeenya) keenya (kun keenyadha)

2nd person singular (all genders) kee (kitaaba kee) kee (kun kitaabakeeti)

2nd person plural (all genders) keessan (kitaaba keessan) keessan (kun kitaaba keessanidha)

3rd person singular masculine (all dialects) isaa (kitaabasaa) isaa (kun kitaabasaati)

3rd person singular feminine (all dialects) ishee (kitaabashee) ishee (kun kitaabashee)

3rd person plural all genders isaanii (kitaabasaanii) isaanii (kun kitaabasaaniiti)

3rd person singular neuter —————

- 5 Proposed Solution to Genitive of Genitive Problems in Afaan Oromoo**
- 6 Conclusion**

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## **Acronyms and symbols**

c=palatal,

DEF=definite

F=feminine lit.=literal

M=masculine plosive, affricate

GEN=genitive

MID=middle

pl=plural

sing=singular