

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 (*The Genitive in English*, n.d.). 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 doesn'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) ⲥ
caama bona-a
drought summer-GEN
'summer drought'

- (5) ⲥ
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) ⲥ
buna Kafaa
coffee Wallaggaa.GEN
'Kafaa coffee'

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

- (8) ⲥ
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) _∘
 siree sibiilaa
 bed iron.GEN
 'iron bed'
- (10) _∘
 foon hoolaa
 meat sheep.GEN
 'mutton'
- (11) _∘
 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) _∘
 siibiila siree
 iron bed.GEN
 'bed iron'
- (13) _∘
 foon hoolaa
 meat sheep.GEN
 'meat sheep'

- (14) _ḥ
 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) _ḥ
 halkan walakkaa
 night half.GEN
 'middle of the night'

- (16) _ḥ
 lit'a gannaa
 beginning winter.GEN
 'beginning of winter'

- (17) _ḥ
 baha gannaa
 end winter.GEN
 'end of winter'

- (18) _ḥ
 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) _i
 mana koo
 house my
 ' my house '
- (22) _i
 mana kee
 house your
 ' your house (sing) '
- (23) _i
 mana ishee
 house her
 ' her house '
- (24) _i
 mana isaa
 house his
 ' his house '
- (25) _i
 mana keenya
 house our
 ' our house '
- (26) _i
 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) ₁
 mana Tolasaa
 house Tolasa.GEN
 'Tolasa's house'
- (28) ₁
 Tolasaa-n mana qab-a
 Tolasa-NOM house has-3MSS
 'Tolasa has a house.'
- (29) ₁
 obboleessa Boontuu
 brother Bontu.GEN 'Bontu's brother'
- (30) ₁
 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) ₁
 kitaaba barataa
 book student.GEN
 'student's book'
- (32) ₁
 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) _z
 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) _z
 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) _z
 barataa-n kitaab-icha k'ab-a
 student-NOM book-DEF has-3MSS
 'A student has the book.'
- (43) _z
 barsiisaa-n konkolaat-icha k'ab-a
 teacher-NOM car-DEF has-3MSS
 'A teacher has the car.'
- (44) _z
 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) _z
 kitaaba herreega-a barataa
 book maths-GEN student.GEN
 'student's maths book'
- (46) _z
 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) ₁
 kitaaba kan barataa
 book of student.GEN
 'student's book/book of a student'
- (48) ₁
 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) ₁
 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) ₁
 *kitaaba guddaa barataa
 book big student.GEN
 'student's big book'
- (51) ₁
 kitaaba guddaa kan barataa
 book big of student.GEN
 'student's big book'
- (52) ₁
 *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) _i
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) _i
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) _i
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 expands 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 noun cannot be determined by definite article. But, the head can be separately determined by definite article or by other reference tracking devices in possessive genitives.

(99) ፡
 mana citaa
 house straw.GEN
 'a straw house'

(100) ፡
 *mana-icha citaa
 house-DEF straw.GEN
 'the straw house'

(101) ፡
 *mana cit-icha-a
 house straw-DEF-GEN
 'the straw house'

(102) ፡
 *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), (101) and (102) are not acceptable because the head and dependent nouns are modified by definite article. By contrast the following examples of possessive genitive are acceptable.

(103) ፡
 mana nama-a
 house mana-GEN
 'Someone's house/lit. a mana's house'

(104) ፡
 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. But descriptive genitives cannot be modified by definite article but posmodified by demonstrative.

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

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

(107) _i
 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.

The interpretation of Afaan Oromoo genitive construction is clear if two nouns are involved; but, if more than two nouns are involved ambiguities arise. This means that if a genitive construction is formed by three nouns, the second noun can be interpreted either as possessor (concerning the preceding noun) or as the possessed noun (concerning the following noun). A genitive construction that involves more than two nouns happens to be ambiguous and becomes source of public arguments.

A descriptive genitive can be classifying, metaphorical, and generic one. It specifies another noun.

1. Digrii Lammaffaa
2. Gulantaa lammaffaa

3. Itti aanaa Ministeeraa

ARE DESCRIPTIVE GENITIVES SYNTACTIC PHRASES OR COMPOUNDS?

(a) Coordination test

Rosenbach, A. (2006: 83) gives three criterion to test if descriptive possessors are syntactic or compound. First criterion is Coordination test. In Afaan Oromoo, coordination of dependant is common with descriptive genitives. 9a. foon hoolaa 9b. foon reettii 9c. foon hoolaafi reettii 10a. mana dhagaa 10b. mana mukaa 10c. dhagaa manaa 10d. dhagaafi muka manaa 11a. reettii foonii 11b. hoolaa foonii 11c. reettiifi hoolaa foonii 12a. hoolaa hormaataa 12b. reetti hormaataa 12c. reettiifi hoolaa hormaataa

Because compounds do not allow a third element to be inserted between theme, these examples indicate that descriptive genitives are syntactic phrases and not compounds.

(b) Modification of the dependent

If an N + N construction is a compound, then it should not be possible to separately modify the first noun.

13a. foon hoolaa 13b. foon hoolichaa

In fact it should be noted that the dependent in descriptive genitives gives a different interpretation after modification. In hoolaa'sheep' is not a determiner, it expresses a type, not specifying foon 'meat'.

(c) Modification of the head

As Rosenbach, A. (2006: 85) says, the strongest test for phrasehood is the ability of a modifier to intervene between the dependent and the head noun as shown below: 14a. foon hoolaa 14b. foonicha hoolaa 15a. boojjitoo marqaa 15b. boojjitoowwan marqaa

As shown above -icha and -oowwan are added to the head by intervening between the dependent and the head noun to rule out compound status.

HOW DO DESCRIPTIVE GENITIVES DIFFER FROM N + N SEQUENCES?

(p, 89) (there is no N + N) in Afaan Oromoo

Descriptive genitives shown so far are known as classifying genitives. These genitives are said to be the prototypical cases Rosenbach, A. (2006: 91).

3.1 TYPES OF DESCRIPTIVE GENITIVES

Rosenbach, A. (2006: 92) argues there are three different functions of descriptive genitives: classifying, metaphorical and generic ones. Classifying genitives are the ones usually referred to in the literature as 'descriptive genitives' (p, 92). These genitives are used to name certain objects and they can convey various degrees of lexicalization, from completely opaque expressions to fully semantically transparent ones (p, 92). 16a. ija bunaa 16b. gumaa garbuu 16c. arraba ibiddaa 16d. guyyaa dubartootaa, Seera Makkoo Billii, 16e. harbuu Bantii 16f. buqqee seexanaa (sheexanaa) (it includes, idiomatic expressions, plant names, insect names, named after person (p, 92). Product names, others

girl's school, writers block, spider's web ...etc (p, 93)

In this naming function descriptive genitives are those that most clearly correspond to the term 'classifying genitives' as their basic function is type restriction. However, this only holds for semantically endocentric cases, where the dependent clearly restricts the denotation of the head noun. In these cases the meaning of the head is the meaning of the whole genitive NP, i.e. St Valentine's day designates a certain day, women's underwear a certain type of underwear and smoker's cough a certain type of cough, while a baby's head is not a type of head but a steak and kidney pudding. Similarly in (33d) the meaning of the whole genitive construction is not deducible compositionally from the meaning of the head and the dependent attribute.. Rather, in these cases the descriptive genitive refers to a complete mess (dog's breakfast) or to a specific type of balcony (widow's walks). While they are not as such transparent, knowledge of the etymology of these idiomatic expressions makes them fully compositional in the figurative world, so to speak. For example, the term widow's walks (for porches on the roof) goes back to the fact (or rather legend?) that the wives of seafarers used to climb up there to watch out for the return of their husbands. Note, however, that even in the transparent cases (33e-g) the meaning of classifying genitives is much more restrictive than in a corresponding determiner genitive. Electrician's tape, for example, describes a specific type of tape, while a corresponding determiner genitive ([the electrician's]tape) could mean various things: the tape the electrician possesses, uses, wants to have, dreams of, or whatever. It is in the nature of possession to allow for all these meanings. As the function of the classifying genitives in (33) is to uniquely designate a specific object, it is clear that not all these possessive meanings carry over and so to speak, one possessive meaning gets 'frozen' in these cases. It is this 'freezing' of meaning which makes them so prone to undergo lexicalization and acquire lexeme status. It is presumably for this reason that Huddleston & Pullum (2002: 470) regard this type of genitive as 'a somewhat unproductive category'. They note, for example, that while we can have a summer's day and a winter's day, a spring's day or an autumn's day are very questionable (they mark the latter two with a?). It is true that the last two expressions are far less common than the first two. (p, 93).

Syntactic processes are by definition productive; it is usually only in the domain of word formation that the notion of productivity is evoked at all. As argued above descriptive genitives (in the sense of the classifying genitive discussed here) can be syntactic phrases, and as such they should also be 'productive'. However, even when perceiving classifying genitives as being formed by the rules of word formation, productivity is usually defined as the ability of a form to coin new expressions (p,94). That is, what matters is not how often a particular collection is used, but whether it is possible to coin it in the first place. In the examples above, it is the actual frequency of use that makes the difference. Thus, notice that both 'a spring's day' and 'an autumn's day' can be used perfectly well to refer to a certain type of day; it is just that for some reason they don't happen to be particularly frequent ... p, 94. While frequency of use may give us an indication as to the degree of lexical-

ization, it doesn't tell us anything about the productivity of the form/construction.

Note that, in general, new classifying genitives can be easily formed on the spot whenever we perceive something as defining a type. Classifying genitives are fully productive (p, 94).

3.1.1 Metaphorical genitives

Another type of descriptive genitives is used to describe an object, experience, state etc. in terms of another (p, 94). one.

1. akka dhala soressaa (meeshaa mi'aawaa bituu jaalata)
2. hamma baallee shimbirroo hin'ulfaatu
- 3.

In (37a) the weight of a swan's feather is used to describe the (light) weight of a person. In (37b) the well-known sound of a dentist's drill characterizes the (ghastly) sound of a person's voice. The strength/intensity of the wind is compared in (37c) to a prize fighter's blow. In (37d) the inner state of a person is described by means of the image of a child's inflatable toy. Note that in this last example the whole context is already in the metaphorical world: a word cannot lift a person literally. Rather, what is meant is that the word raises the person's spirits/mood, and the way to get this image to the reader is to stay in this 'lifting' - metaphor and compare it with an inflatable toy (which can easily be lifted). The face in (37e) is compared to a child's pink balloon from which most of the air has escaped, i.e. this image reinforces the description of the face as puffed and crumpled, and the colour of the balloon (pink) resembles the colour of the face. While in the examples in (37) the comparison is always made explicitly, most typically by expressions such as *as, like, it reminded x of* (p, 95).

In (38a) the person gives a yowl typical of cats. The person in (38b) does not of course literally have a puppy's eyelashes, but eyelashes that look like those of a puppy. And in (38c) the child described is not a tennis umpire. In fact, the whole setting is not a tennis setting, but it describes the setting of a play rehearsal by children, with the 'stage director' being physically located above her caste. That is, she does not literally have a tennis umpire's advantage of height but only metaphorically -like a tennis umpire. (p, 95-96).

Note also that these metaphorical genitives can often be found in elliptical constructions (p,96).

In all these constructions the head of the genitive construction is omitted and refers back to a previously mentioned noun. This indicates that such metaphorical genitives are phrases and not words. In many cases it is not clear whether the initial article (usually the indefinite article) belongs to the dependent or to the whole genitive NP; however, examples (39a and c) show that (at least in these cases) the singular article goes with the (singular) dependent and not with the (plural) head.

That is, structurally these genitives behave like determiner genitives. So, what -if anything - justifies their classification as descriptive genitives?

Note that in all the examples above the dependent is very clearly not specific. In fact, it cannot be, since the whole possessive NP is not specific -as said, it serves as the vehicle to transport a certain image into the (specific) context. Semantically, therefore, these constructions are like descriptive genitives. They do not have the function of a typical determiner, i.e. the referential anchoring of a referent, since the whole possessive NP as such is not specific. Rather, they evoke a certain typical property (hence, they are akin to what Strauss, 2004, calls 'property-denoting possessives') (p. 96).

Under this view, we may regard these metaphorical uses of genitives as a type of determiner genitive operation in a 'subordinate mental space', facilitating the identification of the referent of the (fictional) source domain. In this scenario we would first construe the image of a fictional referent, i.e. a puppy, and then connect it to its eyelashes. In this case we might argue that within this fictional context, i.e. this subordinate mental space, a referent exists. That is, the dependent is specific in some unreal, fictitious world, but clearly unspecific in the 'real' world of discourse. Alternatively, however, we may also view them as a special case of classifying genitive which is already akin to -but not identical with -determiner genitives. Under this view, then, the unspecific dependent would not help to identify a (fictional) referent but a property. In this scenario, we construe eyelashes that are typical of puppies (in general), resulting in a nonspecific interpretation of the dependent. Empirically, it is very difficult to decide which of the two conceptualization routes language users take (and see also section 4.1. on such constructional ambiguity). In any case, such metaphorical uses are very common. Not surprisingly, they are most often found in fictional texts, such as novels, where metaphor is a common device to get across certain imaginative images or ideas. Metaphorical genitives are productive in the same way that determiner genitives are, since they are modelled on them (p. 96-97)

3.1.2 Generic genitives

So far, we have only looked at the specificity of the dependent as a typical property distinguishing determiner and descriptive genitives. Under this view, the dependent in a descriptive genitive is unspecific in its naming function and in its comparing function, while it is specific in a determiner genitive. However, specificity alone cannot account for all the referential properties genitive-marked dependents can have in English (Afaan Oromoo??). In this section I argue that it is important to distinguish, within the class of nonspecific dependents, nonreferring dependents from referring (generic) dependents.

Nonspecificity and genericity are often treated alike, but they are different notions with different properties. While specificity is a notion used to capture the referential properties of indefinite NPs, 'generic noun phrases are those in which reference is made to an entire class' (C. Lyons, 1999:179). While specificity is

a term usually only applied to indefinite NPs, generic NPs can also be expressed by definite NPs (The lion is a dangerous animal). Genericity is a concept that can apply to both sentences and NPs. On the NP level, generic NPs have been considered as 'kind-referring' NPs by Krifka et al. (1995), as opposed to 'object-referring' NPs, which denote a specific object/individual. A crucial difference between generic and nonspecific entities then is that generics refer (to kinds), while nongeneric, nonspecific NPs do not refer at all.

Now, how does all this relate to descriptive genitives? In (41) the dependent (a testator) is clearly not referring to a specific testator. However, it does refer, as is evident from the subsequent anaphor *his* which refers back to the dependent (a testator). In contrast to determiner genitives this is not reference to a specific testator but refers to the kind 'testator', i.e. the dependent is 'kind-referring', i.e. generic.

(41) Under family-provision legislation a testator's moral responsibility to provide for his dependents had become a legal obligation in 1938 (p, 98).

In contrast to metaphorical genitives, these genitives are not used to compare a referent in terms of another referent (or the referent's properties) but to describe a specific referent by setting it in relation to its kind. Note again that in the examples in (42) there is a specific referent in the context that matches the generic possessor, a woman in (42a) 'a thin woman's apology', and a man in (42b) 'a man's horrible, humiliating sobbing'. In all these cases the possessor abstracts away from the specific individuals, transcending them as exemplars of a kind. Sometimes, this affinity of a specific referent in the context to its kind is even made explicit, in a kind of mocking way, as in (43), or as describing the kind first and then finally identifying the matching (and co-present) referent, as in (44).

(43). So. What you're about, MrC.Shepherd. You here as the hopeful answer to a maiden's prayers? ..., (44) He was wanting a woman with a woman's way and a woman's knowledge, one who'd be as necessary to him as he was her. And you're that kind of woman, Val. ... (p, 98).

There are other cases where the whole context is generic, and where therefore no potential specific referent is co-present and hence no ambiguity between the modes of speaking arises; example (45a) a woman's fear of breast cancer, (45b) a reader's respect, (45c) a woman's thought ... (p, 98).

In all these examples the genitive NP receives a generic interpretation via the overall generic 'scripts' or 'frames' of the contexts ... That is, the overall context is generic and it is because of this overall generic setting that the genitive therein is generic, too. However, within this generic context the abstract referents get individualized.

Note that we can also find generic dependents which are definite, while it was typical of the metaphorical genitives discussed in section 3.2. to have indefinite dependents. In fact, the definite singular is often regarded as the prototypical generic expression ...

In the examples in (46), 'the bad child's impulse to cry, the oversleepers's panicked sense of having fallen behind, the optimistic Victorian's deep faith in progress' ... the definite dependent is not specific but kind-referring; example (47)

'And he could do noting about his complexion, swarthier than the average Englishman's' illustrates that such generic definite dependents can also occur in ellipitic construction (p, 99).

Like metaphorical genitives, generic genitives behave structurally like determiner genitives, but semantically like descriptive genitives (with respect to their nonspecific dependent). Like metaphorical genitives, generic genitives are as productive as determiner genitives, as every individualized referent can be conceived of as a representative of its kind. (p,99).

As shown in the above examples (11) describes second degree, (12) grade and (13) position.

4 Problems Related to Genitive of Genitive in Afaan Oromoo

Biiroo Biiroo Misoomaa Biiroo Misooma Qabeenyaa Biiroo Misooma Qabeenya Bishaaniifi Inarjii Oromiyaa

Biiroo Barnootaa Biiroo Barnoota Eegumsa Fayyaa Biiroo Barnootaa Eegumsa Fayyaa Oromiyaa

The Flexibility of genitive in Afaan Oromoo Example Signaling koomee durba amurruu '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