

THE FOUR FORMS OF THE GENITIVE SUFFIX IN MAJANG*

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0 Introduction

In many Ethiopian Languages, the genitive case has only one form, such as Aari (Zufan 1989:37) and Dizi (Teberih 1989:22). In some other Ethiopian languages, there are two ways to form genitives, such as Amharic bet mangē st and yayohannā s bet. Khamtanga also appears to have two ways of forming genitives (Mengistu 1989:41-43). Yemsa has three ways to form genitives (Fisseha 1984:21,22), as does Sidamo (including a zero allomorph) (Hudson 1976:254,255). Majang, however, has four ways to form genitives. This paper explains the four allomorphs of the genitive suffix in Majang, a Nilo-Saharan language spoken mostly within the new borders of Kafa. This paper does not give any details of the uses and functions of the genitive case, only the forms. Majang has four allomorphs for the genitive suffix, -onk, -k, -a and -ak. The four allomorphs, my labels for them, and their distribution are as follows:

- / -onk/ The "basic genitive", the most common allomorph. Historically, it is probably a combination of the Proto-Surmic genitive -*on (Unseth 1989) and -k, which is another genitive suffix in Majang.
- / -k/ The "personal genitive", used when the genitive noun is a personal name, (but not used with personal names if the head noun is one of the special kinship terms listed below), or when the genitive is possessed, a demonstrative, a question word, or a special Kinterm.
- /-a/ The "kinterm genitive". This is used only when the head noun is one of a limited set of kinship terms listed below, taking priority over the -k personal genitive.

/-ak/ The "compound genitive, a combination of the personal genitive -k and the kinterm genitive -a. The compound genitive is used only when the genitive noun is a singular kinterm.

Genitives formed with any of these suffixes all follow the same word order, Head Noun - Genitive Noun, as will be seen in the examples below.

Bender said that the genitive is "shown by a suffix of form -ik,-ge,-g. This suffix has a wider application than the name genitive suggests" (1983b:123). Cerulli listed /-on/ and /-o/ as the Majang genitive morphemes (1948:146), probably shortened forms of my basic genitive /-onk./ Cerulli also lists /-on/ as the ending for adjectival verbs (1948:147). It is interesting to note that, just as in my data, Cerulli's form for the adjectival verb is identical to a genitive morpheme. Beyond this, I will not comment on Bender's or Cerulli's data

1. The Basic Genitive: -onk

This is the most common allomorph. It is found with a wide variety of nouns, including animate and inanimate, male and female, plural and singular, human and non-human.

koyte tan+onk	tan tapaD+onk	taar moogun+onk
horn cow+GEN	cow chief+GEN	meat antelope+GEN
'horn of a cow'	'cow of a chief'	'meat of antelope'

olt+ir gorow+onk	ato kibit+onk	goDey togi+k+onk
fish+PL river+GEN	mouth pot+GEN	house cows+PC+GEN
'fish of the river'	'mouth of the pot'	'house of cows'

I have found at least two exceptions to this rule on the distribution of the basic genitive. First, to make the genitive of gongon 'hoop', the shorter -k genitive is used, gongonk, rather than the repetitive form gongononk⁵. The second exception is the word beya 'spear', such as in the construction taama beyaak 'eye (point) of a spear'. I have no explanation for this exceptional form.

2.0 The personal genitive -k

With personal names, possessed nouns, demonstratives, question words, and special kinterms, the genitive suffix is -k, as long as the head noun is not a special class kinterm (explained below in section 3).

2.1 Personal names

When the genitive case is marked on a personal name, the personal genitive is used, unless the possessed noun is one of the kinterms listed in section 3.

taɲ danel +ɪk	'Daniel's cow'
jarti daaki +k	'Daaki's wife'
tɔɔ n iskor +uk	'Iskor's child'

However, place names are not consistent, some take the basic suffix, and some take the personal suffix. My Majang language helper felt that the endings were not interchangeable and that, only one of the genitive suffixes was acceptable for each place name. There is a strong tendency to affix -K to place names that contain only the vowels [i], [i], [e]. Other place names generally take -onk.

joop duusi +onk	not *duusik
people Duusi + GEN	'people of Duusi'

joop fidei +(y) k	not *fide +onk
people Fide +GEN	
' people of Fide'	

2.2 Possessed nouns

When a possessed noun is marked for genitive, the personal genitive -k is used. When a noun is followed by a possessive morpheme, the case marking is suffixed to the possessive, not to the noun.

war tɔɔ n + naak + ik	
dog child + my + Gen	'dog of my child'

war +a tɔɔn + naak +ik
 dog child+ my +Gen 'to my child's dog'

2.3 Demonstratives

When expressing the genitive relationship on demonstrative, the personal genitive is used.

tɔɔn sini +k	tɔɔn soy +uk
child this +GEN 'of this child'	child that +GEN
	'of that child'

2.4 Question words

The question word 'who' is wɔɔD. To ask 'whose?', the personal genitive -k is suffixed to the question morpheme, wɔɔ+k. This is shown in the following examples:

rɛr +ko	wɔɔD		
die +Past	who?	'who died?'	
	rɛr +ko	taɔ	woo +k
	die +PAST	cow	who +GEN
		'Whose cow died?'	

2.5 Special Kinterms

A person's mother, father, and siblings³ (Majang does not have a separate word for 'brother' and 'sister') comprise the "nuclear family of orientation" (Schusky 1983:91,92). Majang has special words for these kinterms when they are the relatives of either 1st or 2nd person. For example, 'mother' is ɛmɛs, but 'my mother' is ɛndi and 'your mother' is naanaa (see footnote 3). These special kinterms take the personal genitive, both the person and the NFO kinterm are singular. If there is a plural, the possessive suffixes are used, involving more than a simple genitive suffix.

Examples:

wɛ ɛndi+k	'my mother's house'
wɛ baabɛ +k	'my father's house'
wɛ deedeɛ +k	'my sibling's house'

3 The Kinterm Genitive -a

This genitive suffix could also be interpreted as an additional use of the dative suffix, which is also -a. This kinterm genitive is only used if the head noun is one of a limited set of kinterms, those of the nuclear family of origin plus the mother's brother (who has a special relationship).

maña 'sibling (of either sex)'

pañā 'half sibling sharing same father'

ɛpɛn 'father'

ɛmɛs 'mother'

maale 'mother's brother'

This is shown below with the personal name Leer. Since Leer is a personal name, one would expect the -k genitive, but since the head noun is one of the special kinterms, it is replaced by -a. For the personal genitive, the choice of genitive suffixes is governed by the genitive noun (or NP). The use of the kinterm genitive, however, is governed by the head noun as in the following examples:

ɛmɛs	lɛɛr +a	'Leer's mother'	ɛpɛn	lɛɛr+a	'Leer's father'
maña	lɛɛr +a	Leer's sibling	maña	+ka lɛɛr +a	'Leer's siblings'
maale	lɛɛr +a	Leer's uncle	pañā	lɛɛr +a	'Leer's cousin'

Some other close kinterms are sometimes used as members of this class, but there is some flexibility on these words: kaamay 'cousin (of different clan)', and maale 'mother's brother'. Other kinterms, that is, those not of the special class, take the -k suffix for genitives.

tɔɔn	lɛɛr +ik	Leer's child	Jiiji	lɛɛr+ik	'Leer's ancestor'
tɔɔmɔ	lɛɛr +ik	Leer's children	jarti	lɛɛr +ik	'Leer's wife'

wasil lɛɛr +ɛk Leer's uncle koBɛ lɛɛr +ɛk 'Leer's brother-in-law'

4 The compound genitive

When a special class kinterm is marked for genitive case, the rules for choosing the genitive allomorph are more complex. If the kinterm is singular and not possessed, the suffix is -ak, which appears to be a combination of the personal genitive -k and the kinterm genitive -a.

taŋ ɛpɛn +ak 'cow of the father'
 taŋ ɛmɛs +ak 'cow of the mother'
 taŋ maña +ak 'cow of the sibling'

I have found this -ak genitive suffix only on singular special class kinterms. If the special class kinterm is plural, the basic genitive -onk is used.

togi ɛmɛs +akak +onk
 cows mother +PL +GEN 'cows of the mother'
 rakate +ye ɛmɛs +akak +onk
 problem +PL mother +PL +GEN 'problems of the mothers'

If the special kinterm is possessed by a personal name, then the kinterm genitive is used alone, without being compounded:

tan ɛpɛn iskor +a
 cow father Iskor +GEN 'cow of Iskor's father'
 taŋ maña sɛɛn +a
 cow sibling 3s +GEN 'cow of his sibling'

5 Summary

This paper has shown that Majang has four allomorphs of the genitive suffix. Most are governed by semantic criteria, but syntactic factors are also relevant in some cases of the compound genitive. Some other Surmic languages also show a different

genitive for personal names, but none of them has been shown to have the same degree of complex allomorphy as Majang does.

NOTES

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Capital B and D represent implosive stops.

1. Within Nilo-Saharan, Majang is classified as Eastern Sudanic, part of the smaller Surma group (Bender 1983a), though I personally use the label "Surmic" to avoid confusing the larger grouping with smaller language group which calls itself "Surma".

2 Alternatively, one might assign the basic genitive suffix, then shorten the surface form by haplology, a deletion of repetitive syllables.

3. In Majang, for the relationships of "father", "mother", "sibling", there are special terms that differentiate whether the possessor is 1st, 2nd, or 3rd person. For example, in asking a child 'where is your father?', the 2nd person possessive form is used, BaaBa eet?. In replying, the child will use the first person possessive form, k ko baab y gorowa 'my father went to the river.'

The following chart shows the various forms of NFO kinterms:

gloss	generic	1st person	2nd person
mother	ɛmɛs	ɛndi	ɲaɲaa
father	ɛpɛn	baabɛy	BaaBa
sibling	maña	deede	masokoy

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