TWO TYPES OF GENITIVES IN MOKSHA
Moksha language

- Moksha is a Mordvin language – together with Erzya
- Spoken by 431,700 people in Russian Federation (2010 census)
- Mordvin languages are spoken in the Volga region
- The variety reported here is spoken in the villages of Lesnoe, Tsibaevoy & Lesnoe Ardashevo in the north-west of the republic of Mordovia

(fieldwork data 2014-2017)
Structure of the talk

- Preliminary data
  - Nominal morphology
  - Possessive constructions
- Problem & research questions
- Semantics of indefinite genitives: specific vs. non-specific
- Syntactic properties of the two type of genitive constructions
Preliminary data

- Three types of declensions (Kolyadenkov (ed.), 1962)
- indefinite, definite, possessive
- Four nominal categories expressed: number, possessiveness, definiteness, case
Indefinite declension

- A part of the indefinite declension →
- Number marker only for Nom –t

(1) *pet'e mak-s' uz'ər'*

Peter give-PST.3.SG axe

*loman’ə-n’d’i*

man-SG.DAT

‘Peter gave an axe to a man’.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Case</th>
<th>Stem</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Nom</td>
<td>Ø</td>
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<td>Abl</td>
<td>-də/-tə</td>
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<td>In</td>
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<td>Lat</td>
<td>-u / -v / -i</td>
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<tr>
<td>Prol</td>
<td>-əva / -ga / -ka</td>
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</table>
Definite declension

- Obligatory expression of Number
- Only three (grammatical) cases

(2) *pet'e maks-əz'ə uz'ər'-t'
    Peter give-PST.3.SG axe-DEF.SG.GEN
      t'ε loman'-t'i
    this man-DEF.SG.DAT
'Peter gave the axe to this man'.
Possessive declension

- The number of the possessee can be expressed only:
  - with singular possessors
  - in grammatical cases

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<th>Case</th>
<th>Possessee</th>
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<td>In</td>
<td>-ә-n</td>
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Possessive constructions

- Classical possessive relations
  - kinship (*girl’s mother*)
  - body-part (*girl’s head*)
  - legal ownership (*girl’s house*)
- Possessive constructions – constructions expressing possessive relations
- Other adnominal relations can be expressed with possessive constructions in the languages of the world
- The splits on the scale of such semantic relations differ across languages
- Such semantic relations – possessive relations in a broad sense
- (Koptjevskaja-Tamm 2002)
Genitive constructions in Moksha

- Classical possessive relations: Double-marking construction
  - definite/possessive genitive on the possessor
  - obligatory possessive marker on the head (in grammatical cases)

(3) al'a-nc kud-*əc / mon' kud-*əx'ə
father-3SG.POSS.SG.GEN house-3SG.POSS.SG I.GEN house-1SG.POSS.SG
ašč-i s'emba-də vel'ə-t' kraj-sə
be.situated-NPST3.SG all-ABL village-DEF.SG.GEN edge-IN

‘His father’s house stays on the very edge of the village’.
Genitive constructions in Moksha

- In obliques obligatory possessive marker only if the possessor is a personal pronoun

(4) son oza-də  mon' l'epə kr'eslə-sə-n / *kr'eslə-sə
he sit-CONV.POS I.OBL soft armchair-IN-1SG.POSS armchair-IN
‘He is sitting in my soft armchair’.

(5) son oza-də  al'e-zə-n'  l'epə kr'eslə-sə-(nzə)
he sit-CONV.POS father-1SG.POSS-GEN soft armchair-IN-3SG.POSS
‘He is sitting in my father’s soft armchair’.
Genitive constructions in Moksha

◦ Other adnominal relations: Dependent-marking construction
  ◦ indefinite genitive on the dependent
  ◦ no possessive agreement on the head

(6) paks'e-n' pan'čf-n'ə / *pan'čf-ənzə pan'č-s'-t' n'i
  field-GEN flower-DEF.PL flower-3SG.POSS.PL open-PST.3-PL already
  ‘Field flowers have already faded’.
Referentiality split

- The main split is between anchoring and non-anchoring possessors (anchoring: presence of the referents of possessor and possessee)
- (Koptjevskaja-Tamm 2004)

<table>
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<tr>
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<th>Dependent-marking</th>
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<td>part-whole</td>
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<td>locative</td>
<td>?</td>
<td>OK</td>
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<td>purpose</td>
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<td>matherial</td>
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Problem

- Our expectations:
  - definite declension for definite arguments $\rightarrow$ definite possessors
  - indefinite declension for indefinite arguments $\rightarrow$ indefinite possessors
- But it is not true!
- To denote a specific entity indefinite genitive needs
  - a modifier (e.g., adnominal indefinite pronoun)
  - to be on a personal name
Research questions

◦ Why does indefinite genitive need a modifier?
◦ How to analyze indefinite genitive in specific contexts?
◦ What are the main properties of the two constructions (with specific possessor and with generic dependent)
◦ Where they are in the NP structure?
Definite vs. indefinite genitives

Indefinite genitives cannot denote specific entities

(7) ava-\textit{t}' sumka-\textit{c} pra-s'

woman-DEF.SG.GEN bag-3SG.POSS.SG fall-PST.3SG

‘The woman’s bag has fallen’.

(8) ava-\textit{n}' sumka-\textit{s}' pra-s'

woman-GEN bag-DEF.SG fall-PST.3SG

‘The woman bag (intended for women) has fallen’.

*‘The bag of a woman has fallen’.
Indefinite possessors

◦ To denote a specific entity indefinite genitive needs a modifier
◦ indefinite pronoun

(9) *kodama bəd'ə ava-n' sumka-s' / sumka-c pra-s'*

which INDEF woman-GEN bag-DEF.SG bag-3SG.POSS.SG fall-PST.3SG

‘The woman bag (intended for women) has fallen’.
Indefinite genitive and numerals

◦ To denote a specific entity indefinite genitive needs a modifier:
  ◦ numeral

(10) kolmə  brad-ən'  kuc'  ašč-i
  three  brother-GEN house.DEF.SG  be.situated-NPST.3SG
  ber'ɛk-t'  tona  bok-sə
  bank-DEF.SG.GEN  that  side-IN

  ‘The house of the three brothers is situated on that side of the river’.
Indefinite genitive and definite modifiers

- Adnominal indefinite genitive can even take a demonstrative as its modifier
- With other indefinite grammatical cases it is impossible (Kashkin, in press)

(11) s'ìn' mòrə-s'-t’ kancerça kodamə bəd'ə t’e kizə-n’ mòrə
they sing-PST.3-PL concert.IN which INDEF this year-GEN song
‘They have sang on the concert some song of this year’.

(12) t’e kuc’ / *kud oc’u i mazi
this house.DEF.SG house big and beautiful
‘This house is big and beautiful’. (Kashkin, in press)
Personal names

- Personal names of humans take indefinite genitive
- They are referential and trigger the agreement

(13) pet'ɛ-ñe' kuc'uv-əc / *kuc'u-s' ašč-i

Peter-GEN  spoon-3SG.POSS.SG  spoon-DEF.SG  be.situated-NPST.3[SG]

morkš  lank-ə

table  on-IN

‘Peter’s spoon is on the table’.
Personal names

- Personal names of non-humans remain non-referential if they take indefinite genitive

(14) mosku-t' mitro-c pëk mazi
    Moscow-DEF.SG.GEN metro-3SG.POSS.SG very beautiful
    ‘Moscow metro is very beautiful’.

(15) moskuv-ɔn' mitro-s' / *mitro-c pëk mazi
    Moscow-GEN metro-DEF.SG metro-3SG.POSS.SG very beautiful
    ‘The metro in the Moscow is very beautiful’.
Syntactic properties

- Specific genitives vs. generic genitives
- Agreement on the head
- Possibility of own modifiers
- Position within the noun phrase
Dependents of a definite genitive

(16) mon s’id’ə-stə n’ej-ən-ca  bazar-sə

I frequent-EL see-IPFV-NPST.3.O.SG.O.1SG.S market-IN

bednaj sos’ed-əz’ə-n’  s’t’ər’-ənc

poor neighbor-1SG.POSS.SG-GEN girl-3SG.POSS.SG-GEN

‘I often see on the market my poor neighbor’s daughter’.

(17) kolmə brat-t’n’ə-n’  kucnə  ašč-i

three brother-DEF.PL-GEN house.3PL.POSS be.situated-NPST.3SG

l’ej-t’  tona ber’eg-sə

river-DEF.SG.GEN that bank-IN

‘The house of the three brothers is on that side of the river’.
Dependents of a definite genitive

- Demonstratives and quantifiers can modify definite genitives as well

(18) $s'\text{emba} \text{vas}'\text{e}-n' \text{s'estra-nzə} \text{uže} \text{jaka-j-t' škola-v}$
  all Vasja-GEN sister-3SG.POSS.PL already go-NPST.3-PL school-LAT
  ‘All Vasja’s sisters already go to school’.

(19) $t'\text{e} \text{ava-t’ panar-əc} \text{pek mazi}$
  this woman dress-3SG.POSS.SG very beautiful
  ‘This woman’s dress is very beautiful’.
Genitves on genitives

- Both genitives can modify definite genitives

(20) šuftə-\textit{n’} vedərka-\textit{t’} kundamə-\textit{c} kšn’i-\textit{n’}
  tree-GEN bucket-DEF.SG.GEN grip-3SG.POSS.SG iron-GEN
  ‘The grip of the wooden bucket is made of iron’.

(21) vas’ə pɛl’-ɛz’ə al’a-\textit{nc}
  Vasja puncture-PST.3SG.S.3SG.O father-3SG.POSS.SG.GEN
  mašina-\textit{nc} šarij-\textit{ənc}
  car-3SG.POSS.SG.GEN wheel-3SG.POSS.SG.GEN
  ‘Vasja has punctured the wheel of his father’s car’.
Dependents of an indefinite genitive

- Although adjectives and numerals can modify indefinite genitives,…

(22) kant-t kel'mə ved'-ən' vedərka
    carry-IMP.SG cold water-GEN bucket
    ‘Carry a bucket for cold water’.

(23) vetʽə kilov-ən' kire-s' t'ejə-n pɛk tožd'ɛ
    five kilo-GEN weight-DEF.SG PRON.DAT-1SG.POSS very light
    ‘A five kilo weight is too light for me’.
Dependents of an indefinite genitive

- Demonstratives and quantifiers are impossible with generic dependents

(24) 
#t’ɛ  ava-n’  sumka-s’  pra-s’
this woman-GEN bag-DEF.SG fall-PST.3SG
‘This woman bag has fallen’.
*‘The bag for this woman’.

(25) 
#s’embə  ava-n’  sumka-t'nə  pra-s'-t'
all  woman-GEN bag-DEF.PL fall-PST.3-PL
‘All woman bags have fallen’.
*‘The bags for all women have fallen’.
Dependents of an indefinite genitive

- Definite genitive is irrelevant (it triggers the possessive declension)
- Indefinite genitive is recoursive

(26) son ašč-i šuftə-n’ s’ed’-ən’ per’ila-t’n’ə-n’
  he  be.situated-NPST.3SG tree-GEN bridge-GEN banisters-DEF.PL-GEN
  lank-sə
  on-IN
  ‘He is staying on the banisters of the bridge’.
Position within the NP

- Definite genitives can be postponed in structural cases

\[(27) \quad \text{OK} \quad \text{baba-}z'\overset{o}{\text{ə}} \quad \text{put-}\overset{o}{\text{ə}}
\]

\text{grandmother-1SG.POSS.SG \ put-PST.3SG.S.3SG.O}

\text{\textit{tar'elka-nc} \ \textit{vas'ɛ-}n' \ \textit{morkš \ lank-s}}

\text{plate-3SG.POSS.SG \ Vasja-GEN \ table \ on-ILL}

‘The grandmother put Vasja’s plate on the table’.

- Postposition of a single indefinite genitive is rather ungrammatical

\[(28) \quad \text{*t'ɛči} \quad \text{t'ej-}nək \quad \text{usk-s'-t'} \quad \text{lofc'ə kaza-}n'
\]

\text{today \ PRON.DAT-1PL.POSS \ carry-PST.3-PL \ milk \ goat-GEN}

Int: ‘Today they have carried us milk of goat’.
Compatibility of two genitives within one NP

- Definite genitive is the leftmost dependent of the NP

(29) pejəl'-t'  šuftə-n'  pe-c  kola-v-s'
    knife-DEF.SG.GEN  tree-GEN  edge-3SG.POSS.SG  brake-PASS-PST.3[SG]
    ‘The wooden haft of the knife is broken’.

(30) #šuftə-n'  pejəl'-t'  pe-c  kola-v-s'
    tree-GEN  knife-DEF.SG.GEN  edge-3SG.POSS.SG  brake-PASS-PST.3[SG]
    *‘The wooden haft of the knife is broken’.
    ‘The haft of the wooden knife is broken’.
## Summary

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Definite GEN</th>
<th>Indefinite GEN</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>adjectives</td>
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</table>
Further problems

- Two definite genitives are incompatible within one NP
  (31) *t’ɛ c’ora-t’ mašina-t’  şari-jəc
    this  boy-DEF.SG.GEN  car-DEF.SG.GEN  wheel-3SG.POSS.SG
    Int:‘this boy’s wheel of the car’

- Two indefinite genitives are compatible within one NP
  (32)  id’-ən’ s’uftsə-n’  nałks’əmbəl
    child-GEN  tree-GEN  toy
    ‘wooden toy for children’
Conclusions

◦ Definite genitive encodes both specificity and case
◦ Indefinite genitive encodes the case only
◦ → if specificity is already present in the structure (inherent specificity in personal names or specific modifiers), indefinite -n is added to denote the case
◦ → if specificity has to be added to the structure, definite -t is added to denote both
Indefinite genitive – is it a real case?

- Cannot encode specificity
- Can mark specific NPs
- Is on the adjuncts

→ is it a case?
Structure

- The structure that can be proposed using the hierarchical model of DP (Abney 1987, Alexiadou et al. 2007, Lyutikova 2017)

- Definite genitive is assigned to the complement of the NP by the head D

- Being in Spec, DP they control the possessive agreement

- NPs with indefinite genitive lack specificity, are adjuncts of the NP

- They do not control the possessive agreement

*pəjəl*-t’ *šuftə-n’* pe-c
knife-DEF.SG,GEN tree-GEN haft-3SG.POSS.SG
‘The wooden haft of the knife’
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References


Thank you for your attention!