

“The Albanian Genitive case free morpheme: Its historical development and contemporary generative distribution.”

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Abstract

This paper aims at thoroughly treating the free genitive case morpheme of Albanian language from the generative linguistics point of view.

The Albanian language genitive noun phrase (NP) poses difficulty while being analyzed according to the contemporary X' theory as it holds two types of morphemes: the free pre-posed morphemes (I, e, të, së) and the bound post-posed ones.

Both these two types of morphemes are considered to represent the functional category of determiners and as so they should be realized under the determiner head. But under such a head should be realized one and only one determiner and as so we are faced with a dilemma which of the abovementioned morphemes to occupy such a head node.

In order to offer a fact-based reasoning we had to consult the pre-posed morpheme historical development. So doing we came to the conclusion that the free pre-posed morpheme used to be a possessive pronoun which with the passing of time lost not only its form but also its functional features.

In conclusion, as this morphemes used to be a possessive pronouns (even in the recent studies it is accepted that i,e,të, së morphemes serve to indicate possession) and at the same time as they are considered to be morphemes and fall under the functional category of determined we have proposed a new functional maximal projection DetPoss, which stands for the phrase of the possessive determined whose head node hosts the genitive pre-posed morphemes.

Keywords: *pre-posed genitive morphemes, X' theory, determiner, DetPoss projection.*

GENERAL OVERVIEW.

In the Albanian language case system the genitive case is reserved a paramount place as compared to its original phonetic form (it has undergone evident evolution). At the very beginning of the case category what determined a nominal construction as being in genitive case was its position in relation to the nominal it specifies. As far as this taken position is concerned, it differentiates related to the different languages; it must be pre-nominal or post-nominal. So, the genitive case due to its form and also its position (in relation with the specified noun phrase) it has followed distinct developmental paths; in Albanian language it demands the presence of a pre-posed, pre-determined free morpheme “*libri i shokut*”; in English language it is presented in two variants: possessive case “*my friend’s book*” or genitive of-insertion “*the book of my friend*”; in French or Italian it requires the presence of a preposition “*le livre de mon copain*”.

The birth and usage of the genitive pre-posed free morpheme is dedicated to the linguistic process of syncretism. According to which when two or more case definitions or representations end up with one and the same phonetic form this leads to the reduction of case system. In this context the Albanian genitive and dative case phonetic forms at a certain point of their morphological historical development have become identical but they were completely different in their semantic distribution. Consequently, it has been considered a necessity a re-differentiation in their phonetic representation. Such a re-differentiation is thought to have been realized by the introduction to the inner structure of genitive construction of what in Albanian language it is known as genitive case free morpheme and it is phonetically represented by “*i, e, të, së*”. As a result the today Albanian language inherits a two-words genitive construction including the noun in genitive case and its pre-posed free morpheme.

Example.

Libri i studentit *the suffix –it of student- is the genitive ending for the singular masculine nouns.*

Qyteti i Romës *the suffix –ës of Rom- is the genitive ending for the singular feminine nouns.*

In addition such a pre-posed free morpheme in these nominal constructions agrees in gender and number with the pre-posed noun.

It is evident that changes in gender and number of the pre-posed noun determine the choice and usage of the pre-posed free morpheme from *i* to *e*.

In conclusion, it is of great interest to summarize here that the genitive case pre-posed free morpheme serves not only as a morphological indicator but as a semantic one as well as the genitive case more than the notion itself expresses the relations this notion builds with another notion.

When one utters “*libri i studentit*” the genitive construction “*i studentit*” does not only expresses the notion itself but it points out that it is this student that owns the book.

So, in this context, it is obvious that the genitive case is defined as expressing possessiveness; the person or thing that owns something is determined, individualized whereas the function is that of determining.

GENERATIVE POINT OF VIEW.

The real target of this article is not the identification and description of genitive noun phrases, but on the contrary this article aims at analyzing such constructions based on the case theory and their X' distribution.

Such a generative analysis is problematic cause of the very complicated structure of native genitive noun phrases which could not be analyzed as follows: NP N+NP for two reasons:

1. The head of a phrase cannot serve as an argument of another phrase that is quite similar to this head maximal projection.
2. The genitive noun includes two different types of morphemes which as a result will ask for two specifier nodes.

Confronted with these obstacles and on the other hand being driven by the desire to offer a thorough treatment we find it appropriate to refer to the historical birth and evolution of the so-called genitive pre-posed free morpheme.

In general, even though we do not lack studies concerning this grammatical item, it has also arisen various questions.

These studies overestimate the fact that the genitive pre-posed free morpheme once has served as a demonstrative pronoun which has lost its phonetic composition (be reduced to a pre-posed morpheme) and also its meaning. In this context we reason that the current Albanian language demonstrative pronoun: *ky, kjo, keta, keto* and *ai, ajo, ata, ato* are etymologically analyzed as being constructed from the suffix *k* and *a* and the simple demonstratives *y, i, o, ta, to*.

This fact that the Albanian language pre-posed free morpheme is thought to be a trace of a demonstrative pronoun which in certain nominal constructions has preserved the meaning of a demonstrative is proved by the following example:

“Dikur në cerdhet e shtetit paguhej më pak se në të privatit”

The abovementioned elements “*e*” and “*të*” that in Albanian language grammar are treated as genitive free morphemes to be so must fulfill the following conditions:

- Define the noun which is also defined by the post-posed bound morpheme.
- Agree with the previous noun in gender, number and case.
- In the nominal construction “*në të shtetit*” the grammatical item “*të*” cannot be in genitive case as it follows the accusative preposition “*në*”.

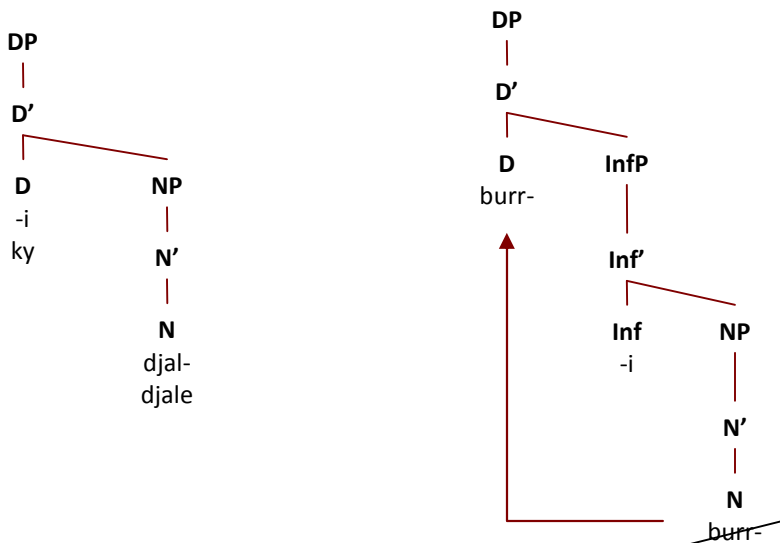
So, we reason that the genitive pre-posed free morpheme from its function and its syntax of belonging cannot be anything else than a demonstrative which in certain syntactic situations has preserved its original demonstrative meaning “*në të shtetit*” whereas in others “*në cerdhet e shtetit*” it has acquired a completely new meaning that of genitive co-referent.

This conclusion is also proved by the fact that if we need to emphasize that “*të*” of “*në të shtetit*” within this phrases we have to make use of the stressed demonstrative pronoun “*ato*” as “*në ato të shtetit*”. Such a usage is not needed in the phrase “*në cerdhet e shtetit*” as the “*e*” morphological item has been disintegrated from a demonstrative (a free lexical category) into a

bound morphological one. As a result in the phrase “*në të shtetit*” the “*të*” demonstrative has preserved its original meaning.

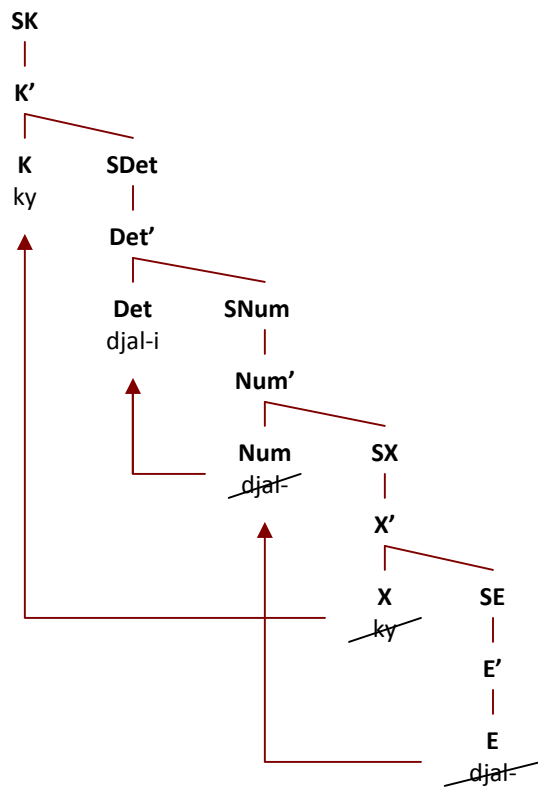
Abney (1987) was the first to propose the functional determinative phrase (DP) according to which the maximal projection of a noun will be the determinative phrase. The determinative category includes all those morphological elements that have individualizing values for the head node D.

But, on the other side the X' realization of genitive noun phrases resulted incomplete, for the mere reason that the definite article should be realized in a higher head node “ D^0 ” than the nominal head which conditions the movement of the latter to a higher head position “ X^0 ” in order to be co-related to the definite article. This obstacle influenced the creation of another functional projection, that of inflection which is realized in-between the maximal determinative one and the noun phrase.



But in Albanian language exist certain nominal constructions with demonstrative pronouns which are thought to be generated “demonstrative pronoun + DP”. This kind of X' projection presents certain issues as for the same D^0 head node we have two phonetically expressed items: the demonstrative pronoun + definite article. If, for a moment we would think that both this items will be realized under the same node than we will have to accept that they serve the same function and so it will break the Principle of Economy.

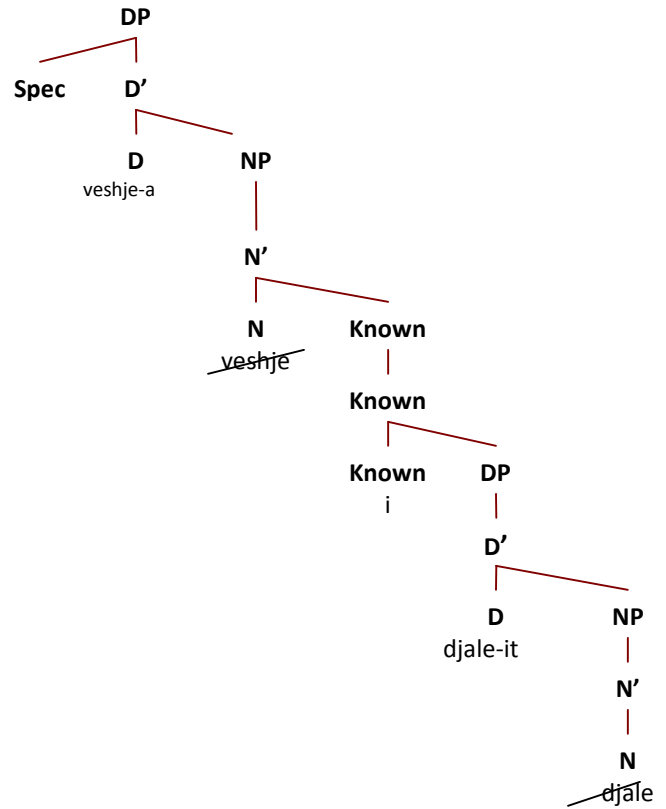
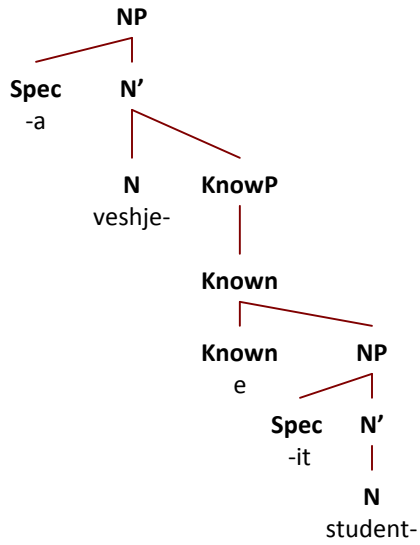
On this occasion Bruge (1996) and Giusti (1992, 1995, 1997) propose the generation of demonstrative pronoun in Spec NP and later on its movement to SpecDP. Later in their studies the same linguists propose that the demonstrative pronoun should belong to a head except the D^0 head in which is realized the definite article. Following this logic, according to which the demonstrative pronoun should be realized in quite a different position than that of D^0 , it is proposed its generation to a higher head position that of quantification projection.



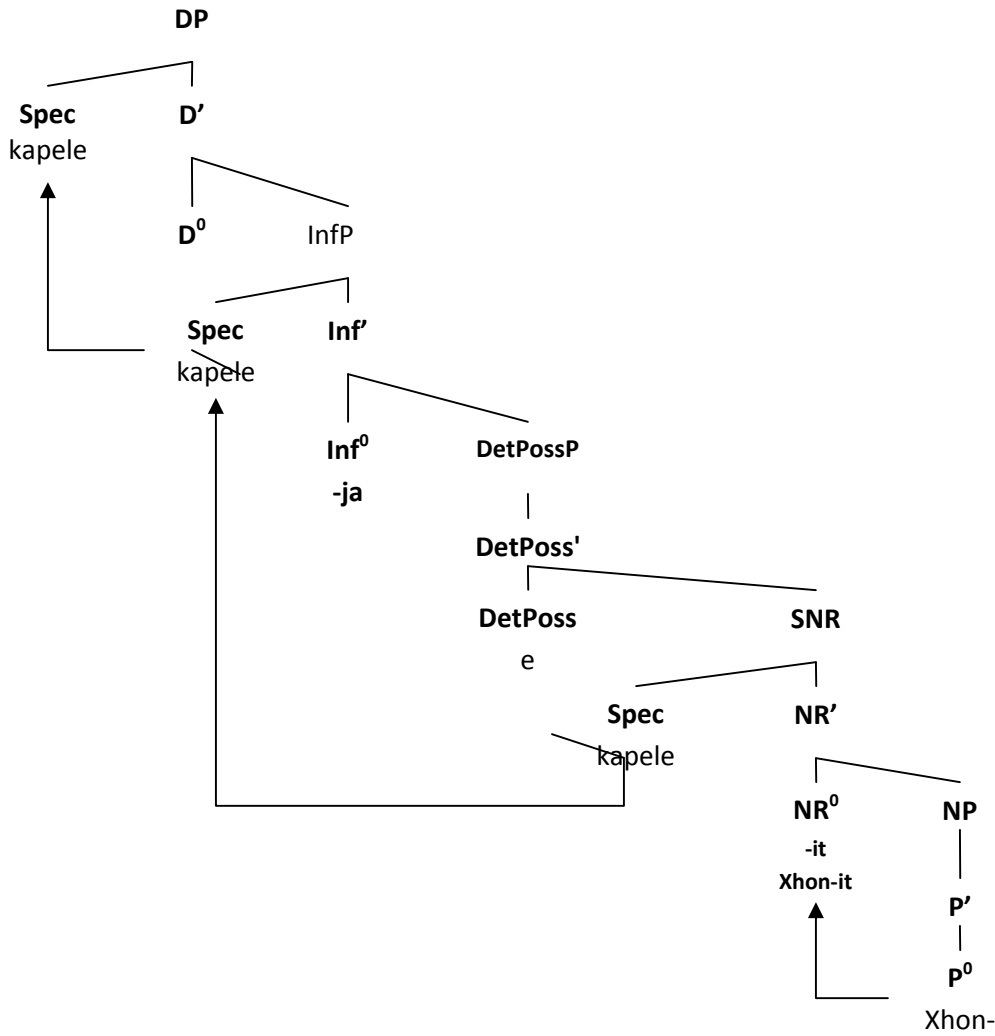
So, analogically we would accept the realization of the genitive pre-posed free morpheme in the head node Q^0 replacing the demonstrative pronoun “ky”. Such a representation is impossible as the genitive pre-posed free morpheme it is not a demonstrative pronoun but a morphological element.

It was Josif Mitaj who offered another solution to such an issue. Based on the proposal that genitive pre-posed free morphemes descend from a demonstrative pronoun losing their phonetic form and their meaning too by being transformed from an anaphoric demonstrative pronoun to an article, he presented the hypothesis that this anaphoric pronouns bearing within an individualizing function present what is *the known* in a phrase.

In this context Josif Mitaj proposed the generation of another functional phrase that of the known (KnownP) in the head node of which is realized the pre-posed free morpheme of the genitive case.



But in conclusion the most accepted generation of the Albanian genitive constructions, that fulfills the semantic and morphological criteria of these constructions and most important of the genitive pre-posed free morpheme is the following:



In this generation it is presented a maximal functional projection that of possessive determinative phrase. In its head is realized the genitive pre-posed free morpheme whereas the noun is realized under the functional node of N (number) or Nom (Nominal) in analogy with the possessive pronouns.

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