

Two types of possessive applicatives: Predicative possessors in Budai Rukai*

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1 Introduction

- Across the world's languages, predicative possessives are expressed by different syntactic strategies (Heine 1997, Stassen 2009, Myler 2014, 2016, a.o.). The predicative possessor can be a transitive subject, a prepositional phrase, or a genitive possessor.

- (1) a. English
I have a sister.
- b. Yucatec (Mayan, Freeze 1992:577)
yaan huntul ciimin ti? in-paapa.
COP one horse P my-father
'My father has a horse.' (= A horse is with my father.)
- c. Central Amis (Formosan, Zeitoun et al. 1999:3)
ira ku paysu nira.
exist NOM money 3SG.GEN
'He has money.' (= His money exists.)

- Most Formosan languages (Austronesian; Taiwan) employ the strategy 'X's Y exists' for predicative possessives, including Budai Rukai (Zeitoun 2000). The predicate is also used in existentials and locatives (Zeitoun 2024, Zeitoun et al. 1999, a.o.).

- (2) a. Y<a>kay ku tawpungu=li.
<AV.REAL>exist NOM dog=1SG.GEN
'I have a dog.'

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- b. Y<a>kay ku tawpungu.
<AV.REAL>exist NOM dog
'There is a dog.'
- c. Y<a>kay nakwane ku tawpungu.
<AV.REAL>exist 1SG.OBL NOM dog
'The dog is with me.'

- Interestingly, when the possessum is internally complex with a genitive inside it, the possessor is oblique. The possessive construction is identical to the locative construction on the surface.

- (3) Y<a>kay nakwane ku hungu ki Lrupilriane.
<AV.REAL>exist 1SG.OBL NOM book GEN Lrupilriane
possessive reading: 'I have Lrupilriane's book.'
locative reading: 'Lrupilriane's book is here with me.'¹

- Note that both the genitive and locative-like oblique predicative possessors differ in case marking from the typical grammatical subject in the language. While the grammatical subjects in both verbal and non-verbal predication bear nominative, neither of the predicative possessors can bear nominative.

- (4) a. Wa-uma=aku ki Muni.
AV.REAL-kiss=1SG.NOM OBL Muni
'I kissed Muni.'
- b. Sinsi=aku.
teacher=1SG.NOM
'I am a teacher.'
- (5) a. *Y<a>kay=aku ku tawpungu.
<AV.REAL>exist=1SG.NOM NOM dog
'I have a dog.'
- b. *Y<a>kay=aku ku hungu ki Lrupilriane.
<AV.REAL>exist=1SG.NOM NOM book GEN Lrupilriane
'I have Lrupilriane's book.'

- In brief, Budai Rukai showcases two strategies, namely, 'X's Y exists' as a default and 'Y is with X' when the possessum is complex with a genitive inside it. The possessors are genitive and (locative-like) oblique in the respective types and cannot bear nominative case.
- Goals:** to investigate the syntax of genitive and oblique predicative possessors and to capture the variation in the possessive constructions

¹Lrupilriane was an author in Budai Rukai, and he did publish a book talking about Rukai names.

Claims

- Both the genitive and locative-like oblique predicative possessors behave as grammatical subjects, although not bearing nominative case.
- Furthermore, the two possessors are shown to differ syntactically not merely morphologically. The genitive predicative possessor is pronounced inside the possessum DP, while the locative-like oblique possessor is pronounced outside the possessum DP.
- Two possessive applicatives are posited. One is athematic and raises the genitive possessor inside the possessum DP to its specifier position. The other is thematic and introduces an oblique possessor in the specifier position, outside the possessum DP.
- As the highest arguments, the higher copies of both possessors are A-moved to Spec,IP and function as grammatical subjects, while the lower copies are pronounced and show syntactic differences relative to the possessum DP.

• Outline:

- §2: Theoretical backgrounds and main proposal
- §3: An overview of the two possessors
- §4: Genitive and oblique possessors as grammatical subjects
- §5: Oblique possessor different from genitive possessor
- §6: Analysis
- §7: Conclusion
- §8: Appendix: Possessums as inert arguments

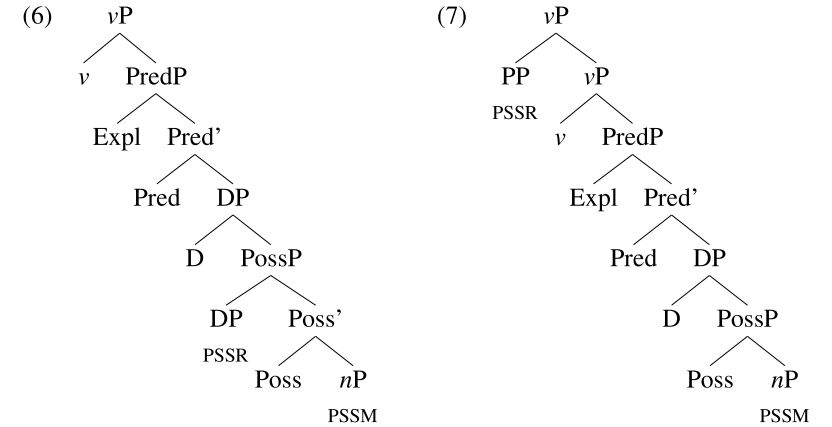
2 Theoretical backgrounds and main analysis

2.1 Theoretical backgrounds

- Theoretically, Myler 2014, 2016 propose a unified syntax for predicative possessives, where the possessum DP serves as a predicate, in the languages without dedicated *have*, namely ‘X’s Y exists’ and ‘Y is with X’.²
- To capture the variations of the possessor, he proposes that the possessor can be generated in Spec,PossP within the possessum DP, or be introduced in higher positions in the clausal spine if a language allows delayed saturation for possessors.

²Freeze 1992 (see also Huang 2013 for Mayrinax Atayal, Austronesian; Taiwan) proposes a locative syntax for locative-like predicative possessives. But see Shih 2025 for counterarguments to this approach regarding Budai Rukai.

- Within his account, in ‘X’s Y exists’ languages (= ‘My dog exists’ for ‘I have a dog’), the possessor is introduced in PossP within the possessum.
- In ‘Y is with X’ languages (= ‘A dog is with me’ for ‘I have a dog’), the possessor is introduced in PP and adjoined to vP, with the Spec,PossP left unsaturated.



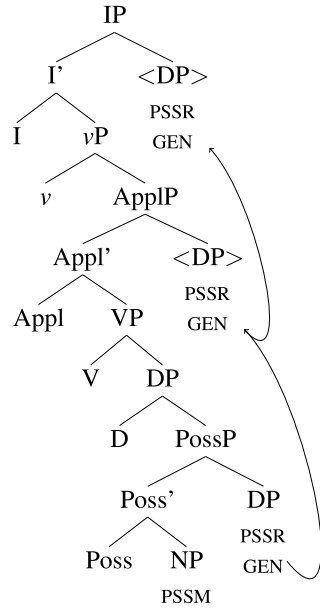
- **Prediction:** The expletive subject is the grammatical subject; neither the genitive predicative possessor (in ‘X’s Y exists’) nor the PP predicative possessor (in ‘Y is with X’) can show the grammatical subject properties.

2.2 Main proposal

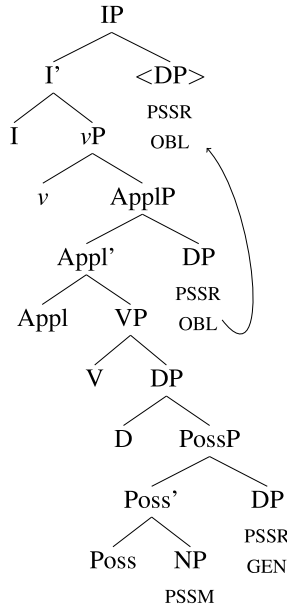
- We propose an applicative syntax with two types of possessive applicatives, athematic and thematic, following the distinction proposed in Georgala et al. 2008, Georgala 2012, and see Deal 2013.

- For Budai Rukai, in ‘X’s Y exists’, the predicative possessor is base-generated in Spec,PossP within the possessum DP and moves through the specifier of the athematic applicative to Spec,IP.
- In ‘Y is with X’, the predicative possessor is base-generated in the specifier of the thematic applicative and moves to Spec,IP.

(8) Genitive possessor



(9) Oblique possessor



- Prediction:** Both the genitive predicative possessor and locative-like oblique predicative possessor showcase grammatical subject properties.

3 An overview of the two predicative possessors

- Argument:** In Budai Rukai, the genitive possessor is used when the possessum is bare, while the locative-like oblique possessor is used when the possessum is internally complex with another genitive inside it.
- Mantauran Rukai, another Rukai variety, can resort to both the genitive and locative-like predicative possessors for the possessive readings.

(10) Mantauran Rukai (Austronesian; Taiwan)

- a. Om-iki paise-**li**.
DYN.FIN-exist money-**1SG.GEN**

‘I have money.’ (Zeitoun 2007:352)

- b. Om-iki-**iae** paise.
DYN.FIN-exist-**1SG.OBL** money
‘I have money.’ (Zeitoun 2007:352)
- c. Om-iki-**iae** varange-**li** lroolai
DYN.FIN-exist-**1SG.OBL** belly-**1SG.GEN** child
‘apece.
DYN.SUBJ.sleep
‘The baby sleeps on my belly.’ (Zeitoun 2007:352)

- Budai Rukai, on the other hand, does not have this alternation in simple clauses. When the possessum is bare, the predicative possessor surfaces as genitive. The locative-like oblique only yields the locative reading.

- (11) a. Y<a>kay ku hungu=**li**.
 <AV.REAL>exist NOM book=**1SG.GEN**
 ‘I have a book.’
- b. Y<a>kay [✓ **nakwane**] ku hungu [✓ **nakwane**].
 <AV.REAL>exist [✓ **1SG.OBL**] NOM book [✓ **1SG.OBL**]
 locative reading: ‘The book is here with me.’
 possessive reading: ‘*I have a book.’

- However, when the possessum contains a genitive inside it, the predicative possessor surfaces as oblique but not as genitive.

- (12) a. Y<a>kay [✓ **nakwane**] ku hungu ki Lrupilriane [✓
 <AV.REAL>exist [✓ **1SG.OBL**] NOM book GEN Lrupilriane [✓
 nakwane].
 1SG.OBL
 possessive reading: ‘I have Lrupilriane’s book.’
 locative reading: ‘Lrupilriane’s book is here with me.’
- b. *Y<a>kay ku hungu ki Lrupilriane=**li**.
 <AV.REAL>exist NOM book GEN Lrupilriane=**1SG.GEN**
 ‘I have Lrupilriane’s book.’
- c. *Y<a>kay ku hungu=**li** ki Lrupilriane.
 <AV.REAL>exist NOM book=**1SG.GEN** GEN Lrupilriane
 ‘I have Lrupilriane’s book.’

4 Genitive and oblique possessors as grammatical subjects

- Argument:** Although not bearing nominative case, genitive and locative-like predicative possessors are grammatical subjects, showcasing grammatical subject properties.

4.1 Controlled PRO

- The grammatical subject can be controlled PRO in Budai Rukai.

- (13) a. Ma-dalam=aku [ka-sipelreng **PRO**].
AV.STAT.REAL-like=1SG.NOM [STAT-sleep **PRO**]
'I like to sleep.'
- b. Ma-dalam=aku [lrabwale **PRO**].
AV.STAT.REAL-like=1SG.NOM [run **PRO**]
'I like to run.'

- The genitive predicative possessor can be the controlled PRO, whereas the regular possessor cannot. The genitive predicative possessor but not the regular possessor behaves like a grammatical subject.

- (14) a. Ma-dalam=aku [ikay ku tawpungu
AV.STAT.REAL-like=1SG.NOM [exist NOM dog
PRO_{GEN}].
PRO_{GEN}]
'I like to have a dog.'
- b. *Ma-dalam=aku [lrabwale ku tawpungu
AV.STAT.REAL-like=1SG.NOM [run NOM dog
PRO_{GEN}].
PRO_{GEN}]
Intended 'I like for my dog to run.'

- The locative-like predicative possessor can be controlled PRO, whereas the genuine locative phrase cannot. The locative-like predicative possessor but not the locative phrase behaves like a grammatical subject.

- (15) a. Ma-dalam=aku [ikay ku hungu ki
AV.STAT.REAL-like=1SG.NOM [NFIN.exist NOM book GEN
Lrupilriane **PRO_{OBL}**].
Lrupilriane **PRO_{OBL}**].
'I like to have Lrupilriane's book.'
- b. *Ma-dalam=aku [ikay ku tawpungu
AV.STAT.REAL-like=1SG.NOM [NFIN.exist NOM dog
PRO_{OBL}].
PRO_{OBL}]
Intended: 'I like for the dog to be with me.'

- Both the genitive and locative-like predicative possessors pattern with the grammatical subject in being the controlled PRO.

4.2 Topicalization

- In Budai Rukai, the grammatical subject but not the grammatical object can be topicalized in AV (= active voice).

- (16) a. **Ka Lavurase**, wa-lrumay ki tawpungu.
NOM Lavurase AV.REAL-hit OBL dog
'Lavurase hit the dog.'
- b. ***Ki/KA tawpungu**, wa-lrumay ka Lavurase.
OBL/NOM dog AV.REAL-hit NOM Lavurase
'Lavurase hit the dog.'

- The genitive predicative possessor can be topicalized without a pronoun in-situ or a resumptive pronoun, whereas the regular possessor cannot (see also Huang 2013 for Mayrinax Atayal). This may indicate that the regular possessor occurs with a hanging topic. The genitive predicative possessor but not the regular possessor behaves like a grammatical subject.

- (17) a. Ka Lavurase, y<a>kay ku daane(=ini).
NOM Lavurase, <AV.REAL>exist NOM house(=3SG.GEN)
'Lavurase has a house.'
- b. Ka Lavurase, m-u<a>kulrudru ka daane*(=ini).
NOM Lavurase M-<AV.REAL>fall NOM house*(=3SG.GEN)
'Lavurase's house fell.'

- The locative-like predicative possessor can be topicalized, whereas the genuine locative phrase cannot. The locative-like predicative possessor but not the locative phrase behaves like a grammatical subject.

- (18) a. Ka Lavurase, y<a>kay ku hungu ki
NOM Lavurase <AV.REAL>exist NOM book GEN
Lrupilriane.
Lrupilriane
'Lavurase has Lrupilriane's book.'
- b. *Ka Lavurase, y<a>kay ku tawpungu.
NOM Lavurase <AV.REAL>exist NOM dog
Intended: 'Lavurase, the dog is with him.'

- Both the genitive and locative-like predicative possessors pattern with the grammatical subject in being able to be topicalized with an AV verb.

4.3 Wh-movement

- Like most Formosan languages (Aldridge 2002, Tsai 2024), the fronted interrogative is a *wh*-predicate and the rest of the clause is headless relativization in Budai Rukai (C.-F. Chen 1999).

- The grammatical subject but not the grammatical object can undergo *wh*-movement with an AV verb. The grammatical object can only undergo *wh*-movement through an OV verb (object voice, see Shih To appear).

- (19) a. Aneane [ka **wa-lrumay** ki tawpungu]?
 who [NOM **AV.REAL-hit** OBL dog]
 ‘Who hit the dog?’ (= The one that hit the dog is who?)
 b. *Manemane [ka **wa-lrumay** ka Lavurase]?
 what [NOM **AV.REAL-hit** NOM Lavurase]
 ‘What did Lavurase hit?’
 c. Manemane [ka **lrumay** ki Lavurase]?
 what [NOM **OV.hit** GEN Lavurase]
 ‘What did Lavurase hit?’ (= The one that Lavurase hit is what?)

- The genitive predicative possessor can undergo *wh*-movement with an AV verb, whereas the regular possessor cannot (see also Huang 2013 for Mayrinax Atayal). The genitive predicative possessor but not the regular possessor behaves like a grammatical subject.

- (20) a. Aneane [ku **y<a>kay** ku daane]?
 who [NOM **<AV.REAL>exist** NOM house]
 ‘Who has a house?’
 b. *Aneane [ku **m-u<a>kadrulru** ku danne]?
 who [NOM **M-<AV.REAL>fall** NOM house]
 ‘Whose house fell?’

- The locative-like predicative possessor can undergo *wh*-movement with an AV verb, whereas the genuine locative phrase cannot. The locative-like predicative possessor but not the locative phrase behaves like a grammatical subject.

- (21) Aneane [ku **y<a>kay** ku hungu ki Lrupilriane]?
 who [NOM **<AV.REAL>exist** NOM book GEN Lrupilriane]
 ‘Who has Lrupilriane’s book?’
 (22) *Aneane [ku **y<a>kay** ku tawpungu]?
 who [NOM **<AV.REAL>exist** NOM dog]
 Intended: ‘Who is the dog with?’

- Both the genitive and locative-like predicative possessors pattern with the grammatical subject in being able to undergo *wh*-movement with an AV verb.

4.4 Relativization

- The grammatical subject but not the grammatical object can be relativized with an AV verb. The grammatical object can be relativized only through an OV verb.

- (23) a. M-u<a>bere ka [**wa-lrumay** ki tawpungu
 M-<AV.REAL>escape NOM [**AV.REAL-hit** OBL dog
 ka] lasu.
 REL] man
 ‘The man that hit the dog escaped.’
 b. *M-u<a>bere ku [**wa-lrumay** ka Lavurase
 M-<AV.REAL>escape NOM [**AV.REAL-hit** NOM Lavurase
 ka] tawpungu.
 REL] dog
 ‘The dog that Lavurase hit escaped.’
 c. M-u<a>bere ka [**lrumay** ki Lavurase ka]
 M-<AV.REAL>escape NOM [**OV.hit** GEN Lavurase REL]
 tawpungu.
 dog
 ‘The dog that Lavurase hit escaped.’

- The genitive predicative possessor can be relativized with an AV verb, whereas the regular possessor cannot. The genitive predicative possessor but not the regular possessor behaves like a grammatical subject.

- (24) a. Sa-paysu-ane ku lasu [ku **y<a>kay**
 have(.a.lot)-money-NMLZ NOM man [REL **<AV.REAL>exist**
 ku daane].
 NOM house]
 ‘The man that has a house is wealthy.’
 b. *Ma-lisi-lisi ka lasu [ka **m-u<a>kadrulru**
 AV.STAT.REAL-RED-angry NOM man [REL **<AV.REAL>fall**
 ku daane].
 NOM house]
 ‘The man whose house fell is angry.’

- The locative-like predicative possessor can be relativized with an AV verb, whereas the genuine locative phrase cannot. The locative-like predicative possessor but not the locative phrase behaves like a grammatical subject.

- (25) a. Kudra [**y<a>kay** ku hungu ki Lrupilriane ku]
 that [**<AV.REAL>exist** NOM book GEN Lrupilriane REL]
 lasu ay, m-u<a>bere.
 man TOP M-<AV.REAL>escape
 ‘That man who has Lrupilriane’s book escaped.’³

³My consultant doesn’t like the non-topicalized version. Whether this is due to the processing or syntactic problem is not unclear.

- b. *M-u<a>bere ku lasu [ku y<a>kay ku
M-<REAL>escape NOM man [REL <AV.REAL>exist NOM
tawpungu].
dog]
‘The man who the dog was with escaped.’

- Both the genitive and locative-like predicative possessors pattern with the grammatical subject in being able to be relativized with an AV verb.

4.5 Nominative proclitics

- Budai Rukai has developed a set of nominative proclitics expressing volitionality (Zeitoun 2000, and see Zeitoun 2008:286-287 for Mantauran Rukai, Zeitoun 2024 for cross-Rukai varieties). Notably, the nominative proclitics correspond to the nominative argument in a plain declarative, i.e. the subject.

- (26) a. Lri-apec=**aku**.
FUT-sleep=**1SG.NOM**
‘I will sleep.’ (Zeitoun 2000:88)
- b. **Naw**-apece.
1SG.NOM-sleep
‘I want to sleep.’ (Zeitoun 2000:88)

- Both the genitive and locative-like predicative possessors can show up as nominative proclitics.

- (27) a. **Naw**=ikay ku daane.
1SG.NOM=exist NOM house
‘I want to have a house.’
- b. **Naw**=ikay ku hungu ki Lrupilriane.
1SG.NOM=exist NOM book GEN Lrupilriane
‘I want to have Lrupilriane’s book.’

- Both the genitive and locative-like predicative possessors pattern with the grammatical subject in being able to surface as nominative proclitics.

4.6 Interim summary

- As shown in the table, both the genitive and locative-like predicative possessors pattern with the grammatical subject.

(28) Comparison of the syntactic behavior⁴

	grammatical subject	genitive predicative possessor	locative-like predicative possessor
controlled PRO	✓	✓	✓
topicalization in AV	✓	✓	✓
wh-movement in AV	✓	✓	✓
relativization in AV	✓	✓	✓
nominative proclitics	✓	✓	✓

- These subject properties cannot be explained by the expletive approach by Myler 2014, 2016, where the expletive is expected to be the subject.
- Instead, a derivation is needed where the predicative possessors are raised to the subject position.

5 Oblique possessor different from genitive possessor

- Argument:** Although the genitive and locative-like oblique predicative possessors behave identically in being grammatical subjects, the genitive possessor is pronounced inside the possessum DP, whereas the oblique possessor is pronounced outside the possessum DP. The difference between the two possessors is syntactic but not merely morphological (such as a ban on two genitives in a row).

5.1 Setting the stage: genitive predicative possessors pronounced inside the possessum DP

- Argument:** Predicative possessors are pronounced in PossP and form a constituent with possessums, thus like regular DP possessors but unlike clausal subjects on the surface (see Shih 2025).
- Word order:** The predicative possessor is required to follow the possessum, like the regular possessor but unlike the clausal subject which can either precede or follow the object.

- (29) a. Y<a>kay [✗ ki Lavurase] [ku tawpungu] [✓ ki
<AV.REAL>exist [✗ GEN Lavurase] [NOM dog] [✓ GEN
Lavurase].
Lavurase]
Intended: ‘Lavurase has a dog.’

⁴For topicalization of the regular possessor, it is labeled ungrammatical if we don’t take hanging topics into consideration.

- b. Wa-a<lea>leale [x ki Lavurase] [ku tawpungu] [✓
AV.REAL-<RED>bark [x GEN Lavurase] [NOM dog] [✓
ki Lavurase].
GEN Lavurase]
Intended: 'Lavurase's dog is barking.'
- c. Wa-lrumay [✓ ku Lavurase] [ki tawpungu] [✓ ku
AV.REAL-hit [✓ NOM Lavurase] [OBL dog] [✓ NOM
Lavurase].
Lavurase]
'Lavurase hit the dog.'

- Assuming that word order is subject to phrasal domains, this shows that the genitive predicative possessor is realized DP-internally and follows the word order restricted to the DP domain.

- Contextual allomorphy:** Budai Rukai shows contextual allomorphy for kinship terms. The predicative possessor shows the allomorphy, like the regular possessor but unlike the clausal subject.

- (30) a. Wa-kela-nga ka t-aka-Ø.
AV.REAL-come-PFV NOM T-older.sibling-**2SG.GEN.INAL**
'Your older sibling has come.'
- b. Y<a>kay ku t-aka-Ø?
<AV.REAL>exist NOM T-older.sibling-**2SG.GEN.INAL**
'Do you have an older sibling?'
- c. Taka-t-aka=**su**?
RED-T-older.sibling=**2SG.NOM**
'Are you an older sibling?'

- If contextual allomorphy is assumed to take place in a local domain (Embick 2010), this shows that the genitive predicative possessor is realized DP-internally with the possessum DP triggering the allomorphy.

5.2 Oblique possessor does not surface due to *GEN-GEN

- Argument:** While the oblique possessor surfaces when the possessum is internally complex with another genitive inside it (see Section 3), the oblique marking does not result from a ban on two genitives in a row.
- Presence of GEN-GEN:** With different constituencies and interpretations, two genitives can surface in a row, namely in the case where the possessor is internally complex.

- (31) a. Y<a>kay [ku hungu ki panudhu] **nakwane**.
<AV.REAL>exist [NOM book GEN student] **1SG.OBL**
'I have a student's book.'

- b. Y<a>kay ku hungu [ki panudhu=**li**].
<AV.REAL>exist NOM book [GEN student=**1SG.GEN**]
'My student has a book.'

- Non-adjacency:** With a temporal adverb between two genitives, the predicative possessor cannot surface as genitive. The lack of the influence of morphological concatenation suggests it is less likely a morphological operation.

- (32) *Y<a>kay [ku ki-bengelray ki Muni
<AV.REAL>exist [NOM get-flower GEN Muni
kuiya]=**li**.
yesterday]=**1SG.GEN**
'I have the flowers that Muni picked yesterday.'

5.3 Oblique possessor pronounced outside the possessum DP

- Argument:** Locative-like oblique predicative possessors are pronounced outside the possessum DP, unlike the genitive predicative possessors.
- Variable positions:** The oblique possessor can either precede or follow the possessum, whereas the genitive possessor cannot. Note that genitive and oblique cases are syncretic as *ki*.

- (33) Y<a>kay [x ki Lavurase] [ku tawpungu] [✓ ki
<AV.REAL>exist [x GEN Lavurase] [NOM dog] [✓ GEN
Lavurase].
Lavurase]
Intended: 'Lavurase has a dog.'
- (34) Y<a>kay [✓ ki Lavurase] [ku hungu ki Lrupilriane] [✓ ki
<AV.REAL>exist [✓ OBL Lavurase] [NOM book GEN Lrupilriane] [✓ OBL
Lavurase].
Lavurase]
'Lavurase has Lrupilriane's book.'

- This indicates that the oblique possessor may be outside the possessum and thus does not follow the typical possessor order within the nominal domain.
- Ellipsis:** When the possessum is elided, the genitive possessor can only be topicalized but not stranded, whereas the oblique possessor can be topicalized or stranded.

- (35) a. Kadrwa ku hungu=**li**, ay ka Lavurase,
AV.NEG.exist NOM book=**1SG.GEN** but NOM Lavurase
y<a>kay.
<AV.REAL>exist
'I don't have a book, but Lavurase does.'

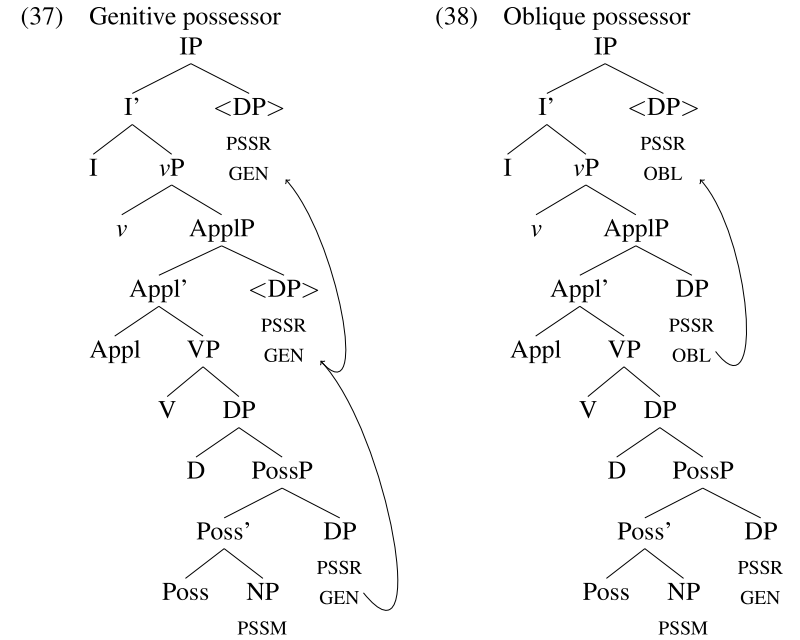
b. #Kadrwa ku hungu=li, ay y<a>kay ki
 AV.NEG.exist NOM book=1SG.GEN but <AV.REAL>exist GEN
 Lavurase.
 Lavurase
 Intended: 'I don't have a book, but Lavurase does.'

- (36) a. Kadrwa nakwane ku hungu ki Lrupilriane, ay ka
 AV.NEG.exist 1SG.OBL NOM book GEN Lrupilriane but NOM
 Lavurase, y<a>kay.
 Lavurase <AV.REAL>exist
 'I don't have Lrupilriane's book, but Lavurase does.'
- b. Kadrwa nakwane ku hungu ki Lrupilriane, ay
 AV.NEG.exist 1SG.OBL NOM book GEN Lrupilriane but
 y<a>kay ki Lavurase.
 <AV.REAL>exist OBL Lavurase
 Intended: 'I don't have Lrupilriane's, but Lavurase does.'

- If the ellipsis site is thought of as VP, this indicates that the oblique possessor but not the genitive possessor may be outside the possessum, thus not affected by the ellipsis site.

6 Analysis

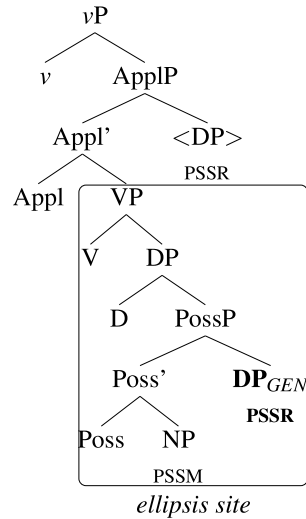
- To summarize, while not showing up as nominative arguments, expected of grammatical subjects in the language, both the genitive and locative-like oblique predicative possessors showcase the grammatical subject properties.
- However, the genitive predicative possessor is realized inside the possessum DP, while the locative-like oblique predicative possessor is realized outside the possessum DP.
- Building on the complex DP structure in Myler 2014, 2016, we propose an applicative syntax, which allows the predicative possessors to function as grammatical subjects.
- Two applicatives are proposed, and they differ in flavor of being thematic or athematic (Georgala et al. 2008, Georgala 2012):
 - In the default predicative possessives, Appl is athematic (see also Deal 2013). It raises the genitive possessor DP within the possessum DP to its specifier, followed by movement to Spec,IP. Note this ApplP is only present in predicative possessives but not in intransitives as possessor raising is generally unattested.
 - In the locative-like predicative possessives, Appl is thematic and has a possession flavor. It introduces an oblique possessor, which also undergoes movement to Spec,IP.



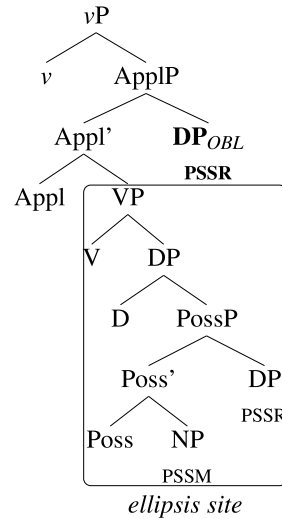
- Within the copy theory, the higher copies of A-movement are not pronounced. They nevertheless determine the grammatical subject properties and feed subject-restricted A'-movement.
- On the other hand, the lower copies of A-movement are pronounced in both structures. As they are base-generated in different positions, the pronounced lower copies of the genitive and oblique possessors show the different syntactic behavior relative to the possessum DP.
- The genitive possessor is base-generated and pronounced within the possessum DP, following the restricted word order in the DP domain, whereas the oblique possessor is base-generated and pronounced outside the possessum DP, not confined to the DP word order.

- Regarding ellipsis, the genitive possessor is pronounced within the possessum DP and cannot survive VP-ellipsis without topicalization, whereas the oblique possessor is pronounced outside the possessum DP and can survive VP-ellipsis.

(39) Genitive possessor



(40) Oblique possessor



- The possessum DP is an inert argument and is realized with a default nominative case (see Shih 2025 and Appendix).

7 Conclusion

- We showed that both genitive and oblique predicative possessors, though not bearing nominative case, behave as grammatical subjects, while they differ in the syntactic behavior relative to the possessum DP.
- The prima facie mismatch between case and grammatical relations is resolved by A-movement and copies. With A-movement, the covert higher copies occupy the subject position, showing subject properties and also feeding later subject-restricted A'-movement.
- The syntactic differences relative to the possessum DP between the two possessors are attributable to the base-position and two flavors of applicatives. The genitive predicative possessor is base-generated inside the possessum DP and raised by athematic Appl, while the oblique one is introduced by thematic Appl outside the possessum DP.

8 Appendix: Possessums as inert arguments

- Argument:** Possessums in possessives are not grammatical subjects nor grammatical objects, but inert arguments with default nominative case.

8.1 Controlled PRO

- Despite the nominative marking, the possessum cannot be controlled PRO, which suggests it doesn't serve as a grammatical subject.

- (41) a. *Ma-dalame ka tawpungu [ikay **PRO**=li].
AV.STAT.REAL-like NOM dog [exist **PRO**=1SG.GEN]
'That dog likes to be mine / be owned by me.'
- b. *Ma-lrase ka ngiaw [ikay **PRO** ki Lavurase].
AV.STAT.REAL-hate NOM cat [exist **PRO** GEN Lavurase]
'That cat hates to be Lavurase's / be owned by Lavurase.'

8.2 Wh-movement

- The possessum cannot undergo *wh*-movement, either with an AV verb or an OV verb, different from the grammatical subject and the grammatical object. The only way to have a possessum interrogative is through the in-situ strategy.

- (42) a. *Manemane [ku **y**<**a**>**kay**=su]?
what [NOM <**AV.REAL**>exist=2SG.GEN]
'What do you have?'
- b. *Manemane [ku **ikay**=su]?
what [NOM **OV**.exist=2SG.GEN]
'What do you have?'
- c. Y<**a**>**kay** ku manemane=su?
<**AV.REAL**>exist NOM what=2SG.GEN
'What do you have?'

8.3 Case and demonstratives

- The nominative case remains in the non-finite control structure, which suggests the nominative case on possessums does not originate from finite Infl and may be default (see Schütze 2001).

- (43) Ma-dalam=aku [ikay ku / *ki tawpungu **PRO**].
AV.STAT.REAL-like=1SG.NOM [exist NOM / OBL dog **PRO**]
Intended: 'I like to have a dog.'

- Note that the nominative is default within this language, as seen in topicalization.

- (44) a. Y<a>kay ku tawpungu **ki Lavurase**.
 <AV.REAL>exist NOM dog **GEN Lavurase**
 ‘Lavurase has a dog.’
 b. **Ka Lavurase**, y<a>kay ku tawpungu.
NOM Lavurase <AV.REAL>exist NOM dog
 ‘Lavurase has a dog.’
- In addition, while the regular demonstrative can be placed for the possessum, the semantics appears not to work, suggesting that the DP layer is defective. Instead, a periphrastic strategy is used for the demonstrative reading.
- (45) a. ?#Y<a>kay **kay** laimay ki Lavurase.
 <AV.REAL>exist **this** clothes GEN Lavurase
 Intended: ‘Lavurase has these clothes.’
 b. Y<a>kay ku [miyaiya kay ku] laimay ki
 <AV.REAL>exist NOM [like this REL] clothes GEN
 Lavurase.
 Lavurase
 ‘Lavurase has this kind of clothes.’
 (Lit. Lavurase has clothes which is like this.)

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