

Irish genitive phrases: The pseudo-construct state

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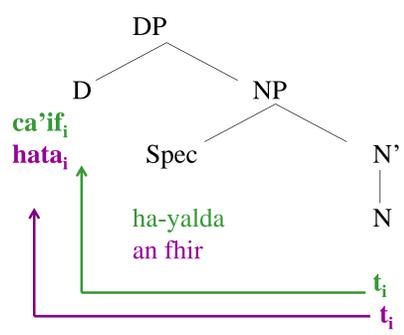
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3. Previous analyses - 'N to D'

The pattern observed for Irish in (1) is also seen in Semitic CSNs:

- (7) *ca'if ha-yalda scarf the-girl-GEN 'the girl's scarf'*
- (8) **ha-ca'if ha-yalda the-scarf the-girl-GEN*

An N-raising analysis has been proposed for Semitic CSNs (Ritter 1988; Mohammad 1988; Siloni 1996 and Borer 1988, 1999a). This analysis has subsequently been applied to account for Irish GNPs (Guilfoyle 1988; Sproat and Shih 1991 and Duffield 1995):



Literature review in a snapshot: An 'N-D' movement operation motivated by case assignment accounts for both the word order and disallowance of the article on the head.

4. Adjective placement: A well-known problem

We observe however that when the head noun is modified by an adjective they both appear in the "moved position" making it thus impossible for this position to be a head.

- (9) *Teach buí mór aláinn an mhúinteora house yellow big beautiful the teacher-GEN 'the teacher's big beautiful house'*

5. Irish GNPs ≠ Semitic CSNs

In fact, we checked whether the attested properties of CSN (Borer 1999a) apply to Irish GNPs:

CSN defining property of Semitic	Semitic CSN	Irish GNP
Head first, NSO word order	✓	✓
No modification of head by determiner or adjective	✓	✓(determiners) ✗(adjectives)
±DEF value of head spreads to non-head	✓	✗
APs appear on right of possessor	✓	✗
Multiple Ns are nested	✓	✗
CSN strategy for compound formation	✓	✗ ✓(in restricted cases)

This shows clearly that Semitic CSNs and Irish GNPs are not the same apart from head-genitive word order and disallowance of the determiner. These are superficial properties that can be accounted for in different ways.

Abstract

In this paper we argue that previous analyses of Irish complex genitive noun phrases (GNPs henceforth) as structurally identical to Semitic construct state nominals (CSNs) cannot be correct. First, we expand the empirical picture: we show that some GNPs, namely attributive genitive phrases and genitive phrases with demonstratives can occur with a pronominal determiner. Second, we highlight fundamental differences between Semitic CSNs and Irish GNPs further confirming that the two cannot be analysed on a par. Finally, we show that a unified account for possessive and attributive genitives can be achieved by assuming a relational phrase (after Adger, 2012).

1. Background

Typical analysis of GNPs have focused on apparently bare genitive possessor phrases:

- (1) *Hata an fhir hat the man-GEN 'The man's hat'*

Normally, Irish has definite articles that appear in pre-nominal position. Crucially a noun is followed by a genitive possessor, the head noun (*the possessee*) cannot host a pre-nominal definite determiner:

- (2) *An hata the hat 'the hat'*
- (3) **An hata an fhir the hat the man-GEN*

2. The Key Data: The head of a GNP can in fact have a definite determiner

(i) When the genitive noun denotes an attribute:

- (4) *An gcaptaen na loinge the captain the ship-GEN 'The captain of the ship'*

(ii) When the head is modified by a demonstrative:

- (5) *An hata sin an fhir the hat DEM the man-GEN 'That hat (of the man)'*

➔ Notice that with demonstratives, the article is in fact obligatory.

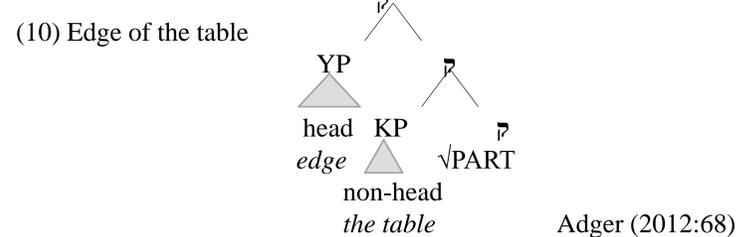
- (6) **(An) hata sin *(the) hat DEM 'that hat'*

Our new analysis is motivated by:

- New data that shows that N cannot have moved to D
- Irish GNPs do not pattern with Semitic CSNs

9. The proposal: flavours of ϕ

The two components of the GNPs are both generated within a relational phrase ϕ (Adger 2012) where a specific relation between the two is mediated. One such example is a partitive relation:



Adger (2012:68)

7. Analysis: Part 1

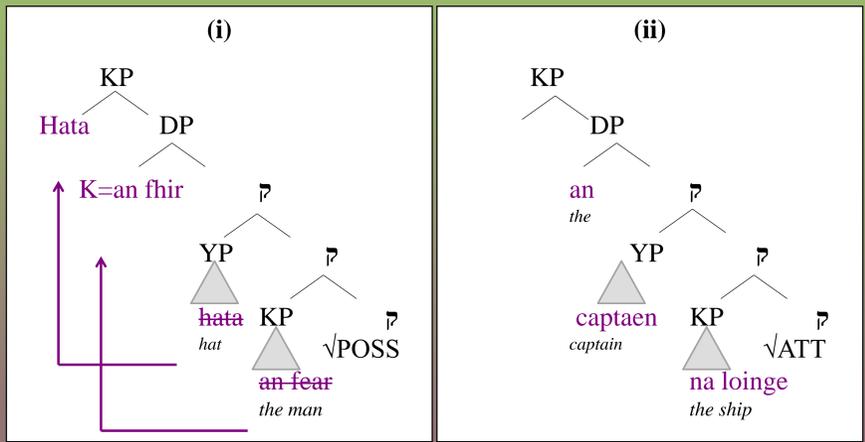
Components of a genitive phrase are generated in ϕ

The relation between the head and genitive is mediated within a relational phrase ϕ which can be possessive ϕ_{POSS}, or attributive ϕ_{ATT}

The genitive possessor in ϕ_{POSS} moves to SpecDP, assigns reference in D and blocks article as seen in examples (1) and the tree in (i) below.

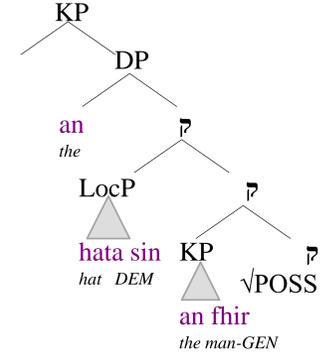
The genitive in ϕ_{ATT} is not referential and cannot assign reference in D. The genitive remains in-situ and reference is assigned in D by the article, see (ii).

The head noun-containing phrase moves to SpecKP. This also accounts for the N+A adjacency in (9).



8. Analysis: Part 2

N modified by DEM requires reference via the article that operates as a discourse antecedent. Article merges in D and the components remain in-situ:



This structure is supported by the following co-ordination data:
(11) *An hata sin agus an cóta sin the hat DEM and the coat DEM* (12) **An hata sin agus cóta seo the hat DEM and coat DEM*