

3.2.14. *Possessor in a possessive clause*

In a clause in which the predication expresses possession, the form that the possessor noun phrase takes depends on the type of relationship involved (temporary possession or ownership) and on the nature of the possessed referent. The verb involved in all cases is one of the existential verbs (see §4.2.4). If the relationship is inalienable possession and the referent is something that does not normally exist apart from the possessor, such as a body part, then the clause takes the form of a simple existential clause, and the possessor appears as a genitive possessor of the body part in a single noun phrase with the body part, and the verb is intransitive (with that one noun phrase as its sole argument), as in (3.156a). The person marking on the verb reflects the person and number of the possessor, not the possessed. If instead the relationship is one of temporary physical possession, and not ownership, and the referent is able to exist independently of the possessor, then the noun phrase representing the (temporary) possessor takes the locative/dative marker /-ta/, as in (3.156b). Here again the verb is intransitive, with the noun phrase representing the possessed referent as the single direct argument in an existential clause, but with the noun phrase representing the possessor appearing as an oblique argument and the person marking reflecting the person and number of the possessed referent rather than those of the possessor (inanimates are unmarked).

- (3.156) a. *qa-dzoqu-ji-tua wa.* (*< we*)
 1sg-leg-two-CL exist:1sg (connected to main entity)
 ‘I have two legs.’ (lit.: ‘My two legs exist.’)
- b. *?ũ-dzoku-le: qa-ta sə.* (inanimate)
 2sg-key-DEF:CL 1sg-LOC exist
 ‘Your key is at my place.’ / ‘I have your key.’

If the situation involves ownership of an object which is not part of the person (i.e. is not physically inalienable, including other people, such as in kinship relations), then the causative suffix (see §4.2.2) is used with the verb of possession to make it transitive. The noun phrases representing the possessor and the possessed referent then are both

direct arguments of the verb, and so the possessor does not take any semantic case marking, as in (3.157)-(3.159).

- (3.157) *khumtsi dzəgy kən a-ha sə-z.* (inanimate)
 Khumtsi money very one-pl exist-CAUS
 ‘Khumtsi has a lot of money.’

- (3.158) *khumtsi tutʃ-ɣzə-zi zɪ-z.* (animate)
 Khumtsi younger.brother-four-CL exist-CAUS
 ‘Khumtsi has four younger brothers.’

- (3.159) *the: səf-a-ha we-z.* (connected to main entity)
 3sg tree-one-pl exist-CAUS
 ‘He has some trees.’

Verbs of possession/existence differ with the type of noun possessed (see §4.2.4; the type of possessed noun is given at the right margin of each example). There is no difference between present and past possession, and there are no nouns that are obligatorily possessed. There is also no difference in the construction based on whether the possessor is represented by a pronoun, a proper noun or common noun.

Aside from the verbs given above, which are inherently intransitive and have both existential and possessive uses, there is one verb, /qəqe/, which is inherently transitive and used only for possession, and particularly for personal ownership of some important or valuable entity, as in (3.160a-c). With this verb the noun phrase representing the possessor always is a direct argument, and does not take any semantic case marking.

- (3.160) a. *ʔũ ʃku qusu qəqe-n.*
 2sg gold much have-2sg
 ‘You have a lot of gold.’
- b. *qupu tɕymi ʋua-tʃ qəqe.*
 3sg child five-CL have
 ‘S/he has five children.’

- c. *qa tshe a-wy qəqa.* (< qəqe)
 1sg sheep one-flock have:1sg
 ‘I have a flock of sheep.’

There is no preposition that can be used with the possessive sense of English ‘with’, as in ‘The man with the knife’, or ‘the man without the knife’; instead a relative clause using a possessive verb must be used.

- (3.161) a. *xtšepi şə-z-əm* (inanimate)
 knife exist-CAUS-NOM
 ‘(the) person with (the) knife’
- b. *xtšepi ma-ş-z-əm* (inanimate)
 knife NEG-exist-CAUS-NOM
 ‘(the) person without (the) knife’

Possession of a quality involves the same structure as possession of an object; the use of a relative clause structure (see §5.2) is also possible ((3.162c)).

- (3.162) a. *the: qhu-s we.* (connected to main entity)
 3sg hate-NOM exist
 ‘S/he is very mischievous.’
- b. *the: qəpatş le.* (inside vessel)
 3sg head exist
 ‘S/he is very brainy.’ (cf. English *She’s got a head on her shoulders*)
- c. *ətçimi na-tç mi*
 heart good-GEN person
 ‘(a) good hearted person’

3.2.15. Genitive

A genitive noun phrase appears before the noun it modifies, and can be followed by the genitive marker /-tç(ə)/. When the relationship between