

## The syntactic encoding of I- and M-possessors in Bangla

This paper considers possessor-constructions in Bangla, which have not been much discussed in the literature, and argues for a syntactic distinction between two types of possessors in the language, with potential broader consequences for the analysis of genitive constructions in other languages such as English.

Morphologically, possessors are constructed in Bangla through the addition of an –r clitic to nominal elements, as illustrated in (1-4), in which –r is cliticized to a pronoun (1), a proper name (2), a noun followed by a classifier (3), and a bare noun (4):

- |    |   |    |   |
|----|---|----|---|
| 1. | ama-r bhai<br>I-r brother<br>'my brother'             | 2. | Ruma-r juto<br>Ruma-r shoes<br>'Ruma's shoes' |
| 3. | chele-ta-r juto<br>boy-ta-r shoe<br>'the boy's shoes' | 4. | goru-r khabar<br>cow-r food<br>'cow food'     |

In terms of interpretation, a distinction has sometimes been made across languages with regard to 'individual genitives' (I-genitives from now on), and modificational-genitives (M-genitives) (e.g. Munn (To appear: *Proceedings of WECOL. V. Samiian, (ed.)*). In I-genitives, the nominal 'possessor' refers to a particular individual. Hence, examples (1-3) are all instances of I-genitives. In M-genitives, the nominal possessor does not refer to a specific individual, and the meaning of the possessor + noun is generic. An example of an M-genitive in Bangla would be (5) below:

5. chele-de-r juto  
boy-de-r shoes  
'men's shoes'

In English, there is no explicit morphological difference between the I-genitives, and the M-genitives. Consider *a man's shoe*. This can have an I-genitive reading, where it refers to a particular man, and his shoe; it can also have an M-genitive reading, where it refers to a shoe meant for men. English I- and M-genitives do not seem to be distinguished in terms of morphology or syntax, but the question is clearly raised as to whether the difference in interpretation should be assumed to relate to some underlying difference in syntactic structure. Considering Bangla, this paper will show that I- and M-genitives do have a different syntactic encoding in the DP. It will be shown that the head and the non-head of these possessive constructions behave differently with regard to a range of syntactic tests, namely in terms of pronominal reference, allowing numerals, and possibility of being modified. With regard to the linear order of elements in the DP, it is shown that I- and M-genitives occupy different positions, this becoming manifest when further elements such as the universal quantifier *sOb* are introduced. In (6) and (7) below, it is seen that I-genitives necessarily precede, but M-genitives follow the universal quantifier:

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|-------|--|----|---|
| 6. a. | chele-Ta-r sOb juto<br>boy-ta-r all shoe<br>'all the shoes of the boy' | b. | *sOb chele-Ta-r juto<br>all boy-ta-r shoe |
| 7. a. | sOb chele-de-r tupi<br>all boy-de-r shoe<br>'all men's shoes'          | b. | *chele-de-r sOb tupi<br>boy-de-r all hat  |

The paper shows that the distinctive patterns with I- and M-genitives have various consequences for the general analysis of DPs in Bangla (and other languages), and will also discuss the genitive encoding of nominal arguments in the language.

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