

Optionality of the Genitive (of Negation) in Slovene

1 The Genitive of Negation (GoN). In standard Slovene, the GoN is fully grammaticalised (similar to in Polish, cf.: Przepiórkowski 2000), occurring with the complement NPs assigned the accusative in non-negative clauses (1a), as well as with the complement NPs in embedded infinitival (subject/object control) clauses introduced by a negative matrix clause (1b,c).

- (1) a) *Janez ni bral časopisa.* Local GoN
Janez not-is read newspaper-GEN
'Janez didn't read the newspaper.'
- b) *Nataša ni hotela čitati knjige.* Long distance GoN
Nataša not-is wanted read-INF book-FEM-GEN
'Nataša didn't want to read a book.'
- c) *Učitelj ne sili študentov reševati takšnih problemov.* Long distance GoN
teacher not forces students-GEN solve-INF such problems-GEN
'the teacher does not force the students to solve such problems.'

Slovene also displays the multiplicity of the GoN, i.e. multiple occurrences of the genitive under the scope of a single negation. The multiplicity of the GoN may be found both with Local GoN (2a) and Long-distance GoN (1c). In the latter case, the scope of the matrix negation seems unbounded, since it may extend over a series of infinitival complements (2b).

- (2) a) *Janez ne uči deklice lingvistike.* double object construction
Janez not teaches girl-GEN linguistics-GEN
'John doesn't teach the girl linguistics.'
- b) *Ne želim siliti študentov reševati takšnih problemov.* Long distance GoN
not want force students-GEN solve-INF such problems-GEN
'I don't want to force the students to solve such problems.'

1.1 Optionality of the GoN. In free and colloquial Slovene, the GoN is frequently replaced by the accusative. This type of optionality differs from the Russian type of optionality (cf. Bailyn 1997) in the fact that the choice between the genitive / accusative cannot be ascribed to different pragmatic or semantic factors. While in the local environments the complement NP is still more typically marked for the genitive, in the long distance environments, the choice of the accusative complement NP becomes more frequent (3a). With respect to the interplay between the multiplicity and the optionality of the GoN, colloquial Slovene allows the free choice between the genitive / accusative, which may occur with all, none or some of the complement NPs. The case markedness of the higher complement NP does not affect the case markedness of the lower complement NP and vice versa. Hence, there are several different orderings possible, including, genitive / genitive, genitive / accusative, accusative / accusative and accusative / genitive ordering of the complement NP (3b). It is noteworthy, however, that the first three patterns are much more common than the last one.

- (3) a) *Nisem imel pravice dajati navodila.*
not-am had right- GEN give-INF instructions- ACC-PLUR
'I didn't have the right to give difficult instructions.'
- b) *Študentov / Študente ne želim siliti reševati problemov / probleme.*
students-GEN / students-ACC not want force solve-INF problems-GEN / problems-ACC
'I don't want to force students to solve problems.'

1.2 Problem and Analysis. It has traditionally been assumed (Toporišič 2000) that in Slovene, there is a direct correspondence between the genitive case assignment and negation. Recent developments in the linguistic theory (cf. Bailyn 2004, Abels 2005), however, have shown that the genitive case assignment should be understood from a broader perspective, in which negation is only one of the indirect triggers for the genitive case selection. Under Bailyn's (2004) proposal, non-lexical morphological Genitive case occurrences are accounted for in terms of the uninterpretable Q(uantification) feature on nominals. In the case of negation, Neg selects the V complex with inherited [q] feature, which in turn selects a QP providing for the genitive on its NP complement. In the presentation, we will show that in the case of optionality, the Neg selects the V complex without the [q] feature, which bars the selection of the QP and consequently the genitive on the NP complement. This claim is supported by the fact that the optionality of the genitive is not restricted to the GoN only but can also be found in cases of verbal argument genitives.

2 Verbal Argument Genitives (VAG). In non-negative context, the genitive can be found in complements to reflexive verbs (4a) and the partitive genitive (4b). In the reflexive constructions, the event by the verb is typically targeted on the subject rather than the object (Toporišič 2000), and may be in many cases associated with the intentional meaning.

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| (4) a) <i>Veselim se darila.</i> I-look forward to REFL. present-GEN 'I look forward to the present.' | b) <i>Pil bi vode.</i> drunk am-COND water-GEN 'I'd like to drink some water.' |
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2.1 Optionality and VAG. As is the case with the GoN, the genitive in VAG constructions may be optional. In the case of the reflexive verbs (4a) the accusative *in lieu of* the genitive is still quite untypical, mostly occurring in colloquial speech with the pronominal complement NPs (5a). On the other hand, the accusative replacing the partitive genitive (5b) is very common, not just in the colloquial Slovene but also standard Slovene, and it can be claimed that the partitive genitive is considered as unusual or untypical.

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| (5) a) <i>Veselil se jo bom.</i> I-looked forward to REFL. her-ACC FUT 'I'll look forward to her.' | b) <i>Pil bi vodo.</i> drunk am-COND water-ACC 'I'd like to drink some water.' |
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3. Conclusion and extensions. Building on the fact, that there is a strong parallelism between the optionality of the GoN and VAG (speakers using the accusative instead of the genitive in the case of GoN also tend to use the accusative in the VAG constructions), we argue that these instances of optionality deserve the same syntactic account. In the spirit of Bailyn (2004), we assume that in both cases, there is no [q] feature involved, either by the negation head selection (GoN) or the lexical semantics of the verb (VAG), resulting in the non-lexical morphological accusative case on the complement NP. We believe that the same analysis can be extended to other cases of the optional genitive case, including the negative existentials.

References.

- Abels, Klaus. 2005. "Expletive negation" in Russian: A conspiracy theory.' *Journal of Slavic Linguistics* 13: 5-74. // Bailyn, John Frederick. 1997. 'Genitive of Negation is Obligatory.' *Proceedings of FASL 5*. Michigan Slavic Publications. // Bailyn, John Frederick. 2004. 'The case of Q.' *Proceedings of FASL 12*. Michigan Slavic Publications. // Przepiórkowski, Adam. 2000. 'Long Distance Genitive of Negation in Polish.' *Journal of Slavic Linguistics* 8: 151-189. // Toporišič, Janez. 2000. *Slovenska slovnica*. Založba Obzorja: Maribor.