CHAPTER 8

Possession

8.1 Attributive possession

Attributive possession in Kamya is expressed using a preposed genitive form, either a noun or personal pronoun (see **??** for more on the genitive case).[1] In addition to this, an article is required. In the vast majority of cases, this is the definite article. The use of the definite and indefinite articles in possession is discussed further below.

(1) Na şerfere soma.

na   şerf-ere   soma
DEF family-GEN house.NOM
'The family's house.'

(2) Na mere deyza.

na   me-re   deyza
DEF 1PL-GEN daughter.NOM
'Our daughter.'

(3) Na gelare kami.

na   gela-re   kami
DEF horse-GEN blood.NOM
'The horse's blood.'

(4) Na stenere leva.

na   sten-ere leva
DEF box-GEN inside.NOM
'The inside of the box.'

Genitives in such possessive phrases are able to stack, though, as in all other languages, the more possessors included, the less frequent the occurrence of such expressions in the language (not to mention the higher the cognitive load for both speaker and listener).

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1   Dependent marking appears to be the commonest strategy for expressing attributive possession throughout the languages of the world (see e.g. Nichols & Bickel 2013).

(5) Na cere ayşare huş.

na   cere   ayşa-re   huş
DEF 1SG.GEN friend-GEN son.NOM

'My friend's son.'

(6) N' are yetire koblere ridho.

n'   a-re   yeti-re   kobl-ere ridho
DEF 3SG-GEN wife-GEN shoe-GEN heel.NOM

'The heel of his wife's shoe.'

As the above examples demonstrate, attributive possession in Kamya is not sensitive to alienability. However, it appears that, in a former state of the language, the dative case was used for kinship relationships and the genitive was used elsewhere. This has now essentially been entirely eroded away, with the dative being used only in archaic texts or in order to effect a dated or lofty style. When used by modern speakers—which occurs only seldom—it does not generally distinguish between kinship terms and other nouns.

The above examples also show that using the definite article is much commoner than the indefinite. Nevertheless, it is possible to use the indefinite, with a change in meaning.

(7) Şi cere mun.

şi   cere   mun
INDEF 1SG.GEN finger.NOM

'One of my fingers.'

(8) Şi sosare çeher.

şi   sosa-re   çeher
INDEF child-GEN toy.NOM

'One of the child's toys.'

The article in such attributive possessive phrases exhibits the somewhat unusual property that it may be interpreted as modifying either the possessum or the possessor. However, this is dependent on both context and the possessor. For example, with genitive pronouns or personal names, the likeliest interpretation is that the article qualifies the possessum.

(9) Şi hayire yuşa.

şi   hayi-re   yuşa
INDEF 3PL-GEN idea.NOM

'An idea of theirs.'

(10) Şi Yuhanere sapi.

şi   Yuhan-ere sapi
INDEF Yuhan-GEN hat.NOM

'One of Yuhan's hats.'

With common nouns, however, the usual reading is that the definite article applies to both possessum and possessor but it may also be interpreted as only applying to the possessum, with the possessor being indefinite.

(11)   Na kadare kudi.

na   kada-re   kudi
DEF man-GEN book.NOM

'The book of the man.' or 'The book of a man.'

Similarly, the indefinite article can be interpreted as having scope over either only the possessum or both possessum and possessor, with the latter being less likely.

(12)   Şi kadare kudi.

şi   kada-re   kudi
INDEF man-GEN book.NOM

'One of the man's books.' or 'One of a man's books.'

If desired, this can be disambiguated by moving the possessor from the default pre-possessum position to a following position and adding another article as appropriate.

(13)   Na kudi na kadare.

na   kudi   na   kada-re
DEF book.NOM DEF man-GEN

'The book of the man.'

(14)   Şi kudi na kadare.

şi   kudi   na   kada-re
INDEF book.NOM DEF man-GEN

'One of the man's books.'

(15)   Na kudi şi kadare.

na   kudi   şi   kada-re
DEF book.NOM INDEF man-GEN

'The book of a man.'

(16)   Şi kudi şi kadare.

şi   kudi   şi   kada-re
INDEF book.NOM INDEF man-GEN

'One of a man's books.'

Note that, although this is possible, it is not typically very common as context or real-world knowledge will tend to disambiguate the speaker's intentions.

8.2   Predicative possession

As in many languages, the default way of expressing predicate possession does not use a possessive verb (such as *to have* in English or *có* in Vietnamese; see e.g. Stassen 2009, 2013). Rather, this is conveyed by way of an existential construction (see **??**) in which the possessum occurs as the subject of the verb (and hence takes the nominative) and the possessor is expressed as an adjunct in the dative case (see **??**). However, the default word order of such possessive phrases is possessor–verb–possessum (thus, adjunct–verb–subject) rather than possessum–verb–possessor (or subject–verb–adjunct) as might be expected.

(17)   Ceş usi şi daru.

     ceş   usi   şi   daru
     1SG.DAT EXIST.PRES INDEF car.NOM

     'I have a car.'

(18)   Teş uşar gara kobol.

     teş   uş-ar-Ø   gara kobl
     2SG.DAT EXIST-PL-PRES much shoe.NOM

     'You have a lot of shoes.'

(19)   Na kibiş bod na çeher.

     na kibi-ş   bod   na çeher
     DEF baby-DAT NEG.EXIST.PRES DEF toy.NOM

     'The baby doesn't have the toy.'

In addition to this, the instrumental and locative can be used in place of the dative case to indicate either temporary possession or, with the locative, a more literal meaning.

(20)   Aşa usit şi zaler.

     a-şa   usi-t   şi   zaler
     3SG-LOC EXIST-NPST INDEF gun.NOM

     'He had a gun on him.'

(21)   Na gelakişata usi şi jen.

     na gelakiş-ata   usi   şi   jen
     DEF horseman-INST EXIST.PRES INDEF short.whip.NOM

     'The horseman has a riding crop with him.'

(22)   Na terpoşa bod biş han.

     na terpo-şa bod   biş han
     DEF cup-LOC NEG.EXIST.PRES none water.NOM

     'The cup doesn't have any water in it.'

Lastly, there does also exist the verb *diti* meaning 'to own, possess' which can be used to indicate possession. However, as the translation suggests, this is not the default strategy for expressing predicative possession.

(23)   Na deçuta diti gara gozaz.

     na   deçuta   diti   gara   goz-az.
     DEF   farmer.NOM   own.PRES   much   cow-ACC

     'The farmer owns a lot of cows.'

(24)   A be dizit na somaz.

     a   be   dizit   na   soma-z.
     3SG.NOM   NEG   own.NPST   DEF   house-ACC

     'He didn't own the house.'

(25)   Hay diçar eşek daruz.

     hay   diçar   eşk   daru-z.
     3PL.NOM   own.PL.PRES   too.much   car-ACC

     'They own too many cars.'

As can be seen in the examples above, the verb *diti* is slightly irregular in its conjugation (see **??** for more information on irregular verbs).

8.3   External possession

External possession is a phenomenon in which a semantic possessor occurs in a separate constituent to its possessum. This is common in the languages of Europe but is also found in certain other languages, such as Yimas in Papua New Guinea and Chickasaw in Oklahoma (Payne & Barshi 1999). In Kamya, external possession is somewhat largely restricted to inalienably possessed nouns and is especially common with body parts and kinship terms.

     Firstly, attributive possession is not used when the direct object of a transitive verb belongs to the subject of that same verb.

(26)   Cen vanad na kawaz.

     cen   vand-Ø   na   kaw-az
     1SG.NOM   wash-PRES   DEF   hand-ACC

     'I wash my hands.'

(27)   Cen maldit n' amzaz.

     cen   mal-dit   n'   amz-az
     1SG.NOM   see-NPST   DEF   mother-ACC

     'I saw my mother.'

Indirect objects and adjuncts may also act in a similar manner.

(28) A reçit na henziş ş' işaz.

a   reç-it   na henz-iş   ş'   işa-z
3SG.NOM give-NPST DEF brother-DAT INDEF gift-ACC

'He gave his brother a present.'

(29) Me dhuriyar na dhurisakaz na batatala.

me   dhuri-ar-Ø   na dhurisak-az   na bata-ta-la
1PL.NOM watch-PL-PRES DEF television-ACC DEF parent-INST-COM

'We are watching television with our parents.'

In addition to this, when a direct object does not belong to the subject, a dative indirect object can be included to express the possessor.

(30) N' amaz berkuldit na çuluş na selkaz.

n' amz   berk-ul-it   na çulu-ş   na selk-az
DEF mother.NOM comb-VRB-NPST DEF child-DAT DEF hair-ACC

'The mother combed her child's hair.'

(31) A loçet ceş na poçaz.

a   loçe-t   ceş   na poç-az
3SG.NOM squeeze-NPST 1SG.DAT DEF leg-ACC

'He squeezed my leg.'

External possession is also sometimes extended to include the possession of a subject by another argument, especially with body parts that are the subjects of intransitive verbs, as in (32a). In such cases, there is also a valid non-external alternative which uses normal attributive possession, given in (32b).

(32)   a. Na dunuc zumut na sosaş.
Na dunc   zumu-t   na sosa-ş
DEF stomach.NOM swell-NPST DEF child-DAT
'The child's stomach swelled.'

    b. Na sosare dunuc zumut.
Na sosa-re   dunc   zumu-t
DEF child-GEN stomach.NOM swell-NPST
'The child's stomach swelled.'

This is similar to the way in which external or non-external possession may be expressed in certain mediopassive constructions.

(33)   a. Umar roçit na sosaş na semaz.
Umar   roç-it   na sosa-ş   na sem-az
Umar.NOM break-NPST DEF child-DAT DEF arm-ACC
'Umar broke the child's arm.'

    b. Na sem roçot na sosaş (Umarta).

> Na sem   roç-o-t   na sosa-ş   Umar-ta
> DEF arm.NOM break-MDP-NPST DEF child-DAT Umar-INST
> 'The child's arm was broken (by Umar).'

    c. Na sosare sem roçot (Umarta).

> Na sosa-re   sem   roç-o-t   Umar-ta
> DEF child-GEN arm.NOM break-MDP-NPST Umar-INST
> 'The child's arm was broken (by Umar).'

To convert the active construction in (33a), though both equally valid, the strategy in (33b) is normally used to focus the possessum whereas (33c) is usually used to focus the possessor. However, the external-possession strategy is only possible in the mediopassive when the possessum fulfils certain thematic roles, especially the patient. Otherwise, only the normal attributive-possession strategy in (33c) can be used, as shown in (34b) below.

(34)   a. Umar maldit na sosaş na semaz.

> Umar   mal-dit   na sosa-ş   na sem-az
> Umar.NOM see-NPST DEF child-DAT DEF arm-ACC
> 'Umar saw the child's arm.'

    b. Na sosare sem malot (Umarta).

> Na sosa-re   sem   mal-o-t   Umar-ta
> DEF child-GEN arm.NOM see-MDP-NPST Umar-INST
> 'The child's arm was seen (by Umar).'

A final nuance to note is that, with body parts that naturally occur in pairs or more, use of the definite article in a direct object position often implies the plural number. However, the indefinite (without any overt nominal plural marker) results in a singular interpretation.

(35)   a. Na han peçit ceş na kawaz.

> na han   peçit   ceş   na kaw-az
> DEF water.NOM scald.NPST 1SG.DAT DEF hand-ACC
> 'The water scalded my hands.'

    b. Na han peçit ceş şi kawaz.

> na han   peçit   ceş   şi   kaw-az
> DEF water.NOM scald.NPST 1SG.DAT INDEF hand-ACC
> 'The water scalded my hand.'

8.4   Possessive pronouns

Possessive pronouns are formed by adding the suffix *-n* to the genitive forms of the personal pronouns (see **??**). Additional case suffixes may then be added according to the pronoun's role in the sentence. Pronouns are accompanied by an article in a similar manner to in normal attributive possession (see §8.1).

(36)   Na teren retut şi skarazen.

na   tere-n-Ø   retu-t   şi   skara-zen
DEF 2SG.GEN-NM-NOM fall-NPST INDEF cliff-ABL

'Yours fell off a cliff.'

(37)   Reça aş na cerenaz.

reç-a   a-ş   na   cere-n-az
give-IMP 3SG-DAT   DEF 1SG.GEN-NM-ACC

'Give him mine.'

Using possessive pronouns is, however, somewhat very common in Kamya, with speakers mostly preferring to simply use the referent noun.

Abbreviations

1	first person		INST	instrumental
2	second person		LOC	locative
3	third person		MDP	mediopassive
ABL	ablative		NEG	negative
ACC	accusative		NM	nominaliser
COM	comitative		NOM	nominative
DAT	dative		NPST	near past
DEF	definite		PRES	present
EXIST	existential verb		SG	singular
GEN	genitive		VRB	verbaliser
IMP	imperative			
INDEF	indefinite			

References

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