Turkic default agreement

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Introduction

Genitive case is a case on nouns that is often used to show possession. An example is given below, in which *my* is the possessor of the possessum, *great and unmatched wisdom*:

(1) my [great and unmatched wisdom] Trump's Twitter, Oct 7

Since Chomsky (2000) it's often been assumed that agreement (via the operation Agree) assigns case in the narrow syntax. This isn't possible to see in English, so under this approach, we might assume that English does have agreement, but it's just null; you can't see it.

Introduction

But we can look at a language like Turkish, which does have agreement with possessors. We see that the phi-features of the possessor (almost) always match up with the phi-features of the possessive suffix:

(2) Ben-**im** kedi-**m**
1SG-GEN cat-1SG
'my cat'

(3) Deniz-**in** kedi-**si**
Deniz-GEN cat-3SG
'Deniz's cat'

But couldn't it also be the case that case (no pun intended) determines agreement, and not the other way around?

Introduction

- The goal of this presentation is to determine when and how genitive case is assigned: is genitive case assigned by agreement or is it the other way around; is agreement parasitic on case? And in what conditions is it assigned?
- Based on evidence from many Turkic languages, I argue that genitive case assignment in Turkic is an unmarked case that is assigned **before** agreement, as argued for in Bobaljik (2008).
- The data is from several Turkish speakers (including myself), and in person fieldwork from 1 native Sakha speaker, and field work via Skype from 3 native Uzbek and Altai speakers and 1 Kyrgyz speaker.

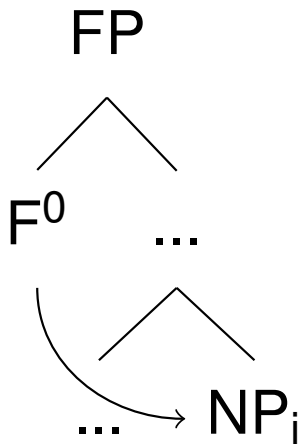
Introduction

I will argue for this based on an analysis of the phenomenon I call default agreement with complex possessors in Turkic, which assumes that KP, the functional projection for case, is assigned before agreement and can block agreement.

Background

- Baker & Vinokurova (2010) argues for two different ways (or modalities) in which case is assigned in Sakha.
- First, there is standard Chomskyan view in which case is assigned, via designated functional heads which assign case via agreement to the closest NP. In the Baker & Vinokurova (2010) approach, an agreeing D^0 assigns genitive case and T^0 assigns nominative case. Case assignment is parasitic on previous phi-agreement between F^0 and NP_i.

(4)



Background

Baker (2015) adapts this approach from Sakha to other languages like Turkish. He claims that languages in which genitive case is assigned in this way only allow one genitive case-marked NP inside an NP.

(5) Deniz-in Paris-(*in) resim-i
Deniz-GEN Paris-(*GEN) picture-3SG
'Deniz's picture of Paris'

In the example above, *Paris resimi* is a compound. *Paris* can't be genitive case-marked.

Background

Also, in these languages, a possessive suffix has the same phi-features as the possessor.

(6) Benim kedi-**m** (1SG, my cat)

(7) Bizim kedi-**miz** (1PL, our cat)

(8) Senin kedi-**n** (2SG, your cat)

(9) Sizin kedi-**niz** (2PL, your(pl) cat)

(10) Onun kedi-**si** (3SG, his/her cat)

(11) Onlarin kedi-**si** (3PL their cat)

A natural assumption is that in possessive structures, a head D or Poss (following Alexiadou et al. (2007) among others) assigns case to via agreement with the possessor.

Background

This contrasts with languages like Japanese or Tamil, which allow multiple genitive-marked NPs in a possessive structure.

(12) Itachi no karasu
Itachi GEN crow
'Itachi's crow'

(13) Akatsuki no Konoha no hakai
Akatsuki GEN Konoha GEN destruction
'Akatsuki's destruction of Konoha'

They also have no possessive suffix that goes along with the possessor.

Background

- Baker doesn't want to account for Japanese and Tamil genitive case in the same way as Turkish and Sakha, so he assumes a different modality of genitive case for Japanese.
- We also have a configurational mechanism to assign case markings, based on Marantz (1991), who distinguishes between four kinds of case (the order of assignment is from top to bottom):

(14) Lexical case (case determined by the lexical properties of an item, such as quirky case assigning verbs in Icelandic)

(15) Dependent case (case that is assigned depending on whether there are other nominals in the same local domain, such as accusative or ergative)

(16) Unmarked case (nominative to any NP in a clause, genitive to any NP in an NP)

(17) Default case (assigned to any NP not marked for case)

Background

- Also for Baker and Vinokurova (2010), though nominative and genitive case in Sakha are assigned in the Chomskyan way, accusative and dative case are assigned configurationally. This is why the paper is titled "two modalities of case assignment in Sakha."
- But do we really need the Chomskyan approach in addition to the Marantz approach? Levin & Preminger (2015) argues that no, you don’t need two different modalities of case assignment in Sakha.

Background

- We might instead think that it is the presence of an appropriately case-marked NP that enables agreement, first mentioned by Bittner & Hale (1996), and developed further by Bobaljik (2008), who treats agreement as a post-syntactic operation. Agreement might inspect all nominals, and agree with ones with the appropriate case assignment.
- I will argue that all case is assigned configurationally, and genitive case, even in Turkish and Sakha, is an unmarked case, and agreement is parasitic on case already assigned, following Bobaljik (2008). I provide an independent reason for why Japanese allows multiple genitive case-marked NPs while Turkic languages only allow one.

Default agreement

Turkic languages often have default agreement with complex possessors, in which case to the complex possessor is assigned despite lack of agreement. Ince (2008) first noted this in an unpublished short paper. This happens with partitive subjects (the two of us, all of us) and adnominal pronouns (we linguists, we Turks). Default agreement is obligatory in Turkish.

(18) Iki-miz-in kedi-si
two-1PL-GEN cat-3SG
'the two of us's cat.'

(19) *Iki-miz-in kedi-miz
two-1PL-GEN cat-1PL
'(Intended meaning) the two of us's cat.'

Default agreement

It seems that partitive subjects contain a null pronoun with phi-features. We can make it overt but this makes no difference in agreement patterns:

(20) Biz iki-miz-in kedi-si
1PL two-1PL-GEN cat-3SG
'the two of us's cat'

(21) *Biz iki-miz-in kedi-miz
1PL two-1PL-GEN cat-1PL
'(Intended meaning) the two of us's cat'

I also want to point out that the fact that pronoun in the partitive subject construction is **not** assigned genitive case is unexpected in Baker's approach. For Baker, D^0 assigns genitive case, and this makes nominal agreement appear. We see nominal agreement appear on the partitive.. yet the partitive pronoun is in nominative case, which is not expected. In fact, the partitive pronoun cannot be assigned genitive case (**bizim ikimiz* is completely out.)

Default agreement

Turkic is well-known for having structures in which genitive case is assigned that aren't possessive structures. Default agreement happens in other contexts in which genitive case is assigned as well, for example in nominalized non-infinitival complement clauses.

(22) Deniz iki-miz-in gide-ceğ-i-ni söyle-di.
Deniz two-1PL-GEN leave-FUT-3SG-ACC said-PST
'Deniz said the two of us will leave.'

(23) *Deniz iki-miz-in gide-ceğ-imiz-i söyle-di.
Deniz two-1PL-GEN leave-FUT-1PL-ACC said-PST
'(Intended meaning) Deniz said the two of us will leave.'

Default agreement

The same in inflected infinitival clauses:

(24) Deniz iki-miz-in gel-me-si-ni isti-yor.
Deniz two-1PL-GEN come-INF-3SG-ACC want-PRES
'Deniz wants the two of us to come.'

(25) ??Deniz iki-miz-in gel-me-miz-i isti-yor.
Deniz two-1PL-GEN come-INF-1PL-ACC want-PRES
'(Intended meaning) Deniz wants the two of us to come.'

Default agreement

The same in relative clauses:

(26) Iki-miz-in ye-diğ-i döner
two-1PL-GEN eat-FN-3SG doner
'the doner the two of us ate.'

(27) *Iki-miz-in ye-diğ-miz döner
two-1PL-GEN eat-FN-1PL döner
'(Intended meaning) the döner the two of us ate'

Default agreement

This isn't unique to partitive subjects. It also happens with what I call adnominal pronouns.

(28) Biz Türk-ler-in kedi-si
1PL Turk-PL-GEN cat-3SG
'the cat of us Turks'

(29) *Biz Türk-ler-in kedi-miz
1PL Turk-PL-GEN cat-3SG
'(Intended meaning) the cat of us Turks'

This might indicate that in complex possessor, the features of the adnominal/partitive pronoun are not able to agree with the probe.

Default agreement

In finite clauses, default agreement is not an option; full agreement is required:

(30) (Biz) Iki-miz gel-dik
1PL iki-1PL come-1PL
'the two of us came'

(31) *(Biz) iki-miz gel-di
1PL two-1PL come-3SG
'(Intended meaning) the two of us came.'

One natural observation we can make is that default agreement arises with genitive case, and full agreement arises with nominative case. Nominative case is often analyzed as caselessness, however, as argued for in Kornfilt & Preminger (2015).

Default agreement

In some finite clauses it's optional (Aydın (2008)):

(32) Sekiz kişi paintball-a git-miş-ti-k ve sadece iki-miz
Eight person paintball-DAT go-EV-PST-1PL and only two-1PL
daha-önce oyna-mış-tı(-k)
before play-EV-PST.3SG-(1PL)
'Eight of us went to play paintball and only two of us had played before.'

Aydın claims that it's always optional in finite clauses for this reason, but he doesn't consider simple finite clauses like "*Ikimiz geldi." Rather, it's because of the presence of *sadece* that it is optional.

Default agreement

Sadece makes full agreement optional even in simple finite clauses, as shown by the contrast in (33):

(33) a. * Iki-miz Boston-a gitti.
Two-1PL Boston-DAT go-PST.
'The two of us went to Boston.'

b. Sadece iki-miz Boston-a git-ti.
Only two-1PL Boston-DAT go-PST.3SG.
'Only the two of us went to Boston.'

Default agreement

The presence of *sadece* is not necessary; contrastive focus can also block agreement in finite clauses, where the presence of *sadece* is optional.

(34) On kişi Harvard-a başvur-duk, ama (sadece) iki-miz
Ten person Harvard-DAT apply-PST, but (only) two-1PL
Harvard-a kabul edil-di.
Harvard-DAT accept AUX-PST.3SG.
'Ten of us applied to Harvard, but (only) two of us were accepted.'

Default agreement

In every other Turkic language in my sample (not counting Uzbek), default agreement is possible but not required. Uyghur and Kazakh are not shown.

Default agreement

(35)

a. eki-le-bis-ting
two-NUM-1PL-GEN
biçig-i
book-3SG
'the two of us's book'

b. eki-le-bis-ting
two-NUM-1PL-GEN
biçig-is
book-1PL
'the two of us's book'
Altai

c. ikki-em-mit aqa-ta
two-NUM-1PL father-3SG
'the two of us's father'

d. ikki-em-mit aqa-bıt
two-NUM-1PL father-1PL
'the two of us's father'
Sakha

e. ekö:-büz-dün
two.NUM-1PL-GEN
kiteb-i
book-3SG
'the two of us's book'

f. ekö:-büz-dün
two.NUM-1PL-GEN
kiteb-ibiz
book-1PL
'the two of us's book'
Kyrgyz

Default agreement

(36)

a. ekilebistiñ kıçırgan biçigd
‘the book the two of us read$_{3SG}$’

b. ekilebistiñ kıçırgan biçig-**is**
‘the book the two of us read$_{1PL}$’

c. ikkiemmit siebit at-**a**
‘the book the two of us read$_{3SG}$’

d. ikkiemmit siebit ap-**pıt**
‘the book the two of us read$_{1PL}$’

e. ekö:büzdün cazgan kiteb-**i**
‘the book the two of us read$_{3SG}$’

f. ekö:büzdün cazgan kiteb-**ibiz**
‘the book the two of us read$_{1PL}$’

Default agreement

Full agreement is required, however, in the finite clauses of these languages.

(37) Ekilebis keldis (1PL)

(38) *Ekilebis keldi (3SG) Altai

Uzbek

However, default agreement is impossible in Uzbek, as shown in (39a)-(39b), and this carries on to the relative clauses in (39c)-(39d):

(39) a. * Ikki-miz-ning kitob-i
Two-1PL-GEN book-3SG
'the two of us's book'

b. Ikki-miz-ning kitob-imiz
Two-1PL-GEN book-1PL
'the two of us's book'

c. * Ikki-miz-ning kör-gan
Two-1PL-GEN saw-PTPL
kitob-i
book-3SG
'the one the two of us saw'

d. Ikki-miz-ning kör-gan
Two-1PL-GEN saw-PTPL
kitob-imiz
book-1PL
'the one the two of us saw'

Default agreement

Here's a summary of the languages I've looked into:

(40) Default agreement required with genitive case: Turkish, Hungarian, Finnish

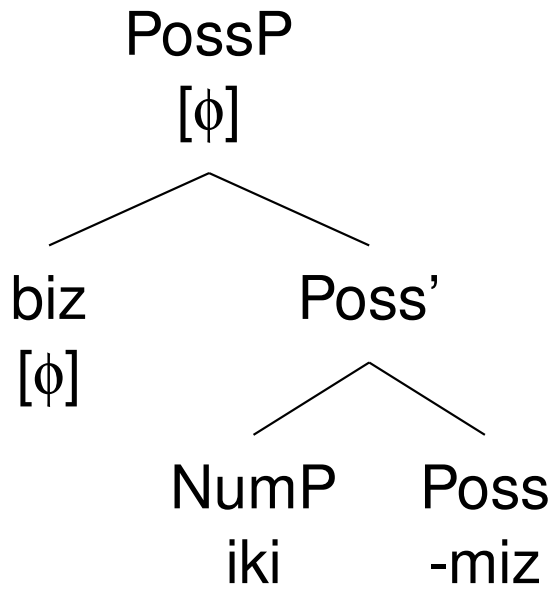
(41) Default agreement optional with genitive case: Sakha, Kyrgyz, Kazakh, Uyghur, Altai

(42) Default agreement banned with genitive case: Uzbek

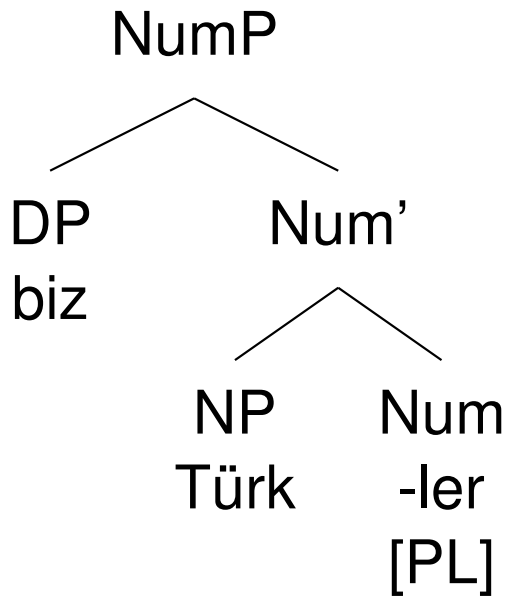
Discussion

I propose the pronoun in partitives is in Spec,PossP as it is the source of the non-optional agreement on the possessive suffix, as in (44). I also propose that the pronoun in APs is located in Spec,NumP given the plurality of the lexical NP in APs, as in (43).

(43) Partitive subject



(44) Adnominal pronoun



I refer the listener to Höhn (2019) to motivate these structures.

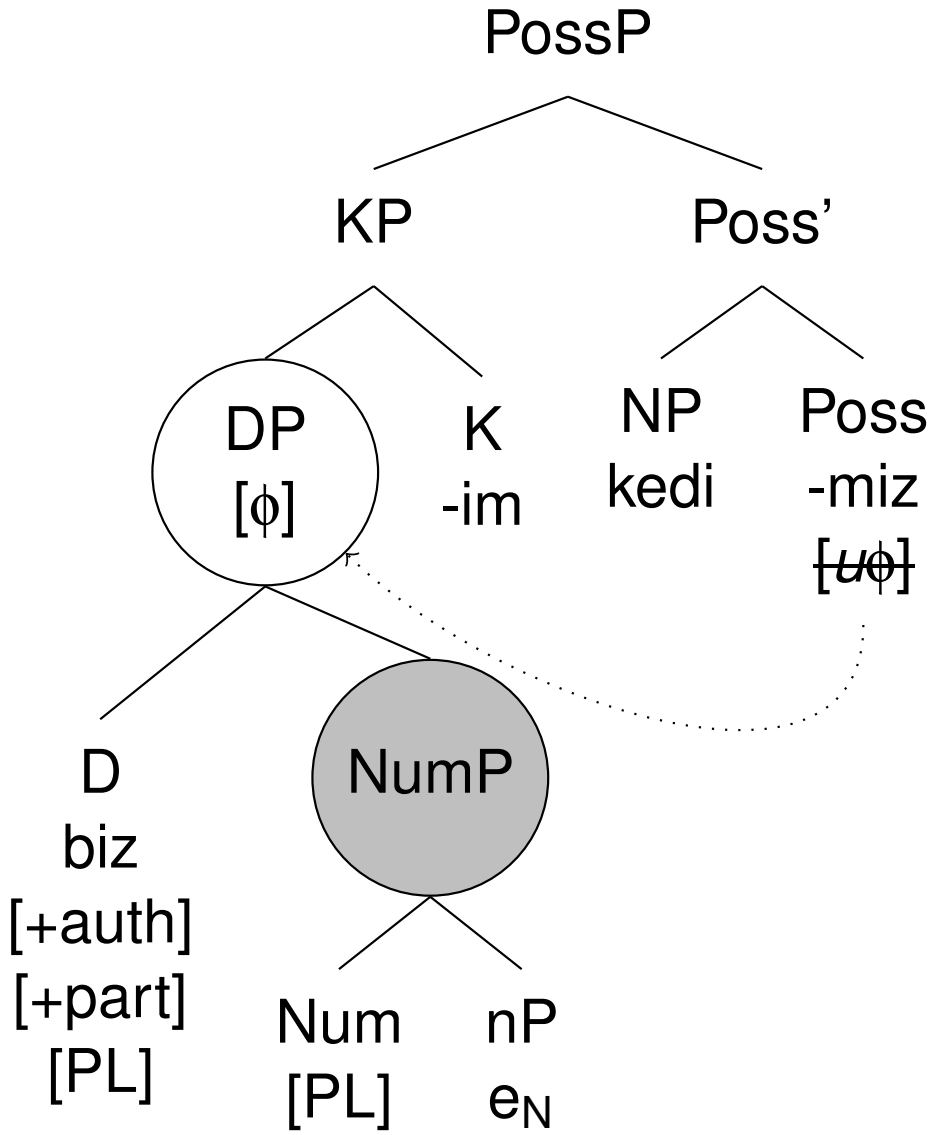
Discussion

- We might be able to come up with a reason why default agreement is required in Turkish. Let's follow Kornfilt & Preminger (2015) in assuming that nominative case is just caselessness.
- If we also assume that case is projected via KP layers on top of DP, as in Bittner & Hale (1996), we can say that nominative case NPs lack a KP layer, while genitive-marked NPs do have a KP layer.

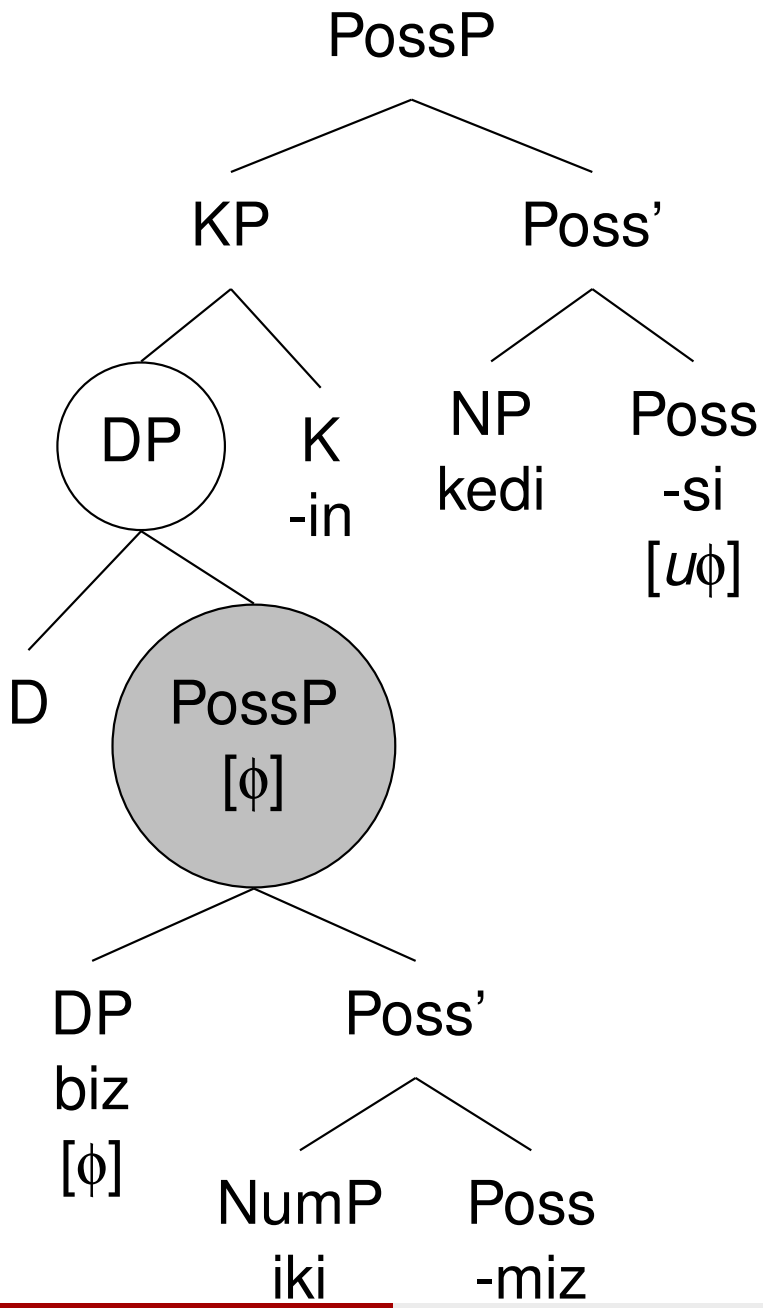
Discussion

- I further assume Chomsky (2001)'s weakened PIC, defined as follows: in phase A with head H, the domain of H is accessible to operations outside A only until the next (strong) phase head is merged. Furthermore, both D and K are phase heads.
- Default agreement, then, arises in Preminger (2014)'s sense, when agreement is attempted with complex possessors and fails, but the derivation doesn't crash.

(45) Derivation of a generic possessive construction, ex. ‘bizim kedi-miz’



(46) Derivation of a partitive subject, ex. *(biz) ikimizin kedi-si*



Do the ϕ-features of the pronoun get passed on from PossP to the maximal projection of the nominal phrase? The answer is no, and this is simple to show. For example, when PSes with 1st person possessors agree with the matrix verb in Turkish, there is 3rd person singular agreement on the verb:

(47) a. Benim kedim geldi.
'My cat came.'

b. * Benim kedim geldi-**m**.
'My cat came.'

So the difference between regular pronouns and complex possessors is, as you'd expect, complexity. The features of the pronoun in partitive subjects and adnominal pronouns just do not pass onto DP. The pronoun just is part of the D layer in the regular pronoun construction, so it has ϕ-features, but it is in a specifier position below D in the complex one.

Discussion

- For Baker, KPs would be assigned after agreement, so they can't be a barrier to agreement. Crucially in my story, KPs are assigned before agreement, so they can block agreement. So Baker can't have his cake and eat it.
- Deriving the optionality (or ban in Uzbek) of default agreement would have to assume some kind of optional movement to the phase edge of the complex possessor, which is required in Uzbek.
- If Turkic languages lack a D layer, as argued by Bošković (2008) among others, then the adnominal or partitive pronoun would have to be inside another phase, maybe inside a projection the categorial root head n^0.

Default agreement outside of Turkic

Holmberg (2017) shows that Finnish has default agreement with adnominal pronouns as well:

(48) a. teidän lapsien mielipitee(*-nne)
you.GEN children.GEN opinions.3SG-(*2PL)
'you children's opinions'

b. Meidän lapsien mielipiteitä(*-mme) ei
we.GEN children.GEN opinions.PAR.3SG(*-1PL) not
oteta vakavasti.
take.PASS seriously
'We children, our opinions are not taken seriously.'

c. teidän mielipitee-nne
you.GEN opinions-2PL
'your opinions'

Default agreement in Finnish

However, like Turkish, there is full agreement on the verb in the subject position of a sentence; in other words it has nominative case-marking, or caseless following Kornfilt & Preminger (2015):

(49) Me lapset voi-mme tulla mukaan
we.NOM children.NOM can-1PL come along
'We children can come along.'

As I suggested, he also argues that KP blocks agreement, but he does not provide an account of why KP does not block agreement with regular pronouns.

Japanese vs. Turkish

If genitive is an unmarked case in both Japanese and Turkish, why does Japanese allow multiple genitive-marked NPs in an NP? Note that Turkish allows only one specifier in a clause, from Kornfilt (1991):

(50) *medeni ülke-ler erkek-ler ortalama hayat süre-si kısa
civilized country-PL man-PL average life span-CMPD short
'(Intended meaning) The life of men in civilized countries is short.'

Japanese allows many nominative-marked NPs in a clause:

(51) Taro-ga musume-ga isya-ni natta
Taro-NOM daughter-NOM doctor-DAT became
'Taro, his daughter became a doctor.'

Conclusion

- I've brought up two problems for Baker's approach to case assignment in this presentation. I've argued that genitive case need not be assigned via agreement; it can be assigned as an unmarked case even in Turkish and Sakha.
- Further problems also arise from Turkic relative clauses (even Sakha's relative clauses which were discussed in Baker (2010), and genitive case-assigned NPs present without agreement in Turkish; check my Lingbuzz manuscript for more details.
- Thank you for listening!

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