A Lowering Analysis of Dagur CASE-POSS Order

Overview Dagur represents typologically exceptional stem-CASE-POSS suffix order in possessive constructions (also attested in other Mongolic/Tungusic languages) compared to typologically-similar Turkic languages. I suggest that the suffix order is due to postsyntactic lowering of K^0 (CASE) to D^0 (POSS). Evidence from Suspended Affixation (SA) shows that the order cannot be due to Local Dislocation (LD), and that Dagur SA is a low coordination structure, instead of ellipsis.

Background In Dagur possessive constructions, the suffix following the possessum agrees in person and number with the possessor. The prenominal possessor is optional, but the possessive suffix is not. When the possessive construction is marked for case, CASE suffix precedes POSS suffix. This is true for all (attested) cases and person/number: e.g., in (1) where the possessive DP (*shinii*) noyu-shin^y ('your dog') is marked for ablative, the ablative suffix -*eer* precedes the POSS suffix -*shin^y*.

(1) Bi (shini) no yu -eer -shin^y ai -wei

I.NOM your dog -ABL -2S.POSS afraid -NPST.1SG 'I'm afraid of your dog.' The same suffix order extends to argument clauses and non-subject relative clauses as well e.g., (2):

(2) Bataar [tani Morin Dawa -d iqi -sen -ii -tan^y] med -sen Bataar [your.PL Morin Dawa -DAT go -PST.PTCP -ACC -2PL.POSS] know -PST.3SG 'Bataar knows that you.PL went to Morin Dawa.'

Since in all crucial syntactic and semantic respects Dagur is very similar to other Turkic languages, which do not have this order, I propose this suffix order to be the result of a postsyntactic operation rather than a direct output of syntax.

The Analysis It has been noted that the CASE-POSS order is also possible in some Uralic languages like Mari (Guseva & Weisser, 2018). G&W argue that the order is a consequence of postsyntactic metathesis that applies to linearized structures (similar to LD), based on suspended affixation (SA) facts. SA is the construction where one grammatical ending serves two or more parallel words. It's been observed in many languages with SA that the elements omitted must be at the right edge of the non-final conjuncts, which is sometimes termed the *right edge condition* (REC). G&W's account involves some surprising SA facts summarized in (3): in Mari the judgments for (3a-b) are the opposite of what's expected under the REC. Analyzing SA as ellipsis, G&W argue that this is due to the right edge suffix being elided after linearization, but crucially *before* the metathesis operation changes the order from POSS-CASE to CASE-POSS. Thus CASE – the right edge suffix before metathesis – can be elided. However, this argument cannot be extended to Dagur. First, Dagur has quite robust SA which almost uniformly observes the REC–(3a) is ungrammatical, which is expected. Second, (3b) is one interesting exception in Dagur: although the REC is observed, the grammaticality is degraded.

		coordination with SA (gray suffix is unpronounced)	Mari	Dagur
(3)	a.	stem-CASE-POSS & stem-CASE-POSS	1	*
	b.	stem-CASE-POSS & stem-CASE-POSS	*	??

These facts are straightforwardly accounted for if Dagur SA is treated as low coordination instead of ellipsis. To show it is not ellipsis, consider [stem-POSS & stem-POSS] coordination. In both Mari and Dagur, the first POSS can be omitted with the second POSS ending serving both conjuncts. This can be analyzed as either ellipsis (as in G&W), or low coordination [stem & stem]-POSS. From just possessive coordinations it's unclear which analysis is on the right track. However, Dagur has a special construction where the 3s.POSS suffix *-in*^y functions as a D⁰ which attaches to adjectives and turn them into argumental DPs with no possessive interpretation (4b) (cf. (4c)).

(4)	a.	ter pinguee <u>xulaan</u>	b.	<u>xulaan</u> -ii -in ^y	idsenbi	c.	* <u>xulaan</u> -ii idsenbi
		that apple red		red-ACC-3S.POSS	eat.PST.1SG		red-ACC eat.PST.1SG
		'that apple is red'		'I ate the red one	,		Int.'I ate the red one'

Crucially, in Dagur there are two types of coordinators: *boloor* conjoins two argumental DPs (*pii* **boloor** *qas* 'pen **and** paper'), whereas *beitleen* conjoins two predicates which can be NP, AP, or VP (*ene ger* [*engel beitleen geyeeken*] 'this room is [spacious **and** bright]'). Note that an [*Adj*-3S.POSS & *Adj*-3S.POSS] coordination, which conjoins two DPs like the one in (4b), requires argument coordinator but not predicate coordinator (5a-b). However, omitting 3S.POSS suffix on the first conjunct requires the predicate coordinator (5c), and is ungrammatical with the argument coordinator (5d).

(5) [context: there are many apples on the table] a. $[xiy-ii-n^y \quad boloor \ xulaan-ii-n^y \quad] id-sen-bi$ [big-ACC-3S.POSS CONJ red-ACC-3S.POSS] eat-PST-1SG 'I ate the big one and the red one'

b. $*[xiy-ii-n^y \text{ beitleen } xulaan-ii-n^y] id-sen-bi$

c. [xiy **beitleen** xulaan-ii-n^y] idsenbi

. [big CONJ red-ACC-3S.POSS] eat.PST.1SG

'I ate the one that is big and red'

*'I ate the big one and the red one.'

d. $*[xiy boloor xulaan-ii-n^y]$ idsenbi

If SA were ellipsis, which arguably applies at PF, the underlying structure in (5c-d) would be [big-3S.POSS & red-3S.POSS] like (6) and hence would not require the predicate coordinator. But we see the predicate coordinator is obligatory in (5c), which requires that the structure is underlyingly (7), not (6). This is expected under the analysis where SA is low coordination.



In order to see why CASE-POSS order is the result of Lowering, consider the following SA examples. (8) (an instantiation of (3b)) has severely degraded grammaticality, despite observing the REC. In contrast, suspending both CASE and POSS makes the sentence perfectly grammatical (9):

- (8) ??/*tery-eer boloor mor^y-eer-min^y
 vehicle-INST CONJ horse-INST-1S.POSS
 irsen-taan^y came-2PL Int. same as (9)
- (9) terey boloor mor^y-eer-min^y irsen-taan^y
 vehicle CONJ horse-INST-1S.POSS came-2PL
 'you came on my vehicle and on my horse'

I take the POSS suffix to be located on D^0 , and the highest head in the nominal projection to be K^0 , taking DP as its complement. (10) shows the structure for (9). After syntax (at PF branch), K^0 lowers to the head of its complement– D^0 , forming one complex head. Since (8) can only be derived from a structure where DP>KP, it's correctly excluded. Furthermore, recall that (3a) is ungrammatical in



Dagur but grammatical in Mari. The Mari case is accounted for under G&W's metathesis approach. In contrast, given that Dagur SA is low coordination, the fact that the REC is observed in Dagur (3a) cannot be explained through postsyntactic linear reordering operations like Local Dislocation. However, it directly falls out from the current Lowering analysis (11). According to the definition of Lowering, a head can only lower to the head of its complement (Embick & Noyer, 2001). Since in (11) the head of K⁰'s complement is &⁰, K⁰ cannot lower to D⁰.

References Embick, D., & Noyer, R. (2001). Movement operations after syntax. *Linguistic Inquiry*, 32(4). Guseva, E., & Weisser, P. (2018). Postsyntactic reordering in Mari nominal domain. *Natural Lang & Ling Theory*.