

Genitive case-marked subject in Modern Mongolian

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Товч утга: “Орчин цагийн монгол хэлний харьяалахын тийн ялгалаар хэлбэржсэн өгүүлэгдэхүүн” судалгааны өгүүлэлд орчин цагийн монгол хэлний харьяалахын тийн ялгалаар хэлбэржсэн өгүүлэгдэхүүний онцлогийг өгүүлсэн болно. Нэгдүгээрт, угсарсан нийлмэл өгүүлбэрийн бүх төрлийн гишүүн өгүүлбэрт харьяалахын тийн ялгалаар хэлбэржсэн өгүүлэгдэхүүн илэрч байна. Хоёрдугаарт, харьяалахын тийн ялгалаар хэлбэржсэн бүтцүүдийн тодорхой шинжүүдийг тайлбарлана. Гуравдугаарт, утгазүйн хувьд хязгаарлагдмал, хэлбэрийн хувьд тэмдэглэгддэг, бусад тийн ялгалаар сэлгэх боломжтой, тодотгол гишүүн өгүүлбэрт ордог харьяалахын тийн ялгалаар хэлбэржсэн өгүүлэгдэхүүний талаар өгүүлэх болно.

Түлхүүр үгс: Харьяалахын тийн ялгал, өгүүлэгдэхүүн, тодотгон холбох нөхцөл, тийн ялгал сэлгэх

1. Introduction

In some languages, subjects are generally marked with the genitive in certain environments, e.g. Dagur (Hale 2002; Martin 1961), Japanese (Bedell 1971; Hiraiwa 2000; Miyagawa 2011), Turkish (Kornfilt and Whitman 2012), Polynesian languages (Herd 2015), and Slavic languages (Franks 2005; Robinson 2013). See the examples below:

- | | |
|--------------|--|
| Dagur (1) | [mini au -sen] mery -miny sain.
[1sGen buy-PERF] horse-1sGen good
‘The horse I bought is good.’ (Hale 2002: 109) |
| Japanese (2) | [watasi-no katta] uma-wa ii.
[I-Gen bought] hors e-Top good
‘The horse I bought is good.’ |
| Turkish (3) | [ben-im al-dıĝ -ım] at iyi-dir
[I-Gen buy-Factive Nominalizer-1.SG horse good-is
‘The horse I bought is good.’ (Miyagawa S, 2008:1,
p.c ¹ Jaklin Kornfilt, 1984) |
| Hawaiian (4) | Kāna mea i makemake ai i ia wā...
3ps.GEN thing T/A want RESPRN at that time
‘The thing that he wanted at that time...’ (Hawkins 2000:133) |

¹ p.c. - politically correct

This paper presents peculiarities of the genitive case marked subject in Modern Khalkha Mongolian. First, we argue that subordinate clauses with genitive case-marked subjects in Modern Mongolian are CP. Second, we provide an explanation for certain conditions of genitive subject constructions in Modern Mongolian (MM). Third, we attempt to show that genitive case-marked subjects are semantically restricted and information is structurally marked in MM.

2. Genitive case-marked subject in Modern Mongolian

2.1. Previous research

Phenomena related to genitive case-marked subjects in Modern Mongolian have been pointed out and investigated by scholars such as D.Tserenpil and R.Kullmann (2005:392), M.Mizuno (1995), Y.Munkh-Amgalan (2014:253) from a historical perspective.

2.2 D- licensing or C-licensing?

Cross-linguistically, there are two main analyses for the genitive case marking on subordinate subjects.

(i) The Determiner-licensing Hypothesis

The genitive on the subject is licensed by the D associated with the nominal head (Miyagawa 1993, Ochi 2001; based on Bedell 1972, Saito 1985);

(ii) The Complementizer-licensing Hypothesis

The genitive is licensed by the “subjunctive” morphology of the V-C complex (Hiraiwa 2001), or the wh-agreement on C (Watanabe 1996), within the clause that contains the genitive subject.

In this paper we focus on

The focus of this paper is to answer the following question: “how is the genitive case marker assigned in these constructions in Modern Mongolian?” Hale (2002:109) claims that relative clauses in Dagur² have an aspectual phrase structure, which is commonly found in prenominal modification. He argues that aspectual phrase is smaller in structure than CP and it allows nominal heads marked with the genitive case.

- (1) a. *[[[fɪni au-sen] mery -miny] sain.*
 [[2sGEN buy-PERF] horse-2sGEN] good
 ‘The horse you bought is good.’
 b. *[[mini au-sen] biteg-miny] adig sain.*
 [[1sgGEN buy-PERF] book-1sGEN] very good
 ‘The book I bought is very good.’ (Hale, 2002:109)

Hale’s other reason for positing aspect instead of a full CP is that the verb does not have any agreement. According to Hale, agreement would not occur on the verbal

² Hale (2002) proposed that “in Dagur, the phi-feature probe merges at D, and presumably it is inherited by N. Hence, what we find in Dagur is D-licensing as opposed to C-licensing in Turkish” (Hale 2002).

inflection because there is no C to host the agreement to begin with. Furthermore, he argues that aspectual phrases in Dagur allows phi-feature on D to enter into agreement with the subject of the relative clause.

Hale (2002:109) argued that “In the relative clause, the verb itself lacks person/number agreement. If, as my exposition implies, the object relative clause involves agreement, then the putative agreement morphology is postponed and realized (as genitive pronominal agreement) on the head noun”.

Against Hale’s proposal, we argue that a) subordinate clauses provided with genitive case-marked subjects are CP, and b) it is the nominalized form of C that assigns the genitive case marker on the subject and this C also enters into agreement with the subject. In other words, we argue against Hale’s proposal based on the following facts.

First, subordinate verb carries agreement, it would occur on the verbal inflection as shown in (2). In (2.a) the subject “Dulma” of the relative clause is singular and the verb inflection carries agreement (phi-feature). In contrast, (2b) the subject *oyutn-uud* (students) is plural and the verb has plural inflection.

(2.a) Singular: *Dulmaagiin unshsan nom*
DulmaaGEN readPAST book.
Int: ‘The book that Dulma read.’

(2.b) Plural: *Oyutnuudiin unshitsgaasan nom.*
StudentsGEN readPL.PAST book
‘The book that students read’

Second, Hale’s proposal that a relative clause with genitive case-marked subjects is D-licensing in Mongolian does not explain the following complement clause with genitive case-marked subject where there is no head noun.

(3) *Bi [Dulmaa-giin zahidal bich-sen-iig] medsen*
“I know that Dulma wrote a letter”

2.3 Determining suffix in Modern Mongolian³

Mongolian morphology is highly agglutinative, and syntax is consistently head-final (SOV). Thus, morpheme order in the Mongolian sentences reflects both semantic and syntactic scope. Due to these peculiarities of Mongolian, semantic and syntactic interference between the categories can be observed directly. In Mongolian root and subordinate clauses, verbs exhibit a rich variety of suffixes expressing tense. According to the conventional analysis of Sh.Luvsanvandan (1956:190), subordinate verb inflection categories in Modern Mongolian are classified in the following ways:

³ Further denominations for these verbal suffixes in Modern Mongolian include *uilt ner* ‘verbal noun’ (Sh.Luvsanvandan:1957, B.Byambadorj:2006, Y.Munkh-Amgalan:2014), *tsagt ner* ‘noun that shows time’ (B.Rinchen:1967, M.Bazarragchaa:1998), *uiliin todotgon holboh nuhtsul* ‘verb determining suffix’ (P.Byambasan:1987, Ts.Unurbayan:2004), *neriin todotgon holboh nuhtsul* ‘noun determining suffix’ (D.Tserenpil and A.Kullmann:2005), and *baidlig ilerhiileh nuhtsul* ‘aspect suffix’ (Choi Dong-Guen:2008).

- (4) *-san*⁴ Gerund⁵ (past simple)
-dag Gerund (present simple)
-j baigaa Gerund (present continuous)
-h Gerund (future) Sh.Luvsanvandan (1957)

Furthermore, D.Tserenpil and A.Kullmann (2005) call them Noun Determining Suffixes (NDS) and classify them as shown below:

- (5) *-san*: Past Tense NDS
-dag: Indefinite Present NDS
-aa: Progressive Present NDS
-h, -huits, -maar: Future NDS

In accordance with our study, genitive case-marked constructions in Modern Mongolian display the following common properties.

- (6) a. The subject bears the genitive case in this context
 b. Subordinate verb inflections (suffix) are not followed by any other suffix.

In light of these properties let's take the following examples in MM.

- (7) a. Past: [*Uchigdur min-ii av-san*] *nomuud end baina*.
 [Yesterday I-GEN buy-PAST] book-PL here are.
 "The book that I bought (yesterday) are here"
 b. Present: [*Unuudur min-ii av-ch baigaa*] *nomuud end baina*.
 [Today I-GEN buy-PRESENT] book-PL here are.
 Int: "The book that I buy (today) are here"
 c. Future: [*Margaash min-ii av-h*] *nomuud end baina*.
 [Tomorrow I-GEN buy-FUTURE] book-PL here are.
 Int: "The book that I buy (tomorrow) are here."

As mentioned in (7a,b,c,) these subordinate clauses are marked for tense. This is one of the crucial evidences against D-licencing, leading us to adopt the C-licensing approach.

2.4 Distribution of genitive case-marked subjects in MM

The aim of this section is to show the nature of the genitive case-marked subject in Modern Mongolian. In accordance with our study, genitive case-marked subjects can occur in all types of clauses in Modern Mongolian as shown in (8-12):

- (8) Subject clause
 [*Chinii yavsan*] *chin onojee*.
 [You -GEN go-PAST] TOP is right.
 "It is right that you left"

- (9) Predicate Clause
Mongol hel sain sursan ni [*ta nariin hicheesnih*]

⁴ The morpheme "san" has variants like "son" "san" and "sen" depending on vowel harmony.

⁵ Gerund- üilt ner

- Mongolian language well learn-TOP [you -GEN is the fruit of your efforts]
 (That) you learned the Mongolian language well, [is the fruit of your efforts’
- (10) Object Clause
Tuunii irj chadahgui gedgiig bi medej baisan.
 [He-GEN come could- not]COMP I knew.
 ‘I knew that he couldn’t come’
- (11) Relative Clause
[Bold-iin unsh-san] nom-iig bi avsan.
 [Bold-GEN read-PAST] book-ACC I take-PAST
 ‘I took the book that Bold read’
- (12) Adverbial Clause
Bi uuniiг [tanii helsneer] хийнэ.
 I this [youGEN sayPAST.DET.SUFF.instr.] doFUT
 I’ll do this the way you said it.
- (13) Discourse level
*[Boldiin huugiin honi sain hariuldagiig] ee!*⁶
 BoldGEN sonGEN sheep well pasture (Exclamation).
 Int: “Bold’s son pastures his flock of sheep very well”!

2.5 Genitive case in Modern Mongolian

In this section we show that the distribution of the genitive case marker are quite complex and can’t be explained within morphosyntax. In Modern Mongolian, the genitive case marker indicates various other relationships than possession as shown in (14-16).

- (14) a. *Dorjiin baishin*
 Dorj-GEN house
 Dorj’s house
 [DP⁷ *Dorj*’s[N’ *house*]]
- (14) b. *Batiin nomiin orchuulga*
 Bat-GEN book-GEN translation
 Bat’s translation of the book
 [DP *Bat*’s[N’*translation* [DP *of the book*]]]
- (14) c. *Sum hiidiin suirel*
 Monastery-GEN destruction
 The Monastery’s destruction [by the soldiers]
 [DP the monastry’s[N’ destruction [by the soldiers]]

⁶ The interjection “ээ” in MM occurs in exclamations and expresses surprise and astonishment. Scholars call the interjection “ээ” *sul ug* ‘interjection’ (Sh.Luvsanvandan:1957), *dagan chimeh ug* ‘post-positional particle’ (P.Byambasan:1987, Ts.Unurbayan:2004) and *baimjit buteever* ‘modal morpheme’ (M.Bazarragchaa:1998).

⁷ In works published before the mid-1980s structures like (14.a.b.c) would have been analysed as noun phrases (NP). Since Abney (1987), they have been classified as determiner phrase (DP).

In (14a), “Dorj” is a possessor, in (14b) “Bat” is an agent, in (14c) “monastery” is a theme. Even though these determiners have different theta-roles, they are typically used to modify and define nouns. In English, expressions containing determiners like “the” are said to have definite reference, since they refer to entities which are assumed to be known to the hearer. In contrast, there are no definite and indefinite articles in Mongolian. Due to this functional parameter we suppose that the genitive case marker “iin” on the word “sum hiid” (monastery) in (14c) probably indicates the definiteness and specificity of its noun and the genitive case-marked word “sum hiidiin” (monastery) functions as a theme.

More specifically, let’s take the Mongolian counterpart of English DP “The Monastery’s destruction by the soldiers”. This DP is not interpreted as DP in Mongolian as it is in English. In other words, this kind of DP is expressed by the relative clause which contains the genitive case-marked subject as shown below (15):

- (15). [*Tserguudiin nuraasan*] *sum hiid*
 [*soldiers-GEN destroy-PAST*] *monestary*
 “*The Monastery’s destruction by the soldiers*”

The above mentioned example shows us that the word “sum hiid” (monastery) is defined in this clause. Also it displays that the relation between relativization and definiteness has a significant role in analyzing the existence of genitive case-marked subjects in Mongolian. To make this discussion more concrete, let’s move to the next section.

2.6 Information structure and specificity

Cross-linguistically, information structure can be realized by means of a wide variety of linguistic mechanisms. In English, information structure is expressed by pitch, intonation and clefts, whereas in Mongolian it can be expressed by anaphora, topic marking affixes, specialized discourse particles and scrambling.

In this section, we claim that the genitive case-marked subject indicates specificity and topicalization (*see* Rizzi 1997; Drubig 2003) under certain morpho-syntactic conditions, rather than indicating just a contrast to the subject. In other words, if the information is specific, the subject is genitive case-marked and if the information is generic, the subject is not genitive case-marked.

- (14a) *Bold-iin huugiin saihan duuldagiig ee.*
 Bold-GEN son-GEN well sing (exclamation “ee”)
 Int: Wow, It is a wonderful song that Bold’s son sang!
- (14b) *Ene huugiin saihan duuldagiig ee*
 This son-GEN well sing
 Int: “Wow, It is a wonderful song that this son sang!”
- (14c) *Huugiin saihan duuldagiig ee**
 Son-GEN well sing *
 Int: Wow, It is a wonderful song that the son sang!

As mentioned above (14a) and (14b) are grammatical in that the genitive case-marked subject coexists with the possessor “Bold’ and the determiner ‘ene” (this), whereas (14c) is ungrammatical because it does not contain determiners like “ene” (“this” in English).

Furthermore, it should be noted that nominative case-marked subjects cannot coexist with exclamation suffix (cf. e.g. 15a and 15b).

(15a) *Huu saihan duuldagiig ee**

Son-NOM well sing*

(15b) *Huu saihan duuldag*

Son-NOM well sing-PRESENT SIMPLE

Below, we show evidence that the genitive case is related to topicalization in that the topic marker “min”⁸ coexists with the genitive case-marked subject and it doesn’t coexist with accusative and nominative case-marked subjects.

(16) [*Aav*/ iin/ iig/* min hiisen*] *emeeliig chi harav uu?*

[Aav-NOM*/-GEN/ACC* –TOP make-PAST] emeel-ACC you see-PAST-QUEST

“Did you see the saddle that my father made”

Further evidence in support of this claim comes from the following sentences:

(17a) [*Udur bur nuguu huuhdiin uilah*] *chimee*

Everyday child -GEN cry-h noise

The noise which (certain) child cries everyday

(17b) [*Udur bur nuguu huuhed uilah*] *chimee*

Everyday child -NOM cry-h noise

The noise which (uncertain) a child cries everyday

(17c) [*Udur bur nuguu huuhdiig uilah*] *chimee**

Everyday child -ACC cry-h noise

The noise which (certain) child cries everyday

Note that the choice of the genitive, accusative and nominative case-marked subjects leads to specific and nonspecific information, respectively, as shown in (17a.b.c). In the light of this (17.a.b.c), let’s look at the following examples displaying pronouns as subjects:

(18a) [*Udur bur tuunii uilah*] *chimee*

Every day she-GEN cry-h noise

The noise which (certain) he cries everyday

(18b) [*Udur bur ter uilah*] *chimee**

Everyday child -NOM cry-h noise

The noise which (uncertain) he cries everyday

(18c) [*Udur bur tuuniig uilah*] *chimee**

Every day he -ACC cry-h noise

The noise which (certain) child cries everyday

⁸ D.Tserenpil (2005) considers “min” in MM as a Case-bound particles which expresses topic meaning.

As shown in (18a.b.c) only (18a) is grammatical, whereas (18.b) and (18.c) are ungrammatical because of the replaced pronoun “ter” (he/she). It means that the entity expressed by the pronoun is always assumed to be known to the addressees as illustrated below:

(19) Definiteness Scale

Personal pronoun> proper pronoun> definite NP>indefinite NP (Klaus von Heusinger& Jacklin Kornfilt 2005).

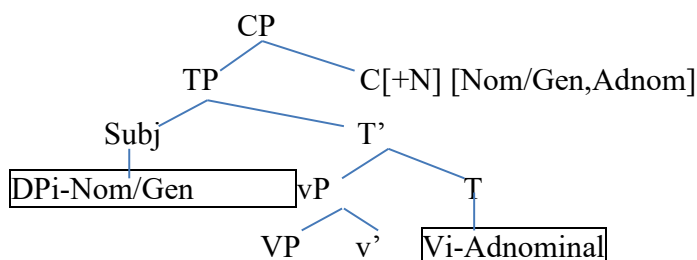
After having demonstrated that genitive case-marked subjects refer to definiteness and specificity in Modern Mongolian, we now address a rather different kind of operation.

3. Optionality in Case marking in Relative clauses

3.1 Japanese

According to Miyagawa (1989), in Japanese relative clauses the genitive subject is possible, but the nominative case may occur instead. In Mongolian, however, only the genitive case is allowed.

- a. 山田が³/の買った]本
Yamada-GEN/NOM buy-PAST book
“The book that Yamada bought”



(Banno:2013)

- b. Mongolian:
[Dulmaagiin hiisen] hool
Dulmaa-NOM/GEN do-PAST] food*
“The food that Dulma cooked”

In the above mentioned environments, the subject that is usually marked by the nominative case marking can appear in the genitive case marking. In contrast, in the Mongolian relative clause, there is no optionality and only the genitive case marking is possible as shown in (b).

3.2. Case alternation in Mongolian Complement Clauses

The case marking optionality within complement clauses in Modern Mongolian substantially differs from the optionality in Japanese complement clauses. In Japanese complement clauses allow only nominative subjects, whereas in Mongolian

complement clauses three different case markings (nominative, accusative and genitive) are possible.

(12) Japanese

[CP anata-ga /*no uti-de tabemono-o tukuru to] kiita.

you NOM/*GEN home-at food-ACC cook C] heard.

“(I) heard that you will cook food at home”

(13) Mongolian

a. [Dulma hool hii-sen-iig] bi medsen

[Dulma-NOM food cook-ACC] I know

‘I know that Dulma cooked at home’

b. [Dulma-giin hool hii-sen-iig] bi medsen

[Dulma-GEN food cook-ACC] I know

‘I know that Dulma cooked at home’

c. [Dulma-g hool hii-sen-iig] bi medsen

[Dulma-ACC food cook-AND-ACC] I know

‘I know that Dulma cooked food at home’

Except for the difference on the subject case markers, the patterns of verbal predicate within the complement clauses are identical as shown in (12a.b.c). This evidence leads us to conclude that subordinate clauses with genitive case marked subjects are C-licensing in Modern Mongolian. For our present purposes, however, nominative case marked subject as shown in (12). Accusative case marked subjects, as illustrated in (12.c), are not immediately relevant, since they can be combined with ECM, DOM.

3.3. Distribution of nominative, genitive and accusative case-marked subject

D.Tserenpil and R.Kullmann, (2005:392), B. Purev-Ochir (2001:334) M.Mizuno (1995) researched the distribution of case alternations. M.Mizuno (1995) formulates case alternations in MM as shown in table below:

1) N>G>A

a.[Galt irsen] gej unen uu? __ [Galt-NOM come-PAST] COMP true ?	Is it true <i>that Galt come?</i>
b.[Galt -iin irsen] gej unen uu? __ [Galt-GEN come-PAST] COMP true ?	
c.[Galt-iig irsen] gej unen uu? __ [Galt-ACC come-PAST] COMP true ?	

2) N>A>G

a.[Dorj ene nom avsan iig] bi saya medlee [Dorj-NOM this book –ACC] I just found	I've just found out <i>that Dorj bought this book.</i>
b.[Dorjiig ene nom avsan iig] bi saya medlee [Dorj-ACC this book –ACC] I just found	
c.[Dorjiin ene nom avsan iig] bi saya medlee [Dorj-GEN this book –ACC] I just found	

3) G>N>A

a.Minii irsen mashin iig chi harav uu? I-GEN come-PAST car-ACC you see-PAST?	Have you seen the car <i>I came with?</i>
b. Bi irsen mashin iig chi harav uu? I-NOM come-PAST car-ACC you see-PAST?	
c.Namaig irsen mashin iig chi harav uu? I-ACC come-PAST car-ACC you see-PAST?	

4) G>A>N

a.[Chinii irseniig] bi saya medlee [You-GEN come-ACC] I just find-PAST	I've just found out <i>that you came.</i>
b.[Chamaig irseniig] bi saya medlee [You-ACC come-ACC] I just find-PAST	
c.[Chi irseniig] bi saya medlee [You-NOM come-ACC] I just find-PAST	

5) A>N>G

a.[Namaig irtel] chi huleej bai [I-ACC come-until] you wait keep.	Keep waiting, until I come!
b.[Bi irtel] chi huleej bai [I-NOM come-until] you wait keep	
c.[Minii irtel] chi huleej bai [I-GEN come-until] you wait keep	

6) A>G>N

a. <u>[Chamaig surguuli deer irseniig] bi saya medlee</u> <u>[You-ACC school at come] I just found</u>	I've just found out that you came to school.
b. <u>[Chinii surguuli deer irseniig] bi saya medlee</u> <u>[You-GEN school at come] I just found</u>	
c. <u>[Chi-NOM surguuli deer irseniig] bi saya medlee</u> <u>[You-ACC school at come] I just found</u>	

In addition to this scheme, we can explain the distribution of case alternations in detail from a discourse perspective.

1. N>G>A

As shown in table (1), the nominative case-marked subject indicates that “Galt” is highlighted, while in (b) the genitive case marked subject shows that the action “come or not” is very important for the speaker. Furthermore, it represents familiar information and highlights overall the sentence.

However, there is not any obvious difference of meaning between the subordinate clause with the genitive case-marked subject and the subordinate clause with the accusative case-marked subject. Mongolian native speakers can tell easily the differences from a discourse perspective. As we seen above, the sentence (c) is ungrammatical.

On the basis of our observations, we propose the following terminology: **N=G>A**

2. N>A>G

As illustrated in table (2.a) the nominative case-marked subject “Dorj” is highlighted, whereas as shown in (2.b) the object “book” is highlighted from a semantic perspective. The sentence in table (2.c) indicates that the whole activity is highlighted by the speaker. Thus we propose the formulation **N=A=G** instead of the preference ordering proposed by Masanori (1995).

3. G>N>A

As shown in table (3.a) the relative clause with the genitive case-marked subject “min-ii” is grammatical, whereas the relative clause with the accusative case-marked subject in (3b) and the relative clause with the nominative case marked subject in (3c) are ungrammatical. Thus we suggest the following plausible formulation **G>N>A** instead of **G>N=A**.

4. G>A>N

With regard to the clause (4.a), overall activity of the agent is highlighted. The accusative-case-marked subject ”chamaig” (you-ACC) in (4b) is highlighted by

the speaker. The sentence (4c) is not grammatical since it contains nominative case-marked subject “chi”(you). Thus, instead of $G>A>N$, we prefer $G=A>N$.

5. $A>N>G$

Table (5) shows that only adverbial clauses with accusative case-marked subjects are grammatical. Consequently, the expression $A>N=G$ is convenient in terms of distributions.

6. $A>G>N$

As explained in (1-4), only the accusative case-marked subject in (6a) is highlighted, whereas overall complement clause with the genitive case-marked subject in (6b) is highlighted by the speaker. The complement clause (6c) is ungrammatical. So we proposed $A=G>N$.

4. Conclusion

In this paper, first of all, we have argued that clauses with genitive case-marked subjects in Modern Mongolian are C-licensing. We have also shown that relative clauses allow only genitive case-marking in Modern Mongolian, whereas nominative and genitive case conversion is possible in Japanese relative clauses.

Secondly, we have attempted to explain distributions of all types of clauses with genitive case-marked subjects in Modern Mongolian. In this regard, we have shown that genitive case-marked subjects and verbs with a determining suffix displaying verbal properties coexist in Modern Mongolian.

Lastly, we have provided an account for the distributions of genitive case-marked subjects in connection to information structure and topicalization. In accordance with our study, genitive case-marked subjects in finite clauses in Modern Mongolian correlates with specific reading of the overall clause. Moreover, adopting the proposal of Mizuno Masanori (1995), we have provided more explanations in reference to information structure (Lopez 2009, Bruel 2005).

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