

# The Subject Extraction Asymmetry in Uyghur Relative Clauses

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## 1. Introduction

Phenomena such as the that-trace effect and the Accessibility Hierarchy (Keenan & Comrie 1977) are examples of the well-known observation that certain types of DP extraction distinguish the position of 'subject'. While the that-trace effect uniquely blocks subject extraction, the Accessibility Hierarchy uniquely privileges subjects for extraction, in that if a language has relative clauses (RCs), it must be able to relativize subjects (Keenan & Comrie 1977). At the same time, the position of 'highest subject' is frequently the locus of an extraction restriction in RCs, such that subjects of certain types of RCs may not be relativized. Such a restriction is attested in a number of typologically distinct languages, including French (Rizzi 1990), Turkic languages such as Turkish, Sakha, and Uyghur (Kornfilt 2008c), Mongolic languages including Dagur and Mongolian (Hale 2002), and the Uto-Aztecan language Mountain Pima (Hale 2002). Uyghur, a head-final language with pre-nominal RCs, exhibits such an apparent asymmetry between subject and non-subject relativization in one type of RC, which I refer to as the 'Agreeing relative clause'. Agr RCs are characterized by the presence of agreement suffixed to the head noun. Non-subjects can be relativized using this strategy, as shown in (1-a), while subject relativizations such as (1-b) are purportedly unacceptable (Kornfilt 2008c, Csató & Uchturpani 2010).

### (1) Agreeing relative clauses

#### a. Object relative clause

sen qiz-ning \_\_ ekel-gen kitap-i-ni  
you girl-GEN \_\_ bring-ASP book-3-ACC  
oqu-d-ing  
read-PST-2SG  
'You read the book that the girl brought'

#### b. Subject relative clause

\*men \_\_ kitap-ni ekel-gen qiz-i bilen  
I \_\_ book-ACC bring-ASP girl-3 with  
söz-lesh-t-im  
speak-RECIP-PST-1SG  
Intended: 'I spoke with the girl who brought the book'

Agr RCs in Uyghur, as in many other Turkic languages, use the agreement and case marking strategy found in simple possessive constructions: the possessor is marked with genitive case and an agreement morpheme cross-referencing the phi-features of the possessor is suffixed to the possessee.

(2) a. mē-ning kitap-im  
I-GEN book-1SG  
'My book'

b. sē-ning kitap-ing  
you-GEN book-2SG  
'Your book'

c. Ehmet-ning kitap-i  
Ehmet-GEN book-3  
'Ehmet's book'

Previous accounts analyze the genitive DP in an Agr RC, like *qiz-ning* in (1-a), as the RC subject (Csató & Uchturpani 2010) in a RC-internal position (Kornfilt 2008c, Asarina 2011). Under those assumptions, it is a mystery why the RC subject cannot be assigned genitive case and then be relativized, just as a DP in any other relativizable position can. In contrast, I propose that the genitive DP of (1-a) is not the RC subject, but rather is in a clause-external position occupied by possessors, Spec,DP, from where it controls an embedded PRO subject and triggers the possessive agreement suffixed to the head noun, *kitap*. I argue that examples like (1-b) arise from unlicensed *pro*-drop of the genitive DP in Spec,DP, and show

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that structurally analogous examples are fully acceptable in contexts that license the *pro*-drop. Existing accounts of Turkic Agr RCs posit a clause-external position for the genitive DP (Laszakovits 2019b: Kyrgyz; Ótót-Kovács 2020, 2023, 2024: Kazakh), however, none to date have exploited that analytical possibility to address the purported extraction asymmetry. While subjects often differ from non-subjects with respect to extraction, Uyghur RC subjects ultimately pattern with other grammatical roles. This fact only becomes apparent upon close study of the language and the relevant patterns. Given that subject extraction asymmetries in RCs have been widely observed in Turkic beyond Uyghur (Turkish: Kornfilt 2008c; Sakha: Kornfilt 2005a, 2008c; Kazakh: Ótót-Kovács 2020; Kyrgyz: Laszakovits 2019a, 2019b), this account has the potential to be relevant for other languages in which such asymmetries are attested.

## 2. The analysis

Uyghur makes use of at least one other relativization strategy besides the Agr RC strategy, which I term the ‘Non-Agreeing relative clause’ (Non-Agr RC) because of the absence of agreement on the head noun. Non-Agr RCs do not exhibit a contrast between subject and non-subject relativization; both are available, as shown in (3), which are minimal pairs with (1):

### (3) Non-Agreeing relative clauses

#### a. Object relative clause

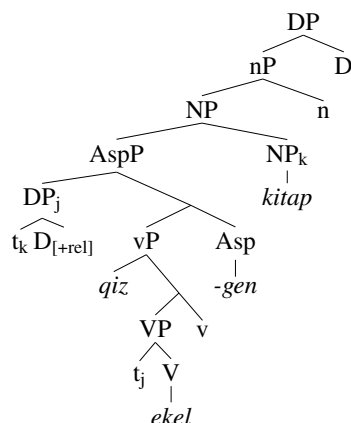
sen qiz \_\_ ekel-gen kitap-ni  
 you girl \_\_ bring-ASP book-ACC  
 oqu-d-ing  
 read-PST-2SG  
 ‘You read the book that the girl brought’

#### b. Subject relative clause

men \_\_ kitap-ni ekel-gen qiz bilen  
 I \_\_ book-ACC bring-ASP girl with  
 söz-lesh-t-im  
 speak-RECIP-PST-1SG  
 ‘I spoke with the girl who brought the book’

For work that claims that the genitive DP in an Agr RC, such as *qiz-ning* in (1-a), is the RC subject (Csató & Uchurpani 2010, Kornfilt 2008c, Asarina 2011), the contrast between the Agr subject RC (1-b) and the Non-Agr subject RC (3-b) is surprising. If *qiz* in (3-b) is base-generated clause-internally as the RC subject, gets nominative case there, and then is relativized, why can’t the same process take place when the subject gets genitive case in (1-b)? I break with previous accounts in claiming that the genitive DP of an Agr RC occupies a distinct position from the nominative subject of a Non-Agr RC: the genitive DP is in a clause-external position, Spec,DP, while the nominative subject is RC-internal. I argue that Non-Agr RCs, such as the examples in (3), are simply RCs in which no DP is merged in Spec,DP (4):

### (4) Proposed structure for the Non-Agr object relative clause in (3-a)



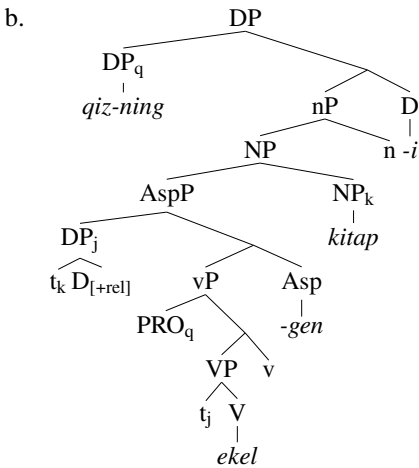
I assume that Uyghur RCs consist of an AspP due to their inability to host TAM morphology, and as a result assume that subjects remain in their base-generated position in Spec,vP, although my analysis of

the apparent extraction asymmetry does not hinge on either of these choices.<sup>1</sup> In (3-a), *qiz* is the relative clause subject. The relativized DP moves to the clause edge, Spec,AspP, and the relative NP *kitap* then sub-extracts and reprojects, a version of the raising analysis of relative clauses which I adopt from Bhatt 2002. Nothing is merged in Spec,DP, and hence no agreement morpheme is present. The derivation of (3-b) is identical except that it is the subject which is relativized, and not the object. Crucially, (3-b) demonstrates that there is no language-wide ban on relativization of subjects.

With this derivation of Non-Agr RCs as a starting point, my the analysis of the Agr RCs in (1) consists of three parts. First, the genitive DP in (1-a), repeated below as (5-a), is not the subject of the RC, but rather is optionally merged in a clause-external position (Spec,DP). Second, the genitive DP controls a PRO subject inside of the RC, shown in (5-b). Third, the genitive DP can be *pro*-dropped. Example (6-a) is an Agr subject RC – a configuration claimed to be impossible in Kornfilt 2008c and Csató & Uchurpani 2010 – which I will show in section 5 is acceptable in an appropriate context. I argue that Agr subject RCs such as (6-a) consist of the underlying structure in (6-b), where the possessive agreement reflects the phi-features of a *pro*-dropped DP in Spec,DP. Note that the possibility of non-third-person agreement, as well as the interpretation of the version with third-person agreement, demonstrate that the agreement is not triggered by the third-person head noun *kitap* – as assumed in accounts of the genitive DP as the RC subject – but rather by a distinct possessor.

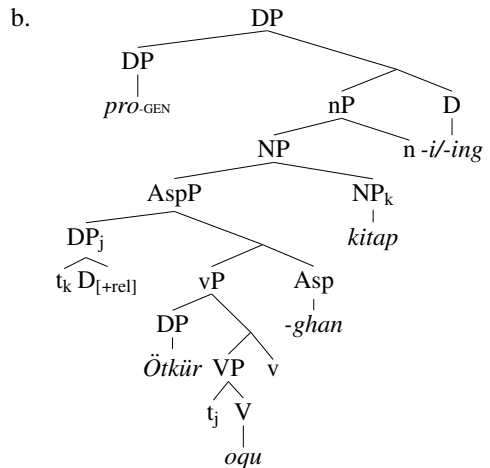
(5) Overt genitive DP in Spec,DP controls embedded PRO subject

- a. sen [ qiz-ning \_\_ ekel-gen kitap\*(-i)-ni  
you girl-GEN \_\_ bring-ASP book-3-ACC  
] oqu-d-ing  
read-PST-2SG  
'You read the book that the girl brought.'



(6) Agr RC with possessor *pro*-drop

- a. [ *pro* Ötkür \_\_ oqu-ghan kitap-i/-ing ]  
*pro* Ötkür \_\_ read-ASP book-3/-2SG  
chong  
long  
'His/her/your book that Ötkür read is long.'



I have adopted the nomenclature of ‘Agr RC’ and ‘Non-Agr RC’ as a descriptive tool, and in keeping with previous literature which refers to two different strategies or types of relative clause (Kornfilt 2008c, Csató & Uchurpani 2010, Asarina 2011). However, the analysis presented here in fact denies that two relative clause strategies exist; I argue that there is one type of relative clause, the Non-Agr RC depicted in (4), in which a DP can be merged in Spec,DP, or not, and whose embedded subject may be overt or controlled PRO. However, I will continue to refer to Non-Agr and Agr RCs for descriptive clarity.

The next three sections offer support in favor of each of the three components of the analysis outlined above. Section 3 presents five pieces of evidence that the genitive DP occupies the position occupied by

<sup>1</sup> It is also possible that Uyghur RCs consist of a TP or CP (argued for in Kornfilt 2008c and Asarina 2011, respectively) and that subjects move to Spec,TP, but that analytical choice requires some kind of machinery to block the realization of TAM morphology on the RC predicate.

possessors in Spec,DP. Section 4 argues in favor of a control analysis of the relationship between the genitive DP and the relative clause in Agr RCs. In section 5, I demonstrate that purportedly degraded Agr subject RCs are acceptable in contexts which license *pro*-drop, with the result that my account obviates the purported extraction asymmetry.

### 3. The genitive DP occupies Spec,DP

There are a number of respects in which the genitive DP of an Agr RC exhibits behavior in common with possessors in Spec,DP and distinct from unmarked embedded subjects, supporting the claim that the genitive DP occupies the Spec,DP position. In the following section, I present data from: (1) the distribution of the genitive DP and unmarked RC subjects, (2) the distribution of the genitive DP and possessors, (3) the interpretation of relational nouns in the RC head position, (4) DP fronting, and (5) the scope of genitive DPs.

#### 3.1. The genitive DP and an unmarked subject may cooccur

Firstly, the genitive DP can cooccur with an unmarked RC subject:

- (7) sen [ qiz-ning oqughuchi \_\_ ekel-gen kitap-i-ni ] oqu-d-ing  
 you girl-GEN student \_\_ bring-ASP book-3-ACC read-PST-2SG  
 ‘You read the girl’s book that the student brought.’

An account in which the genitive DP and the RC subject occupy distinct structural positions correctly predicts that the two should be able to cooccur. Additionally, this account predicts that a construction similar to (7) in which it is instead the subject *oqughuchi*, ‘student’, which is relativized should be possible. This prediction is in fact correct:

- (8) men [ Amine Xanim-ning \_\_ kitap-ni ekel-gen oqughuchi-si ] bilen söz-lesh-t-im  
 I Amine HON-GEN \_\_ book-ACC bring-ASP student-3 with speak-RECIP-PST-1SG  
 ‘I spoke with Ms. Amine’s student who brought the book.’

Felicitous examples like (8) pose a problem for the claim that subject relatives with possessive agreement are ungrammatical. (8) shows that subject relatives with possessive agreement suffixed to the RC head *are* possible, when there is an overt genitive DP. I argue that Agr subject RCs judged as unacceptable, such as (1-b), are structurally identical to (8), except that the genitive DP has been *pro*-dropped in the absence of an appropriate licensing context.

#### 3.2. The genitive DP and a possessor may not cooccur

In simple possessive constructions, multiple possessors of a single possessed nominal are banned:

- (9) \*Ötkür-ning Aygül-ning resim-i  
 Ötkür-GEN Aygül-GEN picture-3  
 Intended: ‘Picture that depicts Aygül and belongs to Ötkür’ Asarina (2011:91)

In relative clauses, only Non-Agr RCs may be possessed, as shown in (10-a). Agr RCs may not be possessed (10-b), paralleling the ban on multiple possessors in simple possessives:

- (10) a. Amine [ më-ning Ehmet \_\_ ekel-gen kitap-im-ni ] oqu-d-i  
 Amine I-GEN Ehmet \_\_ bring-ASP book-1SG-ACC read-PST-3  
 ‘Amine read my book that Ehmet brought.’  
 b. \*Amine [ më-ning Ehmet-ning \_\_ ekel-gen kitap-i-sim-ni ] oqu-d-i  
 Amine I-GEN Ehmet-GEN \_\_ bring-ASP book-3-1SG -ACC read-PST-3  
 Intended: ‘Amine read my book that Ehmet brought.’

These data suggest that the genitive DP *Ehmet-ning* competes with the possessor *më-ning* for a single structural position.

### 3.3. *The interpretation of relational nouns in the RC head*

In most cases, the Agr RC construction does not impose an interpretation in which the genitive DP possesses the RC head; (11) is not obligatorily interpreted as ‘Amine’s book that she read’:

- (11) Amine-ning oqu-ghan kitap-i  
 Amine-GEN read-ASP book-3  
 Interpretation 1: ‘The book that Amine read’  
 Interpretation 2: ‘Amine’s book that she read’

However, an asymmetry between Agr and Non-Agr RCs arises when the head noun is relational, such as a body part or familial status such as ‘father’; for Agr RCs, the only available interpretation is possessive, while for Non-Agr RCs no possessive interpretation arises:<sup>2</sup>

- (12) a. Context: Ehmet and Meryem are not siblings.  
 b. [ Ehmet \_\_ uzun waqt parang-lash-qan ata ] Meryem-ning ati-si  
 Ehmet \_\_ long time chat-RECIP-ASP father Meryem-GEN father-3  
 ‘The father with whom Ehmet chatted for a long time is Meryem’s father.’  
 c. #[ Ehmet-ning \_\_ uzun waqt parang-lash-qan ati-si ] Meryem-ning ati-si  
 Ehmet-GEN \_\_ long time chat-RECIP-ASP father-3 Meryem-GEN father-3  
 #‘Ehmet’s father with whom Ehmet chatted for a long time is Meryem’s father.’

In general, Uyghur genitive DPs can bear an ambiguous, and not necessarily possessive, relationship to the nominal complement of a possessive construction:

- (13) Aygöl-ning resim-i  
 Aygöl-GEN picture-3  
 Interpretation 1: ‘Picture that belongs to Aygöl’  
 Interpretation 2: ‘Picture of Aygöl’ Asarina (2011:91)

Following Kratzer’s (1996) analysis of English *of*<sub>ing</sub> gerunds, I propose that genitive DPs in Spec,DP typically receive an underspecified theta role conveying a general relationship of relatedness. When the nominal complement of D is not a relational noun, as in example (11), the underspecified theta role borne by the genitive DP *Amine-ning* is compatible with a range of relationships between the genitive DP and the head noun, of which agentivity (Interpretation 1) as well as possession (Interpretation 2) are possible options.<sup>3</sup> However, I claim that a relational head noun imposes a possessor interpretation on the genitive DP. The RC-internal subject *Ehmet* of (12-b) is not located in Spec,DP and therefore is not interpreted as a possessor. In contrast, the genitive DP *Ehmet-ning* in (12-c) is in Spec,DP and may only be interpreted as a possessor because the head noun is relational.

### 3.4. *DP fronting*

Nominalized complement clauses (NCCs) bear a superficial resemblance to Agr RCs. The NCC subject is genitive marked, with concomitant possessive agreement suffixed to a complementizer, *-IIQ*.<sup>4</sup>

<sup>2</sup> Ótött-Kovács 2020 originally noted this asymmetry in Kazakh.

<sup>3</sup> The possible interpretations of the genitive DP in a Uyghur RC are in fact strikingly similar to those available for genitive DPs of English *of*<sub>ing</sub> gerunds, like in Kratzer’s (1996:128) example *Maria’s reading of Pride and Prejudice received better reviews than Anna’s*, in which Anna and Maria may be interpreted as readers or attendees.

<sup>4</sup> I provisionally follow Asarina (2011) in analyzing *-IIQ* as the spellout of a C head, although it is possible that it is a nominalizer (Shklovsky & Sudo 2014 : Uyghur ; Gribanova 2010 : Uzbek).

## (14) A nominalized complement clause

men [ s̈e-ning kitap-ni oqu-ghan-liq-ing-ni ] bil-d-im  
 I you-GEN book-ACC read-ASP-IIQ-2SG-ACC know-PST-1SG  
 ‘I knew that you read the book.’

Despite these similarities, there is evidence that the genitive DP of an Agr RC occupies a structurally higher position than the genitive DP of a NCC. While it is possible to front a lower, NCC-internal argument across the genitive DP of a NCC (15), DP fronting across the genitive DP is banned in Agr RCs (16).

## (15) DP fronting possible across the genitive DP of a NCC

men [ kitap-ni s̈e-ning oqu-ghan-liq-ing-ni ] bil-d-im  
 I book-ACC you-GEN read-ASP-IIQ-2SG-ACC know-PST-1SG  
 ‘I knew that, as for the book, you read it.’

## (16) DP fronting impossible across the genitive DP of an Agr RC

\*men [ kitap-ni oqutquchi-ning \_\_ ber-gen oqughuchi-si-ni ] kör-d-im  
 I book-ACC teacher-GEN \_\_ give-ASP student-3-ACC see-PST-1SG  
 Intended: ‘I saw the student to whom, the book, the teacher gave.’

Due to the discourse effects associated with the movement in (15), I assume that DP fronting is an A'-movement targeting the edge of the containing clause. I further assume that the genitive DP of a NCC is a clause-internal subject.<sup>5</sup> In a NCC, a fronted DP is free to target an A' position above the subject and within the clause. However, my account of Agr RCs correctly predicts that clause-internal DP fronting should never be able to target a position to the left of the genitive DP, because the genitive DP is not inside of the relative clause. Therefore, fronting of a RC-internal DP will never yield the word order in (16), in which the moved DP surfaces to the left of the genitive DP.

3.5. *Scope*

Another respect in which the genitive DP of an Agr RC exhibits behavior distinct from the genitive DP of an NCC is that the former patterns like a possessor, and unlike the latter, with respect to scope-taking. The genitive DP of a RC and possessors may both scope above and below elements that c-command them, while the genitive subject of a NCC may not scope above elements that c-command it.

3.5.1. *Scope facts in simplex clauses*

In Uyghur, a quantified object can take both narrow and wide scope with respect to a quantified subject. This is true regardless of whether the quantified object remains *in-situ* (17-a) or is scrambled across the subject (17-b).

- |                                       |  |
|---------------------------------------|--|
| (17) a. Base order                    | b. Scrambled order                     |
| köp doxtur-lar her bir k̈esel-ni      | her bir k̈esel-ni köp doxtur-lar       |
| many doctor-PL every one patient-ACC  | every one patient-ACC many doctor-PL   |
| dawali-d-i                            | dawali-d-i                             |
| treat-PST-3                           | treat-PST-3                            |
| ‘Many doctors treated every patient.’ | ‘Every patient, many doctors treated.’ |
| Interpretation 1: many > every        | Interpretation 1: many > every         |
| Interpretation 2: every > many        | Interpretation 2: every > many         |

<sup>5</sup> The subject could be assigned genitive case by a clause-external nominal element (Asarina 2011), or by a bundled C<sup>+D</sup> head (Ótrott-Kovács 2023: Kazakh). Regardless, the fact that RC subjects cannot get genitive case while subjects of NCCs can remains a puzzle for future work.

### 3.5.2. *The scope of genitive DPs*

The genitive subject of a NCC may not scope out of the embedded clause; it may only take narrow scope with respect to matrix scope-taking elements:

(18) The genitive subject of a NCC takes narrow scope

her bir doxtur [ köp qiz-lar-ning kël-idighan-liq-i-ni ] ëyt-t-i  
 Every one doctor many girl-PL-GEN come-ASP-IIQ-3-ACC say-PST-3  
 ‘Every doctor said that many girls will arrive.’  
 Interpretation 1: every > many  
 #Interpretation 2: many > every

In contrast, the genitive DP of a RC is also able to take both narrow and wide scope with respect to c-commanding elements in the matrix clause (19-a). The same is true of possessors (19-b).

(19) a. The genitive DP of a RC can take narrow or wide scope

her bir mëhman [ ikki ashpez-ning \_\_ et-ken tamaq-i-ni ] yë-d-i  
 Every one guest two chef-GEN \_\_ make-ASP food-3-ACC eat-PST-3  
 ‘Every guest ate food that two chefs made.’  
 Interpretation 1: every > two  
 Interpretation 2: two > every

b. Genitive possessors can take narrow or wide scope

her bir oqutquchi ikki oqughuchi-ning maqali-si-ni tekshür-d-i  
 every one teacher two student-GEN essay-3-ACC grade-PST-3  
 ‘Every teacher graded two students’ essays.’  
 Interpretation 1: every > two  
 Interpretation 2: two > every

These facts provide further evidence that the genitive DP of a RC occupies the same position as a possessor in Spec,DP, and a distinct position from the genitive subject of an NCC. I argue that NCC subjects may not take wide scope because they are embedded inside of a CP, a domain large enough to block QR out of it. In the next section, I propose that the genitive DP in a relative clause may control a PRO in RC subject position.

## 4. The genitive DP may control PRO

I argue that the genitive DP in Spec,DP may obligatorily control a PRO RC subject. In doing so, I reject two alternative analyses of the empty category (EC) in RC subject position: (1) a trace/unpronounced copy left behind by raising or (2) a *pro* that is coreferential with the genitive DP.

### 4.1. *Against a raising analysis of the EC in subject position*

A potential raising analysis of the relationship between the genitive DP and the EC in RC subject position would hold that the RC subject undergoes raising to Spec,DP and receives genitive case there. I discard this option for two reasons. The first is that adjuncts, such as RCs, are generally islands for movement. The second is the fact, discussed in section 3.1, that the genitive DP can appear alongside an overt RC subject. This second datapoint suggests that the option of base-generation in Spec,DP must be available for the genitive DP.

### 4.2. *Against a pro-drop analysis of the EC in subject position*

Under a *pro*-drop analysis, the empty category in RC subject position is a *pro* which may be coreferential with the genitive DP. If so, we predict that that EC will exhibit the same properties as *pro* elsewhere

in the language, such as ambiguity with respect to which salient DP is the antecedent of *pro*, and no requirement that the antecedent of *pro* be restricted to the closest c-commanding DP. Those properties are exemplified in (20), an embedded nominalized complement clause (NCC) whose subject has been *pro*-dropped. In contrast, the EC in subject position of a RC exhibits neither of those two properties (21).

(20) *Pro*-drop in an embedded NCC

Amine<sub>j</sub> Hesən<sub>k</sub>-ge bugün [ *pro*<sub>j/k</sub> Ürümqi-ge bar-idighan-liq-i-ni ] dē-d-i  
 Amine Hesən-DAT today *pro* Ürümqi-DAT go-ASP-IIQ-3-ACC say-PST-3  
 ‘Amine<sub>j</sub> told Hesən<sub>k</sub> today that she<sub>j</sub>/he<sub>k</sub> will go to Ürümqi.’

(21) The EC in RC subject position may only corefer with the genitive DP

men<sub>j</sub> [ Amine<sub>k</sub>-ning \_\_\*<sub>j/k</sub> ekel-gen kitap-i-ni ] oqu-d-im  
 I Amine-GEN \_\_ bring-ASP book-3-ACC read-PST-1SG  
 Interpretation 1: ‘I read the book that Amine brought.’  
 Interpretation 2: #‘I read Amine’s book that I/someone brought.’

Unlike canonical *pro*-drop, the EC in RC subject position may only corefer with the closest c-commanding DP, *Amine-ning*. Despite the fact that *men*, ‘I’, also c-commands the EC, coreference seems to be blocked by the intervening genitive DP. Obligatory coreference between an EC and the closest c-commanding DP is characteristic of obligatory control (Green 2019). A potential objection to the analysis of the EC as PRO is that it is often claimed that PRO does not alternate with overt DPs (Chomsky & Lasnik 1993, Polinsky & Potsdam 2002). Under my analysis, the RC subject may either be (a) overt, or (b) a PRO which is obligatorily controlled by the genitive DP. Alternation between PRO and overt DPs is therefore built into the analysis, and I assume that the absence of T in RCs results in PRO remaining caseless, while morphologically overt subjects surface in the default nominative form. Alternation between PRO and overt subjects has in fact been attested, for example in Hebrew finite control (Landau 2004), and therefore I do not take this point as an argument against the PRO analysis.

## 5. Infelicitous subject relatives arise from unlicensed *pro*-drop

In this section, I present new evidence demonstrating that Agr subject RCs that have been claimed to be ungrammatical are, instead, infelicitous. I claim that they result from *pro*-drop of the genitive DP, which is subject to standard licensing conditions. When those licensing conditions are met, I show that Agr subject RCs become acceptable. The puzzle noted in the introduction is the gap in the Agr RC paradigm, where Agr subject RCs are apparently degraded:

(22) #[ \_\_ ishkap-tin chüsh-üp qal-ghan kitap-i ] chong i-d-i  
 \_\_ shelf-ABL fall-IP stay-ASP book-3 long be-PST-3  
 Intended: ‘The book that fell off the shelf was long.’

The purported unacceptability of (22) is especially surprising given that the Non-Agr minimal pair (23), demonstrates that subject relatives are acceptable in the absence of possessive agreement:

(23) [ \_\_ ishkap-tin chüsh-üp qal-ghan kitap ] chong i-d-i  
 \_\_ shelf-ABL fall-IP stay-ASP book long be-PST-3  
 ‘The book that fell off the shelf was long.’

It is possible to add a genitive possessor to (23), which obligatorily gives rise to possessive agreement on the relativized subject (24), a pattern which can be replicated with any relativizable DP.

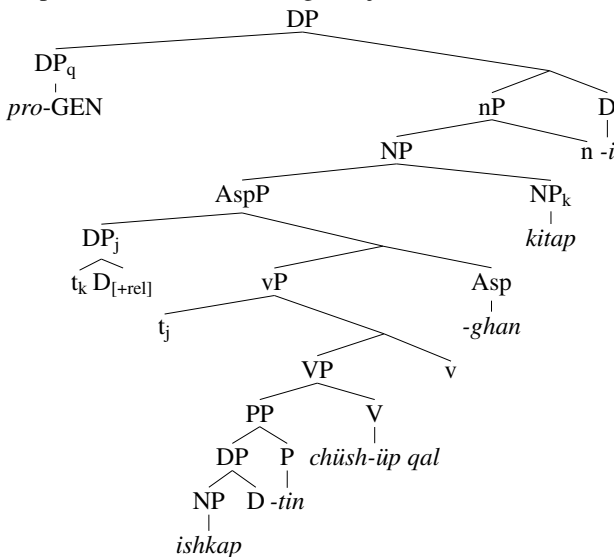
(24) [ Ehmet-ning \_\_ ishkap-tin chüsh-üp qal-ghan kitap-i ] chong i-d-i  
 Ehmet-GEN \_\_ shelf-ABL fall-IP stay-ASP book-3 long be-PST-3  
 ‘Ehmet’s book that fell off the shelf was long.’

Example (24) shows that subject relatives with an agreement suffix on the RC head *are* possible, when there is a genitive DP. Given the dependency between agreement and the genitive DP, the agreement in (22) must signal the presence of one underlyingly; I argue that the genitive DP in (22) has been *pro*-dropped. As it turns out, Agr subject RCs become acceptable in a context that furnishes a salient possessor whose phi-features match those of the agreement suffix on the head noun and hence can serve as an antecedent to the *pro*-dropped DP:

- (25) a. Context: You are telling me that you saw Ehmet at the library today, where he was donating some of his books. One of his books fell off of the shelf. You say:  
 b. [   *ishkap-tin chüsh-üp qal-ghan kitap-i* ] *chong i-d-i*  
       *shelf-ABL fall-IP stay-ASP book-3 long be-PST-3*  
     ‘His (Ehmet’s) book which fell off the shelf was long.’

To summarize, Agr subject RCs underlyingly consist of a *pro*-dropped genitive DP in Spec,DP. It is this *pro*-dropped DP which gives rise to agreement on the head noun. The proposed structure for the RC in (25) is given below:

- (26) Proposed structure for the Agr subject RC in (25)



This account attributes the purported unacceptability of Agr subject RCs to licensing conditions on *pro*-drop, rather than properties specific to RC subjects. Thus, agreement on the head noun of any RC lacking a genitive DP should be infelicitous any time the context doesn't license *pro*-drop. The prediction is borne out; agreement on the head noun of an object RC is illicit in the absence of a licensing context:

- (27) #[ *Ötkür*   *oqu-ghan kitap-i* ] *chong*  
     *Ötkür*   *read-ASP book-3 long*  
     Intended: ‘The book *Ötkür* read is long.’

This set of facts suggests that there is no restriction specific to subject RCs after all; instead, there is a general restriction on the appearance of possessive agreement such that possessive agreement implies the presence of a DP in Spec,DP, and licensing conditions on *pro*-drop require that there be sufficient contextual support for the identity of the *pro*-dropped DP. The purported subject extraction restriction in Agr RCs was only apparently so due to mischaracterization of the genitive DP as a RC-internal subject. If the genitive DP were indeed an *in-situ* subject, then it should be able to undergo extraction and appear in the head position of the relative clause, with possessive agreement cliticized to it, just like any other clause-internal DP. Its inability to participate in that configuration then creates the impression that the

genitive DP is subject to a special restriction. However, my account posits that genitive DPs in RCs are not subjects, but rather occupy a structurally distinct, clause-external position, and can co-occur with subjects. Therefore, we expect *pro*-drop of genitive DPs in relative clauses to be subject to the same restrictions as *pro*-drop elsewhere in the language. This prediction is borne out, and hence the apparent puzzle of the subject extraction restriction dissolves.

## 6. Conclusion and implications

RC subject/non-subject extraction asymmetries are a longstanding puzzle in the Turkic literature. Related languages such as Sakha (Kornfilt 2005a, 2008c), Kazakh (Ótött-Kovács 2020), and Kyrgyz (Laszakovits 2019a, 2019b), and at least one Mongolic language, Dagur (Hale 2002), exhibit genitive case on (apparent) subjects of RCs, superficially similar RC structure, and a subject/non-subject extraction asymmetry. The analysis proposed here for Uyghur may lend itself well to those languages. In fact, a control analysis of Kazakh relative clauses with genitive DPs has recently been proposed (Ótött-Kovács 2023, 2024), albeit without addressing the purported subject extraction asymmetry in that language. Further typological work is needed to probe those languages' relativization strategies and whether their claimed extraction asymmetries are in fact an epiphenomenon arising from unlicensed *pro*-drop.

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