Genitive-accusative and possessive adjective in Old East Slavic

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1. Introduction

Genitive-accusative syncretism has been one of the central problems in historical Slavic linguistics, despite the vast amount of literature devoted to it.[1] Various syntactic and morphological models have been proposed, the most recent ones stressing the decline in genitive direct object (Klenin 1983 and 1987; Krys´ko 1994). This study presents yet another facet of the genitive-accusative evolution in Old East Slavic (OESl). The approach relies on the premise of intolerance of the language to subject (S) — object (O) ambiguity[2] confirmed by new evidence. A previously unrecognized functional connection is proposed between genitive-accusative and adnominal genitive case in possessive constructions. The pattern of attestations in possessive constructions serves as decisive verification, supported by typological data, that S-O ambiguity was the main motivation for the rise of genitive-accusative. It also explains why it was the genitive case that participated in the new syncretic form.

At the centre of the investigation are masc. sg. personal/animate nouns denoting mature male individuals, or unique or supernatural beings of the *o*-stem[3] declension. The stems of these nouns are also productive in the formation of denominative adjective in *-ov/-in* with individual personal reference. Conversely, attestations of genitive of possession among these nouns are extremely scarce.

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[1] See Klenin 1983 for a selected bibliography.
[2] Tomson 1908 was one of the first to make use of a "semasiological explanation" — which refers to the functional need to discriminate between the agent and the patient of an action.
[3] For the purposes of economy, reference to *o*-stem declension also includes *jo-* stems here.

1.1. Agent/Possessor Hierarchy

In OESl, two morphosyntactic variants are attested in each of the two constructions, namely: adjective *vs.* genitive of a noun in possessive constructions, and nominative-accusative *vs.* genitive-accusative as direct O or O of a preposition in transitive constructions. Compare, for example, the adjective *бра^{m}ню* 'brother's' (1) and the bare genitive[4] *брата* 'of (his) brother' (2), and the accusatives homonymous with either nominative or genitive in (3):

(1)   С<ва>тослав же бѣ начало выгнаню *бра^{m}ню* желаıа большее власти

'and Svjatoslav was the beginning of (his) brother's [Adj.] banishment, wishing for more power' (Laur. Chron. 1073, *l* 61*v*)

(2)   ω неправьдьнѣмь прогьнании *брата*

'about the unjust banishment of (his) brother [G]' (L. of Th., 58б.32)

(3)   вѣрую въ единого Б<ог>а Ѡ<т>ца нерожена и въ единого С<ы>на роже^{на} въ единъ С<ва>тыи Д<у>хъ исходаще [sic]

'I believe in one God [G-A] the Father [G-A], not born (of a human), and in one Son [G-A] born (of a human) and in one Holy Spirit [N-A] proceeding' (Laur. Chron. 987, *l* 38*v*)

A multi-dimensional analysis of OESl data sheds new light on the factors influencing the choice of a particular alternative, revealing that both sets are sensitive to the same linguistic features. Moreover, the relevant fea-

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[4]   There is a syntactic constraint on the use of bare genitive: if a head noun has a modifier consisting of a single item, this modifier usually takes the form of a denominative adjective; if, however, the modifier is itself modified — it adopts the form of a noun in the genitive case:

а С<ва>тославъ сѣде Кыевѣ прогнавъ брата своего преступивъ заповѣдь *отню* паче же Б<о>жью велии бо есть грѣ^x<ъ> преступающе заповѣдь *о<т>ца* своего

'and Svjatoslav reigned in Kiev having banished his brother, having violated (his) father's precept, or rather God's (precept), for it is a great sin to violate the precept of one's father' (Laur. Chron. 1073, *l* 61*v* (183)

Proper personal nouns, at the top of the hierarchy, may still adopt adjectival form, even when further modified.

tures are ranked differently and comprise a hierarchy presented below in the form of a table.

Table 1.

Agent/Possessor (S)

Morphosyntactic Variant	Features			
	Lexical	*Morphological*	*Syntactic*	*Referential*
genitive-accusative denominative adjective	[personal] [proper] [mature]	**o*-stem	direct O	[definite]
genitive-accusative/ nominative-accusative denominative adjective/ genitive of possession	[personal] [common] [immature]	**o*-stem/ former **u*- and **i*-stems		[definite] / [indefinite]
nominative-accusative genitive of possession	[non-personal] (animate)	former **u*- and **i*-stems	O of preposition	[indefinite]

Patient/Possessed (O)

The ranking on the scale from Agent/Possessor (S) to Patient/Possessed (O) reflects tendencies in the attestation pattern of a particular morpho-syntactic form. The highest degree of variation between the alternate morphosyntactic forms is found in the middle, while the poles tend towards a single form. The following discussion focuses on the upper pole of the hierarchy occupied by prototypical agent/possessor nouns associated most with S status. The identity of prototypical agents and prototypical possessors based on strong correlation with lexical and other features at the top, explains why the S-O distinction at the centre of the genitive-accusative debate emerges as equally relevant for the form of a possessive modifier. The arrangement of features shared by both sets of constructions into one hierarchy also explains why these two changes, documented in OESl texts, overlapped with each other.

1.2. Discussion Summary

The discussion begins with the rise of genitive-accusative as a response to S-O ambiguity. The critical importance of marking a direct O most likely to be confused with S due to its non-prototypical lexical features is discussed and illustrated on the basis of OESl data. Since the absence of nominative-accusative syncretism in personal pronouns is often cited as proof against the theory that S-O ambiguity played a major role in genitive-accusative syncretism, an overview is provided of genitive-accusative syncretism in pronouns. It is suggested that the process should be divided into different stages, depending on the class of pronouns.

Parallels in the development of noun and pronoun genitive-accusative are identified along the lexical features [personal] and [definite]. The accusative *kogo* of the interrogative *kъto* 'who' due to its prehistoric genitive-accusative syncretism and the inherent feature [personal] emerges as the key morphological model for noun genitive-accusative. Subsequently, genitive-accusative must have been exported from personal nouns to personal pronouns, also based on shared features [personal] and [definite].

The question of nominative-accusative syncretism in the paradigm of the demonstrative pronoun *jego* 'him' is carefully re-examined. It is argued that many traceable shapes of the stem of this pronoun (*$*jь$*) qualify as exhibiting such syncretism as a pre-condition for S-O ambiguity.

This pronoun is considered a pivotal point in mapping the route of recovery from S-O ambiguity through genitive-accusative.

After S-O ambiguity is ascertained as the main driving force in the noun and pronoun genitive-accusative evolution, the same factor is identified as pertinent for denominative adjective formation and distribution in possessive constructions. A correlation is established and confirmed typologically, between denominative adjective and S function, on the one hand, and adnominal genitive and the O function, on the other. In OESl possessive constructions involving nouns highest on the hierarchy (proper personal and common personal with definite reference) and associated with S status, adnominal genitive attestations are close to none. Genitive, incompatible with prototypical S status and thus unproductive in possessive constructions, emerges as the primary candidate for unambiguous marking of non-prototypical direct O — a new syncretic genitive-accusative.

2. S-O Ambiguity as the Driving Force in the Rise of Genitive-Accusative

An overview of the issues surrounding genitive-accusative syncretism will help to get a better perspective on the OESl situation reflected in its earliest records. The prehistoric loss of a final consonant in Common Slavic masc. **o*-stems resulted in a merger of the nominative sg. in **-os* and accusative sg. in **-om*. This "phonetic accident" (Meillet 1897, 122), brought about a potentially irresolvable ambiguity, especially when both S (in the nominative case) and direct O (in the accusative) were personal/animate nouns — prototypical agents.[5]

2.1. The Importance of S and O Case Marking

Comrie (1978, 35) states that

> the function of a case-marking system for subjects and direct objects may be to enable one to distinguish subject from direct object, rather than necessarily to provide one-one correspondence — subject-nominative and direct object-accusative. Since there is a high correlation of subject status with definiteness and animacy (i.e., subjects tend to be definite, and of high animacy), and a weaker but noticeable correlation of direct object status with indefiniteness and low animacy, a particular corollary of this general approach is that special accusative cases, distinct from the nominative, are particularly likely where the direct object is animate or definite.[6]

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[5]   Martinet (1962, 151–3) notes that, in early IE, the ending **-s* designated only *beings* or *objects conceived as animate*. This may indicate that **-s* was a marker of the agent. The case of the S, then, was not nominative but ergative. Nominative proper, on the other hand, must have been expressed by the bare stem, also identical with vocative — both cases used outside of grammatically organized utterances. Later, the nominative bare stem became replaced by the **-s* form. The vocative bare stem has been gradually undergoing the same process, which, as Martinet observes, hasn't yet been completed. Fillmore (1968, 13–14) discusses the possible origin of the **-s* ending from the demonstrative pronoun **so*, a suffix indicating a definite and animate S. With reference to the probable ergative nature of PIE, he points out that a genitive ending was also **-s*, identical with nominative. See also Tomson (1908) and Vaillant (1977, 37).

[6]   The necessity of distinguishing S from O is illuminated by such constructions as nominative with infinitive in northern Russian (and northern OESl). The non-finite form of the verb cannot have a S; thus the nominative object poses no danger of being inter-

Developing a similar idea, Kuryłowicz (1962, 255) stresses that

> the reason for these innovations was not the tendency to differentiate personal (or animate) against impersonal (or inanimate) but to distinguish the acc[usative] from the nom[inative] (the object from the subject) inside the personal (or animate) nouns, where such a distinction is necessary in the first place to avoid misunderstanding.

Prototypical Os tend to be inanimate, while prototypical Ss are most often animate. Clearly, difficulty in distinguishing S from O will most likely arise when animate/personal nouns are used non-prototypically — that is, as Os.

For example, in (4) the S is *холопъ* 'slave', while the O is *свободна моужа* 'a free man'. If the O were in nominative-accusative, the sense of this sentence would likely be understood as the opposite, since a slave is considered less of a person than is a free man.

    (4)   аже холопъ оударить свободна моужа
            'if a slave [N=S] hits a free man [G-A=O]' (Rus. Pr. 65, *l* 624*v*)

Contrast (5), where the same noun *холопъ* 'slave' functions as the S, while the direct O has an animal for a referent — *конь* 'horse'. Lacking the feature [personal] and being only animate (= [non-personal]), the latter is lower on the hierarchy than the former. Despite the absence of the feature [mature] (here intensified by the attributive modifier *обѣльныи* 'full/complete'), *холопъ* 'slave' stands closer to the prototypical agent. The difference in degree of prototypicality renders this sentence unambiguous — hence the O is in nominative-accusative:

    (5)   аже *холопъ обѣльныи* выведеть *конь* чии любо
            'if a full slave [N=S] takes away someone's horse [NA=O]'
            (Rus. Pr. 63, *l* 624)

Similarly, the denominative adjective *коневыи* 'of horses' (6), although formed with the help of the suffix *-ev-* (a variant of *-ov-*) characteristic of

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preted as S. It is significant that in ergative languages the S is marked only when the verb is transitive — that is, only under conditions of potential ambiguity. As Martinet (1962, 152) puts it, "there could be an agent only if some being or object (explicit or understood) was being acted upon".

adjectives with individual personal reference, lacks the lexical feature [personal]. Its stem does not denote a prototypical possessor. The adjective clearly refers to the patient (O), not the agent (S) of the action.

(6)   аче боудеть *коневыи* тать
       'if it is a horse [Adj.=O] thief' (Rus. Pr. 35, *l* 618)

Jakobson (1936/1984, 71) supports the correlation of certain features with the syntactic function of the noun:

> The most fitting representation of the active subject, and especially the active subject of a transitive action, is an **animate** being, and that of the object an **inanimate** entity . . . A switching of roles — as when an inanimate entity functions as the nominative subject and an animate being as the accusative object — correspondingly smacks of personification.

In many languages, marked direct Os exhibit high correlation between animacy/personhood and definiteness, to the extent that they form a "natural class" (Comrie 1979); animacy and definiteness may even coalesce. Direct Os characterized by the features [personal] and [definite] are the most likely to be mistaken for Ss, and therefore have to be clearly marked in their role as Os. The "natural class" of marked direct Os is comprised in a variety of languages of proper personal nouns. As is well documented, proper *o-stem nouns were the first ones to employ genitive-accusative and also prevail in possessive adjective formation. They are "definite by definition", serving as "direct labels for particular referents" (Chafe 1976, 39), thus being the closest to the agent/possessor prototype.

2.2. Genitive-Accusative as O Marker in OESl

Data on the Novgorod dialect lend additional support to the idea that genitive-accusative syncretism arose in reaction to S-O ambiguity. Non-palatalized stem masc. *o-stem nouns are often spelled with the ending -*e* instead of -ъ in the nominative sg.[7] This is a morphological trait, not simply an orthographic peculiarity of north-western OESl. According to Zaliznjak (1986, 127–9), the -*e* ending is only characteristic of the

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7   This ending is also typical of short-form adjectives and participles.

nominative, and never the accusative case — which instead has the regular ending -ъ. Despite the fact that birch bark letters frequently exhibit confusion between the graphemes ъ, ь, о, е, there are no reliable attestations of an accusative case with the -е ending. This distinction between nominative and accusative is found in one of the earliest documents, a fragment of which is cited in (7):

(7)   али чемо есемо виновата а восоли *отроко* а *водале* ми еси
      хамече
      'if I owe you anything, then send an official [N-A]; you have
      given [Part., N] me a bit of fabric...' (BBL #644, early 12th c.)

The direct O is *отроко* 'a low-rank official' (the final *о* stands for *ъ* here), while part of the predicate — the participle *водале* 'given' — has the nominative ending -*е*.

Genitive-accusative syncretism, although attested, is rather scarce in birch bark letters (Zaliznjak 1995, 87). Nevertheless, consistent with the overall trends of this change in Slavic, it primarily involves proper personal nouns. The infrequency of such attestations might be connected with the existence of the special nominative marker -*е*.

The example in (8) illustrates how genitive-accusative provides a solution to the problem posed by free word order when personal nouns are involved. The word order is identical in both elliptical clauses, with both nouns taking turns as S and as O. The Ss are in the nominative, whereas the Os are marked by genitive-accusative:

(8)   аще кто оубье^т или *хрестьанина Рꙋси^н* или *хрестьанинъ*
      Роусина
      'if someone kills: either a Christian [G-A] (is killed by) a Russian [N], or a Christian [N] (kills) a Rusian [G-A]' (Laur.
      Chron. 912, *l* 17)[8]

Of further interest are constructions involving the same lexical item as both S and O, such as in (9), with the verb omitted altogether, highlighting the potential difficulty in deciphering the message, were the case forms of the S and the O identical:

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8   This citation is from the *Radziwił Chronicle*, since the *Laurentian Chronicle* is missing the corresponding pages. Because of the purely illustrative nature of this example, its later date does not compromise the overall argument.

(9) ажь оубиѥть *моужь моужа* то мьстити братоу брата, любо
отцю, любо сыноу, любо браточадоу, любо братню сынови
'if a man [N=S] kills a man [G-A=O], then a brother should be
avenged by a brother, or by a father, or by a son, or by a
nephew/brother's son, or by a brother's son' (Rus. Pr. 1, *l*
615*v*)[9]

As regards nouns originating in other declensions, such as *synъ* 'son' (**u*-
stem) or *gospodь* 'Lord' (**i*-stem) and historically joining the **o*-stems, it
is inappropriate to speak of genitive-accusative syncretism. The new ac-
cusative inflection -*a* became distinct from the genitive -*u*/-*i*. The whole
drift of masc. personal nouns from other declensions towards the **o*-stems
was most likely initiated by their acquisition of the new geni-
tive-accusative ending of the **o*-stems. See the examples in (10) and (11):

(10) который роусинъ или латинескыи имьть *тата* надъ тѣмь
ѥмоу своɪа вълɪа
'if a certain Rusian or Latin catches a thief [G-A], he can do
what he wishes with that one' (1229 Tr., 66)

(11) и взаша [sic] и С<ва>тополкъ акы *тьста* своѥго и врага
'and Svjatopolk took him as his father-in-law [G-A] and enemy'
(Laur. Chron. 1096, *l* 77)

2.3. Genitive-Accusative Syncretism in Pronouns

The genitives of the demonstrative pronouns *togo* 'that', *sego* 'this', the
masc. sg. relative *jegože*, and the interrogative *kogo* 'whom' also serve as
accusatives in Slavic. In the declensional paradigm of the interrogative
pronoun *kъto* 'who', *kogo* is the original genitive-accusative.[10] Thus it is

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9   Note also that the genitive-accusative *брата* 'brother' is used, even though the S
братоу is not in the nominative but in the dative case. This may be caused by syntactic
parallelism with the preceding genitive-accusative *моужа* 'man'. However, since the
noun used as a direct O denotes a prototypical agent rather than patient of a transitive
action, genitive-accusative *is still used* for the purpose of clarity, vital in a legal document.
10 The pronoun *kъto*, along with its inanimate counterpart *čьto*, embodies the very es-
sence of the agent/patient distinction, correlated with the animate/inanimate opposition in
many languages. Jakobson (1936/1984, 71) also points out that in Russian *кто делает*
'who does', *кто* 'who' unambiguously represents the S, while its inanimate counterpart
что 'what' in the same syntactic environment — *что делает* 'does what' — could never

the only pronoun that has no other alternative for the accusative case beside the form syncretic with genitive (Vondrák 1898, 329). In contrast, masc. *o*-stem nouns were the only personal nouns lacking an accusative form distinct from the nominative. Given that both are inherently personal, the genitive-accusative *kogo* would be the primary model for such syncretism in personal nouns (Huntley 1980, 205). Moreover, since *kogo* shares its declensional pattern with demonstrative pronouns, one of which (*jь*) becomes the formant of a long adjectival form, the grounds for analogy become even firmer. For the same reason, *kogo* may have also served as an analogical model for other demonstrative pronouns.[11]

There is no reason to presume that genitive-accusative is of the same origin and date in all the pronouns that exhibit it. The interrogative pronoun *kogo* must have served as the primary model for genitive-accusative in nouns, but personal pronouns may have developed genitive-accusative in a different manner and at a later stage. The 1st and 2nd pers. sg. and pl. personal pronouns never underwent the merger of nominative and accusative. Therefore, unlike nouns, they lack the prerequisite of S-O ambiguity for the rise of genitive-accusative. On the other hand, personal pronouns share many features with personal nouns at the forefront of genitive-accusative innovation. The most important features are [personal] and [definite], which possibly served as the basis for analogy — except this time in the direction from nouns to personal pronouns.[12]

It cannot be conclusively claimed that nominative-accusative syncretism is non-existent in demonstrative pronouns. Meillet (1934/1965, 433) speaks of a peculiar Balto-Slavic innovation unknown to the rest of the IE family that contributed greatly to erasing the distinction between the animate nominative and accusative of demonstrative pronouns. In PIE, the nominative masc. and fem. of these pronouns used to have a suppletive

be mistaken for a S. A similar prototypical opposition is found in many languages, even those that do not express this dichotomy in grammatical terms. For such typological data (especially outside the IE family) on interrogative and anaphoric pronouns — equivalents of the third person pronoun — see Hjelmslev (1956, 231–2).

[11] Demonstrative pronouns can have both personal/animate and inanimate reference.

[12] Meillet (1934/1965, 406) himself admits the possibility that genitive-accusative in personal pronouns may be a secondary development. Kuryłowicz (1962, 251) points out that for chronological reasons alone genitive-accusative in personal pronouns could not have preceded the syncretism in nouns. The old enclitic accusative forms still predominate at a time when genitive-accusative was already "firmly established" among masc. sg. nouns. Thus, it is rather the nouns that triggered the use of genitive instead of accusative forms in the personal pronouns, by analogy on the basis of inherent personal reference.

form, different from both the accusative and the neut. nominative-accusative (for example, Gothic *sa* and *so* vs. *zana, zo* and *zata*). In Slavic, however, masc. *tъ*, fem. *ta* and neut. *to* 'that' all have a single stem for nominative and other cases. This Balto-Slavic innovation apparently preceded the apocope in the sg. **o*-stem nouns which resulted in the nominative-accusative syncretism. All demonstrative pronouns (*sь* 'this here' and **jь* 'this') share the development exemplified by *tъ*.

It is notable that the genitive-accusative of the demonstrative pronoun *jego*, as attested in the OCS corpus, is a comparatively young phenomenon (D. Huntley — personal communication). The relative frequency of the old accusative *jь*, regardless of personal/animate reference, is much higher than that of the new *jego*. Evidently, genitive-accusative in nouns must have preceded this innovation in personal pronouns, and not vice versa.

2.3.1. The Many Faces of -**jь*

Another interesting problem concerns the stem of *jego* — "a cumulative result of a merger of two distinct IE pronouns: a demonstrative **i* and a relative **yo*" (Flier 1974, 67).[13] A variety of genetically related formations can be traced back to this stem, namely: the stem of the 2nd pers. anaphoric pronoun /*j*-/ (except for the nominative case), the relative pronoun *jьže/jegože*, the ending of the long-form adjectival forms, as well as possibly the suffix -**jь* forming denominative adjectives. Because of this multitude of shapes and functions, the stem of this pronoun emerges as a focal point, standing at the intersection of the several routes that analogy may have taken.[14] One might well consider the genitive-accusative of the pronoun **jь* (unattested as such in the nominative, but constituting the ending of definite adjectival forms and the stem of the relative pronoun)

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[13] Flier explains this merger by means of the feature [definite], shared by both of these pronouns. The demonstrative pronoun referred to Os that were present, while the relative pronoun referred to those previously mentioned. Of course, they were also close phonetically.

[14] Greenberg (1976, 45, 51) comments on the high frequency of individual pronouns compared to nouns in languages in general, which he explains by the limited overall number of pronominal forms. Moreover, the OESl texts available for analysis contain hardly any dialogical speech; and, according to Greenberg's typological accounts, there is a tendency to over-represent third person forms in non-conversational texts at the expense of first and second person. Even in conversational samples the third person still predominates.

as the most important proof of the hypothesis that the rise of the genitive-accusative was prompted by the necessity to disambiguate S and O.

As is well documented, at the time of the earliest OCS records the pronoun *jb did not have a nominative case form of the same stem as the rest of the paradigm. The suppletive forms *tъ* or *onъ* were used instead.[15] Despite the fact that *jb is unattested as nominative of the 2nd pers. sg. pronoun, it exists in OCS and OESl in the nominative as a component of the relative pronoun *jьže*:

(12) товаръ *иж* то потоплъ
      'and the merchandise that has sunk' (1229 Tr., 88)

The nominative ending *-jь* also regularly appears in masc. sg. long-form adjectives:

(13) отъ неіа же роди сіа сии *окананьныи* С<ва>топълкъ
      'and from her this wretched Svjatopolk was born' (L. of B. &
      G., 8в.25–6)

Therefore, even if the attested paradigms of this and other demonstrative pronouns do not exhibit nominative-accusative syncretism *per se*, there remains the hypothetical possibility of its prehistoric approximation (in the form of a single stem shared by animate and inanimate demonstrative pronouns throughout the paradigm as the result of the above-mentioned Balto-Slavic change) — if not actual existence, as suggested by the relative pronoun nominative sg. masc. *jьže* and the nominative ending *-jь* of long-form adjectival forms. This nominative formally coincides with the accusative case of the personal pronoun.

With this in mind, it can be postulated that nominative-accusative syncretism caused the genitive-accusative of the pronoun *jego* to emerge in the same manner as it did in nouns, namely when both S and O were represented by etymologically related and formally identical case forms. The fact that the genitive-accusative *jego* is more frequently attested in OCS and OESl as the direct O of active participles than that of verbs (Vaillant 1964, 179; Klenin 1983, 33) lends weight to such a postulate. To understand this, it is important to note that the necessity of disambiguating S and O arises when the participle is in the nominative case, and thus refers

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[15] This secondary substitution is reminiscent of the situation just described in PIE, where the nominative case stem of masc. and fem. pronouns differed from the neut. stem.

to the S of the sentence. OCS attestations containing a present active participle (*prědajǫjь jego* 'the one betraying him') or a past active participle (*prědavъjь jego* 'the one who betrayed him') (Vaillant 1977, 46) show this quite clearly. If the pronoun *jego* were to appear in its old accusative form *jь* as the O of a participle, the nominative ending of which points to the S, S and O would have the same morphological form and would thus be potentially indistinguishable as to their reference. Note that both cited participles are in the active voice, and thus refer to the agent of an action, with *jego* in these constructions also having personal reference.

2.4. Direct O *vs.* Prepositional Rection

One of the features on the agent/possessor hierarchy not touched upon so far constitutes additional proof that S-O ambiguity provided the main impetus for the rise of genitive-accusative. This is a syntactic feature, and concerns prepositional *vs.* direct O rection; it emerges as particularly evident in connection with the pronoun **jь*. The fact that genitive-accusative attestations of **jь* are less frequent under prepositional than under verbal rection has to do not only with the presence of the preposition itself, already signalling that the governed form is not a S. It also has to do with an additional, albeit secondary, marker of the accusative form of the pronoun — the prothetic *n-*, as in *na njь* 'on(to) him' (a result of earlier reanalysis in time extended into wider prepositional usage). This morphophonemic marking further precludes the need for the new genitive-accusative form.

This corresponds to the pattern of genitive-accusative attestations in nouns, which are fewer under prepositional than under verbal rection (Tomson 1908, 247). The contrast between accusative forms depending on this syntactic feature is especially striking for the OESl noun *konь* 'horse'. It is attested as genitive-accusative, yet none of these attestations are under prepositional rection:

(14) онъ же въбързѣ въ мале дроужинѣ въсѣдъ *на конь* поѣха
      'and he swiftly, with a small retinue, having mounted a horse [N-A], set out' (L. of B. & G., 13б.6–7)

(15) въсіади *на конь* свои
      'mount your horse [N-A]' (L. of Th., 43в.8)

Infrequent attestations under prepositional rection clearly indicate that genitive-accusative arose not simply as a means to distinguish nominative from accusative, but to distinguish S from O. The pattern of attestations of the genitive-accusative *jego* confirms the hypothesis that the need to set S apart from O in a transitive sentence was the main reason for the rise of the genitive-accusative in agentive nouns and pronouns.

2.5. Joint Development of Genitive-Accusative in Nouns and Pronouns

Features characteristic of the pronouns discussed above certainly align them with the nouns on top of the agent/possessor hierarchy. 1st and 2nd pers. pronouns are by definition personal and definite, and would have a high position on the hierarchy.[16] Demonstrative pronouns may vary in their degree of animacy, which affects their status; but at the same time they are referentially definite (Tomson 1908, 254). The interrogative *kogo* is, like personal pronouns, inherently personal/animate. It is not surprising, then, that pronouns are so closely involved in the development of genitive-accusative.

Klenin 1983 points to this central role of pronouns, asserting that the Slavic pronominal system has been under-investigated.[17] However, the same author's claim (Klenin 1987, 405) that "the pronoun genitive-accusative had its own history, separate from that of nouns" can be disputed in view of the preceding discussion, especially since it stands on the following reasoning: "The extension of the pronoun genitive-accusative was not controlled by referential personhood or animacy, nor was it restricted to paradigms with pre-existing nominative-accusative syncretism" (Klenin 1987, 405).

The participation of 1st and 2nd pers. pronouns in the genitive-accusative indicates that the feature [animate/personal] played a central

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[16] Comrie (1978, 39) provides typological evidence for placing 1st and 2nd pers. pronouns at the top of the animacy hierarchy in languages where animacy is grammatically relevant. These pronouns are necessarily personal ("human"), or personified, and are characterized by the greatest potential for agentivity, since they refer to speech act participants.

[17] Klenin (1987, 404) submits that it was a reanalysis of genitive objects that resulted in the rise of genitive-accusative, since it occurred at a time when genitive verbal rection in Slavic was in a state of decline. Indeed, both genitive and accusative served as direct O cases in PIE (Krys'ko 1994, 167; 1997). Long before genitive-accusative syncretism arose in *o-stems, genitive (not restricted to any one declensional membership) had been regularly used for the direct O of certain verbs in Slavic.

role in the process. Also, as has been shown above, the non-existence of nominative-accusative syncretism in all pronouns may be less certain (at least with regard to the pronoun *jego*) than has traditionally been thought. The interrogative *kogo* is always attested in genitive-accusative.

Comparative historical evidence suggests that nouns were at the centre of genitive-accusative evolution in Slavic (Huntley 1980, 190). Within nouns, the new syncretic form is most productive among personal nouns at the top of the hierarchy — the closest to the agent/possessor prototype.

On the basis of the foregoing, it can be firmly concluded that the need to avoid confusion between S and direct O was the main driving force in the rise of the genitive-accusative.

Finally, it should also be mentioned that strong support for S-O disambiguation as the reason for the rise of genitive-accusative is provided by studies on the evolution of inanimate genitive-accusative such as that by van Tilburg (1988, 601) on Serbo-Croatian. As the author observes, it does not essentially differ from the earlier development of animate genitive-accusative. His particular point is that in both of these processes S-O case syncretism has been the motivating factor.

3. Denominative Adjective and Prototypical S Status

In OESl, proper noun stems, being inherently definite, tend to form denominative adjectives with individual personal reference. In contrast, proper nouns are hardly ever attested in the genitive form. As has been shown in the discussion of genitive-accusative, this assigns a noun to the top of the hierarchy identifying it with prototypical S.

Common nouns, which may be only contextually or pragmatically definite, tend — if this is the case — to be used as genitives. In common nouns, the original declensional membership (in some cases also indirectly connected with the lexical feature [mature]) is another important factor that assures the noun a lower status on the hierarchy. This lower status is correlated with genitive usage. Denominative adjectives formed from the stems of common nouns are not usually definite; common nouns' stems cannot express individual personal reference. Lack of the lexical feature [mature] results in the noun's lower position on the hierarchy. The majority of genitive attestations in OESl involve the noun *otrokъ* 'boy', characterized by the absence of this feature,[18] for example:

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[18] Gamkrelidze and Ivanov (1995, 392–3) describe the Roman classification of tools into three types: 1) slaves (speaking), 2) oxen (half-speaking), 3) mute. This is instructive, not

(16) си слышавъши м<а>ти кего и чюдивъши ска о премоудрости
отрока и оттолѣ нача оставати ска кего нъ враг не почиваше
остра ю на възбрание *отрока* о таковѣм кего съмѣрении
'his mother, having heard this and having marvelled at the wis-
dom of the youth, since then began to leave him alone, but the
enemy, not sleeping, incited her to forbid the youth such meek-
ness' (L. of Th., 29r.20)

Referential definiteness, interconnected with the various features men-
tioned above, emerges as the decisive feature for the morphosyntactic
outcome, insofar as common nouns in possessive constructions are con-
cerned. Therefore, nouns most likely to be attested in the form of adnomi-
nal genitive are those lower on the hierarchy.

3.1. S-O Ambiguity in Denominative Adjectives

The idea of S-O ambiguity as a contributing factor in the progressive in-
crease in adnominal genitive attestations is not entirely new.[19] However,
the significance of the unproductive adnominal genitive in possessive
constructions has not yet been considered in conjunction with the rise of
genitive-accusative. The legitimacy of such juxtaposition is based on the
fact that the same hierarchy of features governs both sets in morphosyn-
tactic variation. It is also indicative that one of the alternative morpho-
syntactic variants in both sets is the case form that either originates as or
is the genitive case. Finally, it is perhaps no coincidence that both phe-
nomena in morphosyntactic variation are attested contemporaneously.

S-O ambiguity as the cause of the rise of genitive-accusative is also
involved in distribution of possessive adjective and genitive of possession
in prototypical agent/possessor nouns. Due to the features [personal] and
[definite], the noun stems most productive in the formation of such adjec-
tives are highest on the agents/possessors hierarchy. However, the exam-

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only in terms of animacy and personhood — slaves treated as tools — but also with re-
spect to the alleged existence of a subdivision into speaking/non-speaking of the class of
living things in PIE. This criterion for classification may explain the linguistically mani-
fested grouping of children together with servants and/or slaves. All of this supports the
gradation along the lines of the lexical features [personal] and [mature] (or absence
thereof) observed in many languages.

[19] See Lomtev (1956, 56).

ples below demonstrate that such adjective too may be ambiguous as to its reference to either agent (17)–(19) or patient of an action (20), (21):[20]

(17) и *еѡдосьѥвами м<о>л<и>тв<а>ми сблюдаѥми*
'and preserved by the prayers of Theodosius [Adj.=S]' (Laur. Chron. 1074, *l* 66*v*)

(18) и бы^с<ть> в Ростовѣ радо^с<ть> велика о *Глѣбовѣ* приѣздѣ
and there was great joy in Rostov at Gleb's [Adj.= S] arrival'
(Suzd. Chr. 1258, *l* 167)

(19) и *б<о>жиѥю* помощию съврьже одежю съ себе
'and with God's [Adj. = S] help he took off his clothes' (L. Of Th., 34b.29–31)

(20) повѣдаıа оубииство *Игорево*
'reporting the murder of Igor [Adj. = O]' (Suzd. Chr. 1149, *l* 106 (318))

(21) онъ же иже по истинѣ теплыи д<у>шею на *б<о>жию* любъвь
'but he who truly has a warm heart for the love of God [Adj. = O]' (L. Of Th. 34b.24)

Recall also the adjective *коневыи* 'horse' cited in (6) above as an example of O reference.

The reasons for S-O ambiguity in (19)–(21) lie in the fact that the head nouns of the denominative adjectives *помощию* 'help' (19) *оубииство* 'murder' (20) *любъвь* 'love' (21), have lexical equivalents in transitive verbs.[21] The unambiguous S reference in *м<о>л<и>тв<а>ми* 'prayers' (17) and *приѣздѣ* 'arrival' (18) is due to the corresponding verbs' intransitivity. By the lexical features these adjectives' stems are, of course,

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[20] Fillmore (1968, 8) speaks of the "neutralization of the nominative-accusative distinction" in the *genitivus subjectivus* and *genitivus objectivus*.
[21] Examples like these make an obvious bridge, founded on S-O ambiguity, between the two sets of constructions in morphosyntactic variation. In the case of the genitive use increase at the cost of denominative adjective in possessive constructions, there existed no other model for analogy than that of genitive-accusative, the basis for analogy being the S-O ambiguity. The later replacement of denominative adjective by genitive case in Russian must have been motivated by the same factors as the rise of genitive-accusative in OESl.

prototypical Ss. Consequently, just as in the case of genitive-accusative, S-O ambiguity arises only when such adjectives are used non-prototypically — that is with reference to Os.

Since adnominal genitive was unproductive in agent/possessor nouns in OESl, but was used as a morphosyntactic alternative for the opposite pole of the agent/possessor hierarchy in possessive constructions, it was a natural option for O marking in transitive constructions involving the same nouns.

3.2. Genitive as the Case of the Prototypical O

In typological terms, according to Comrie 1976, in possessive constructions, it is usually the O that is expressed by the genitive case, while the S is expressed predominantly by a denominative adjective, all other conditions being equal.[22]

The diachronic connection with genitive form in both adnominal and adverbal usage with the O of an action emerges as particularly salient.[23] Internal Slavic evidence, as well as comparative studies, supports the validity of this correlation. In Czech, for example, denominative adjective in O function is reportedly avoided, while genitive is used instead: *matčina ztráta* 'mother's [S] loss' versus *ztráta matky* 'loss of mother [O]'.[24] The same tendency is evident in the use of a possessive pronoun as opposed to the genitive case of a personal pronoun: *tvá ztráta* 'your [S] loss' versus *ztráta tebe* 'the loss of you [O]'. Likewise, in Polish — which is known for its very limited denominative adjective usage — when an adjective is used, it is most readily interpreted as referring to the S.

A somewhat analogous phenomenon exists in English, where phrases of the kind *the shooting of the hunters* tend to be understood by non-linguists as objective in a transitive action sense. Apparently, the *of* form ("post-posed genitive", in Comrie's terminology) is identified by speakers with the O of a transitive verb nominalization, while the *'s* form ("pre-posed genitive"), as in *Shakespeare's reading*, is perceived as the S ('the

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[22] See also Seiler 1983, for a discussion on S and O marking in possessive constructions.
[23] Zverkovskaja (1964, 294), discussing the adjective-forming suffix -ьn-, writes that this suffix "обозначает так сказать, объектные отношения: основа, от которой образуется прилагательное, выражает объект действия" ('denotes, so to say, objective relations: the stem from which the adjective is formed expresses the object of the action').
[24] These and the following examples are borrowed from Comrie (1976, 188), who also provides references to the original works dealing with the languages that manifest such phenomena.

reading by Shakespeare', even though this is an unlikely interpretation for pragmatic reasons). Similarly, the English *'s* is formed predominantly (and until recently almost exclusively) from animate nouns. Vachek (1961, 25) observes that the *'s* form acts very much like an adjective which has gradually severed its ties with the nominal paradigm. According to Golovačeva et al. (1989, 215), the division between constructions with the preposition *of* and those formed by *'s* is controlled by the feature [animate].

4. Conclusion

As stated at the outset, the pattern of attestations of adnominal genitive in possessive constructions and of genitive-accusative in transitive constructions is regulated by a single agent/possessor hierarchy. The identity of agent and possessor is based on features common for both semantic roles, making agent/possessor a linguistic gestalt comprised of lexical, morphological, syntactic, and referential features. The prototypical S stands for the prototypical agent of an action, which in turn corresponds to the prototypical possessor.

In early OESl, genitive-accusative in transitive constructions and adnominal adjective in possessive constructions were associated with S use typical of the agent/possessor, while adnominal genitive is correlated with the patient/possessed, or O status. Since proper personal stems denoting prototypical possessors predominantly formed individual personal adjectives in OESl, adnominal genitive usage was unproductive among the most agentive nouns (Meillet 1897, 150).

It may be concluded then, that genitive, associated with the Patient/Possessed and O status and greatly under-employed in possessive constructions, was available for use in transitive constructions as a marker of a non-prototypical O. Due to its typological association with O, it was the most fitting case for non-prototypical O marking.

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