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NOUN PHRASES IN HISTORICAL TURKIC AND UZBEK

Annotation

This study examines the structure, classification, and historical development of noun phrases in Turkic languages, with particular emphasis on Uzbek. Based on historical and modern data, it analyzes definite, indefinite, and unmarked constructions, focusing on the development and variation of forms such as +nIn, +nIg, and +nI and the functional relationship between genitive and accusative markers. The findings show that while noun phrase structure has remained relatively stable, marking patterns have changed across periods and are reflected in contemporary Uzbek.

Key words: Noun phrases, possessive constructions, genitive, accusative, historical Turkic, Uzbek, Chagatai.

ИМЕННЫЕ СЛОВСОЧЕТАНИЯ В ИСТОРИЧЕСКИХ ТЮРКСКИХ ЯЗЫКАХ И УЗБЕКСКОМ ЯЗЫКЕ

Аннотация

В статье рассматриваются структура, классификация и историческое развитие именных словосочетаний в тюркских языках с особым вниманием к узбекскому языку. На историческом и современном материале анализируются определённые, неопределённые и немаркированные конструкции. Особое внимание уделяется развитию и вариативности форм +nIn, +nIg и +nI и функциональному взаимодействию генитива и аккузатива. Показано, что при относительной стабильности структуры именных словосочетаний их маркировка менялась в разные исторические периоды и отражается в современном узбекском языке.

Ключевые слова: Именные словосочетания, посессивные конструкции, генитив, аккузатив, исторические тюркские языки, узбекский язык, чагатайский язык.

TARIXIY TURKIY TILLAR VA O'ZBEK TILIDA OTLI BIRIKMALAR

Annotatsiya

Ushbu maqolada turkiy tillardagi otli birikmalarning tuzilishi, tasnifi va tarixiy taraqqiyoti, xususan, o'zbek tilidagi xususiyatlari tahlil qilinadi. Tarixiy va zamonaviy materiallar asosida belgili, belgisiz va belgilanmagan konstruksiyalar o'rganiladi. +nIn, +nIg va +nI shakllarining taraqqiyoti va variativligi hamda qaratqich va tushum kelishigi ko'rsatkichlarining funksional munosabatiga alohida e'tibor beriladi. Natijalar otli birikmalar tuzilishi nisbatan barqaror bo'lsa-da, ularning belgilanishi tarixiy davrlarda o'zgarib, hozirgi o'zbek tilida ham aks etganini ko'rsatadi.

Kalit so'zlar: Otli birikmalar, egalik konstruksiyalari, qaratqich kelishigi, tushum kelishigi, turkiy tillar, o'zbek tili, chig'atoy tili.

Introduction. Noun phrases are an important grammatical category in Turkic languages, expressing possession, specification, and classification. Although their basic structure has remained relatively stable, the forms and functions of grammatical markers have changed across historical periods. This development is particularly relevant to Uzbek, which emerged through Old Turkic, Old Uyghur, Karakhanid, Khwarezmian, Kipchak, and Chagatai stages.

The historical development of Uzbek is also relevant to the language policy of the Republic of Uzbekistan. President Shavkat Mirziyoyev has emphasized the historical and cultural significance of Uzbek and its development, while the Presidential Decree of 20 October 2020 highlights strengthening its role in science and public life. These initiatives further underscore the importance of examining the historical and structural foundations of Uzbek.

Despite extensive research on Turkic noun phrases, questions remain concerning the classification of unmarked noun + noun structures, the distinction between definite and indefinite constructions, and the historical relationship between genitive and accusative marking. The development of forms

such as +nIn, +nIn, +nIg, and +nI also requires comparative examination.

This study examines the structure, classification, and historical development of noun phrases in historical Turkic and Uzbek, focusing particularly on genitive marking. It aims to classify the principal noun phrase structures, compare marked and unmarked constructions, trace the development of genitive markers, examine their relationship with accusative marking, and determine their reflection in contemporary Uzbek. Its significance lies in combining historical Turkic and contemporary Uzbek data to demonstrate continuity and change in possessive and case-marking patterns.

Literature Review. Noun phrases in Turkic languages are generally described as constructions containing two nominal elements linked through possessive, specifying, or attributive relations. Studies primarily distinguish definite and indefinite possessive constructions, while some also recognize unmarked structures. The classification of unmarked N + Ø + N + Ø combinations remains controversial, as they may be interpreted as noun phrases, adjective-like constructions, or lexicalized compounds [1], [2], [3], [4].

In the standard classification, the definite construction consists of a genitive-marked possessor and a possessive-marked head (N + GEN + N + POSS), whereas the indefinite construction contains an unmarked possessor and a possessive-marked head (N + Ø + N + POSS) [5], [6], [7], [8]. The latter may also become lexicalized as a compound noun [5], [7].

Historical studies show that these structures were already present in early Turkic. Talat Tekin identifies genitive-marked, unmarked, and pronoun-based possessive constructions in Orkhon Turkic [9], while Eraslan distinguishes definite, indefinite, and unmarked noun phrases in Old Uyghur

[10]. Şinasi Tekin further notes greater structural flexibility in Old Uyghur than in Köktürk Turkic [11]. Thus, the basic possessive patterns show historical continuity, although their marking and functional interpretation vary across periods.

These findings provide a basis for examining the distinction between definite and indefinite noun phrases in Uzbek and the relationship between genitive marking and unmarked constructions. Accordingly, this study takes contemporary Uzbek as its primary focus and uses historical Turkic data for comparison.

Table I. Structural Patterns of Noun Phrases in Historical Turkic

Structure	Type	Formula	Example	Period
a	Definite	N + GEN + N + POSS	Bilgä kagan+ıñ bodun+ı	Old Turkic (Orkhon)
a	Definite	N + GEN + N + POSS	Burxan+lar+ning yürek+i	Old Uyghur
a	Definite	N + GEN + N + POSS	er+ning köz+i	Karakhanid
a	Definite	N + GEN + N + POSS	Hadıca hatun+nuñ köşk+i	Khwarezmian
a	Definite	N + GEN + N + POSS	men+ıñ köñgü+üm	Chagatai
b	Unmarked possessor	N + Ø + N + POSS	Kül Tigin atı+si	Old Turkic (Orkhon)
b	Unmarked possessor	N + Ø + N + POSS	Abdu'l-Muṭṭalib orn+ı	Khwarezmian
b	Unmarked possessor	N + Ø + N + POSS	Atası vefat+ı	Chagatai
c	Indefinite	N + Ø + N + POSS	Hecr vakt+ı	Chagatai

Source: Author's compilation based on the cited sources.

Types a, b, and c represent the main structural and functional patterns identified in the historical data. Type a contains a genitive-marked possessor and a possessive-marked head, whereas Types b and c have an unmarked possessor and a possessive-marked head. Although Types b and c share the same formal structure, they differ functionally: Type b represents an unmarked possessor construction, whereas Type c expresses an indefinite or generic relationship. Type c additionally expresses an indefinite or generic relationship. Although the basic structure remained relatively stable, the realization and function of genitive marking varied across historical periods.

2.1. Noun Phrases in Uzbek

Uzbek noun phrases are generally classified as definite (belgili qaratqichli birikma) and indefinite (belgisiz qaratqichli birikma). The definite type contains a genitive-marked possessor, normally with +ning, and a possessive-marked head, whereas the indefinite type lacks the genitive marker [12], [13]. Uzbek also permits unmarked possessors and, in some contexts, unmarked possessed elements, demonstrating both overt and zero marking [14]. The possessor and possessed elements are traditionally termed qaratqich/aniqllovchi and qaralmish/aniqlanmish, respectively.

Research Methodology. This study employs a qualitative comparative-historical approach to examine noun phrase structures in historical Turkic varieties and contemporary Uzbek. The data were drawn from historical texts, grammatical descriptions, and previous linguistic studies covering Old Turkic, Old Uyghur, Karakhanid, Khwarezmian, Kipchak, Chagatai, and Uzbek. Examples were selected based on their structural and functional relevance, particularly the marking of the possessor and possessed element.

The analysis combines structural, functional, and comparative-historical methods. Constructions were classified according to the presence or absence of genitive and possessive markers using formulas such as N + GEN + N + POSS and N + Ø + N + POSS. The analysis further examined their semantic and syntactic relations and the historical variation of +ıñ, +nıñ, +nıg, and +nı, including cases of genitive use of +nı. The same

criteria were applied across the historical varieties and Uzbek to identify structural continuity, formal change, and functional variation, with findings cross-checked against established grammars and previous studies.

Analysis and Results. 4.1. Noun Phrase Structures in Uzbek

Contemporary Uzbek noun phrases are mainly represented by two patterns: N + GEN + N + POSS and N + Ø + N + POSS. The first contains a genitive-marked possessor and a possessive-marked head, as in Gülnor+ning yurag+i “Gülnar’s heart” and Majlis+ning ohir+i+da “at the end of the meeting”. The second has an unmarked possessor, as in Navoiy davr+i, dam olish kun+i, and davlat ish+i. Both marked and unmarked forms may alternate, as in Astrabod+ning olim+lar+i and Astrabod olim+lar+i.

4.2. Historical Basis

Both principal Uzbek patterns have historical counterparts. N + GEN + N + POSS is attested in Old Turkic, Old Uyghur, Karakhanid, Khwarezmian, and Chagatai, while N + Ø + N + POSS also occurs in several of these varieties. Examples include Bilgä kagan+ıñ bodun+ı, er+ning köz+i, Hadıca hatun+nuñ köşk+i, and the unmarked constructions Kül Tigin atı+si and Atası vefat+ı. These data indicate structural continuity between historical Turkic and contemporary Uzbek despite changes in marker realization.

4.3. Historical Development of Genitive Marking

Historical sources show variation in genitive forms: +ıñ in Old Turkic, +nıñ in Old Uyghur, +nıñ, +nUñ, +nıg in Karakhanid, +nıñ/+nUñ in Khwarezmian and Kipchak, and mainly +nıñ in Chagatai. Forms such as +nıg and +nı are also relevant to the later development of Turkic case marking, reflecting morphological variation across periods and varieties.

4.4. Genitive–Accusative Functional Relationship

The data include instances of +nı, normally associated with the accusative, functioning as a genitive marker, particularly in Karakhanid, Khwarezmian, and Chagatai. This provides a historical basis for examining the relationship between Uzbek +ning and +nı. However, the evidence indicates a historically restricted functional overlap rather than general interchangeability of the two markers.

Table II. Noun Phrase Structures in Uzbek

Structure	Type	Formula	Example	Period
Genitive-possessive construction	Definite	N + GEN + N + POSS	Gülnor+ning yurag+i; Majlis+ning ohir+i+da	Modern Uzbek
Genitive-function construction with +ni	Definite	N + GEN + N + POSS	Afandi+ni bir miqdor pul+i; Eshak+ni orqa+si+dan	Modern Uzbek
Possessive construction without genitive marking	Indefinite	N + Ø + N + POSS	Navoiy davr+i; dam olish kun+i; davlat ish+i	Modern Uzbek
Marked-unmarked alternation	Definite / Indefinite	N + GEN + N + POSS ↔ N + Ø + N + POSS	Astrabod+ning olim+lar+i ↔ Astrabod olim+lar+i	Modern Uzbek

Abbreviations: N = noun; GEN = genitive; POSS = possessive; Ø = zero marker.
Source: Author's compilation based on the cited sources.

Conclusion. This study examined the structure, classification, and historical development of noun phrases in historical Turkic and Uzbek. The analysis shows that the principal patterns are definite constructions (N + GEN + N + POSS) and indefinite or unmarked constructions (N + Ø + N + POSS). Although their basic structural organization has remained relatively stable, the marking and functional interpretation of noun phrases have varied across historical periods. The comparison of the examined historical varieties demonstrates structural continuity with contemporary Uzbek.

The development of genitive markers, particularly the forms +Inj, +nInj, +nIg, and +nI, reflects historical changes in case marking. The data also indicate a functional overlap between genitive and accusative marking, with +nI occurring in genitive functions in some historical sources. This relationship provides a historical basis for examining the use of +ning and +ni in Uzbek. Overall, the findings demonstrate that Uzbek noun phrase structures preserve important features of earlier Turkic grammatical patterns while also showing changes in morphological marking and the distribution of marked and unmarked constructions. The study therefore contributes to understanding the historical continuity and structural development of noun phrases in Uzbek.

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