On the morphological status of casemarkers in Dolakha Newari

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-- Enclitics is thus neither true suffixation nor juxtaposition of independent elements. It has the external characteristics of the former..., the inner feeling of the latter.

E. Sapir (1930:70)

0. Introduction

In Dolakha Newari, the following casemarkers are in a paradigmatic relationship:\(^1\)

(1) na/n ergative / instrumental
ta dative
ku locative
ke allative
lān ablative

These casemarkers always occur following noun phrases (N'), a distribution which suggests that they may fall into one of two morphological categories. If they stand as free words, they may be considered to be postpositions; if they are phonologically bound, they may be considered to be clitics (Klavans 1985). However, a third possibility also exists in Dolakha, which is that they are nominal suffixes. This possibility arises out of the fact that the vast majority of noun phrases end in a noun, resulting in adjacency between noun and casemarker in most cases. These casemarkers are underlined in the following examples in order to indicate a neutral stance as to their morphological status:\(^2\)

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\(^{2}\) All examples are taken from narrative or conversational discourse unless otherwise noted. Abbreviated glosses whose meanings are not obvious are: FI past habitual; NR1 nominalizer/relativizer 1; NR2 nominalizer/relativizer 2; ASS speaker assertion; PART participle; IMP
(2) sivaji Ṇ jō-i sāt
Sivaji ERG catch-INF as soon as
'As soon as Sivaji caught her...'

(3) thi-mā khicā ta gulpunuŋ thōsi kōsa-pen
one-CL dog DAT never meat bone-PL
na-i ma-bi-u ka
eat-INF NEG-give-3PH ASS
'(They) never used to give the dog meat or bones to eat.'

(4) parāsar risi ta kho pār tar-en-an bi-u³
Parasar Risi DAT river side cross-do-PART give-IMP
'Help Parasar Risi cross to the other side of the river.'

(5) thau bichyāunā ku apsoc yeŋ-an
REFL bed LOC regret do-PART
'While sitting on his bed feeling regretful...'

(6) ji wā rājā ke tuŋ ū-i
1s TOP king ALL EMPH go-1FUT
'I will go to a king.'

(7) uku lān moti jar-ai ju ju sā-lān
here ABL pearl fall-3sPR be(NR1) be(PH) hair ABL
'Pearls used to fall from here, from her hair.'

In addition to these morphemes, there also exists the genitive casemaker e. This morpheme differs distributionally from those mentioned previously in that it links a dependent possessor and its head. Therefore it is noun phrase internal (following N'):

(8) mucā e muthu ku dudu on-a
child GEN mouth LOC milk go-3sPST
'The milk went into the child's mouth.'

imperative; TOP topic; EVID evidential; PRTC discourse particle; EMPH emphatic; CL numeral classifier. For more information and a complete list of abbreviations, see Genetti 1990.

³ The dative is used to mark syntactic objects which can be recipients of ditransitive verbs or patients of monotransitive verbs which have been previously mentioned in the discourse (Genetti 1993). It is also used to mark some subjects under very restricted conditions. I have chosen to continue glossing this case as dative as this follows common practice in South Asian linguistics.
The structure of the locative noun phrase in (8) is as follows:

\[
\begin{array}{c}
N'' \\
/ \quad / \\
N' \quad N' \\
/ \quad / \\
N \quad N \\
/ \\
mucā \quad e \quad muthu \\
\text{child} \quad \text{GEN} \quad \text{mouth} \\
/ \\
ku \\
\text{LOC}
\end{array}
\]

The genitive differs from the other casemarkers (with the exception of the allative, see below) in never occurring phrase-finally, except in cases where the head noun is omitted; in these cases the identity of the head is always clear and the genitive phrase clearly retains its function as a modifier:

(9) lita meguri mi e nyen-ju
   next other man GEN ask-3sPST
   'Next, he asked the other man’s (question).'

On the other hand, the remaining casemarkers never occur phrase-internally unless included in a relative clause:

(10) ām [kho e dāti ku con-a]rel mi ta nāplat-cu
    that river GEN middle LOC stay-NR2 man DAT meet-3sPST
    'He met that man who was in the middle of the river.'

According to informants in elicitation, the noun phrase without the relativizing verb, kho e dāti ku mi, is ungrammatical, and this is borne out in my textual data. Therefore it appears that only the genitive may occur phrase-internally as a modifier of a head noun.

A deviation from this pattern is found with the allative casemaker ke, which is flexible in its positioning. When it occurs following a noun phrase it indicates a human goal as in (6), but it can also occur phrase-internally (following N'), indicating possession and location simultaneously. This use of the allative is contrasted with the genitive in the following elicited pair:
(11) ām e sarchi dyābā dam
    3s GEN 100 rupee have
    'He has a hundred rupees.'

(12) ām ke sarchi dyābā dam
    3s ALL 100 rupee have
    'He has a hundred rupees on him (with him right now).'  

This morpheme may co-occur with the ablative lān, as in the following example:

(13) māji ke lān sampati kār-ju
    boatman ALL ABL wealth take-3sPST
    'He took the wealth from that which the boatman had with him.'

While the co-occurrence of the allative and ablative in example (13) would seem to contradict the statement made above that the two are in a paradigmatic relationship, it is clear that the allative is functioning in this example in its possessive sense, as opposed to its strictly locational sense of human goal. The syntactic structure of this noun phrase is as follows:

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N''
   N'
       N
           māji  ke  lān
           boatman  ALL  ABL
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The two morphemes are thus occurring in different structural environments and hence are not paradigmatic in this case. Instead, the flexibility of the allative's positioning between phrase-internal on the one hand and phrase-external on the other, results in its forming a paradigmatic relationship with the genitive in the former case, and with the casemarkers listed in (1) in the latter. For expository purposes I will refer to the phrase-final casemarkers as

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4 The structure of possessive phrases in Newari is arguably NP V, with the possessor syntactically represented as a modifier of the possessed. Thus these translate literally as "his one hundred rupees exist" and "his one hundred rupees which are with him exist" respectively.