The Distribution of the Māori Genitive Relative Construction

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Outline

1. Introduction: The Genitive Relative Construction (GRC) in Māori

2. What gets Genitive-marked?: not always subjects (puzzle 1)

3. Māori as a split-ergative language

4. What position gets relativised? (puzzle 2)

5. Summary and next steps
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Introduction: The Genitive Relative Construction (GRC) in Māori

- First, a simple subject relative clause, before introducing the GRC

**Gap strategy**: relativised position realized as a gap

1. Ko tēnei te tangata [i tae tōmuri mai ∅_{subj}].
   PREP this the person TAM arrive late DIR
   ‘This is the man who arrived late.’ (Kelly 2015:67)

- Schematically:

2. \( D\ NP \ [O_{p1} \ [ V\ ∅_{subj1} (DP_{obj}) ] ] \)
Introduction: The Genitive Relative Construction (GRC) in Māori

- What does the GRC look like?
  - Two positions within the relative clause that require attention:
    ▶ the relativised position
    ▶ the gap for the subject position
  - The subject is marked with Genitive case, and appears to be realized outside of the relative clause (4)

(3) I kohuru a Hone i te tangata.
   T/A murder PERS John DO the man
   ‘John murdered the man.’

(4) Ka mohio ahau ki te tangata a Hone [i kohuru ai ∅ subj ∅ obj].
   T/A know 1SG to the man of John T/A murder PART
   ‘I knew the man that John murdered’ (Bauer et al. 2003)

(5) the man of John₂ [Op₁ murdered ∅ subj₂ ∅ obj₁]
   ‘the man who John murdered’
Genitive subjects in relative clause constructions in Altaic languages have attracted attention (see, for example, Krause, 2001; Kornfilt, 2008; Miyagawa, 2011)

(6) [Mary-ga/no aishiteiru] otoko-o mita. (Japanese)
Mary-NOM/GEN love.PRS.PROG man-ACC saw
‘I saw the man who Mary-NOM/GEN loves.’ (Krause 2001:36)

The GRC in Polynesian is an understudied construction and raises interesting syntactic and semantic puzzles

Some of the first attempts to provide a detailed formal syntactic analysis were Herd et al. (2004, 2011), and Otsuka (2010)
Goals
The main goal: to provide a description of the GRC in Māori

We will:
1. attempt to characterize the GRC by focusing on the two questions
   ▶ What gets Genitive-marked?
   ▶ What position gets relativised on?
2. present two puzzles regarding the distributional patterns of the GRC
3. show that one of the distribution puzzles receives a natural characterization if we adopt Pucilowski (2006)’s analysis of Māori as a split-ergative language
   ▶ in turn providing support for the split-ergative analysis
4. show that the GRC has a wider distribution than previously thought

What we will NOT do:
1. explain why the subject of a relative clause ends up with the genitive case & outside the relative clause
2. make any claims about other Polynesian languages
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What gets Genitive-marked?: not always subjects (puzzle 1)

What gets Genitive-marked?

- not just Subject (7),
- but also Oblique (passive by-phrase) (8)

(7) Genitive subject

the man of John$_2$ [Op$_1$ murdered $\emptyset_{subj_2}$ $\emptyset_{obj_1}$]

‘the man that John murdered’

The GRC can be used on at least some passive constructions:

(8) Ko tōna ngākau kīhái i wareware ki tana mea [i kite-a ai EQ his heart NEG T/A forget DO his thing T/A see-PASS PART $\emptyset_{subj}$ $\emptyset_{by\_phrase}$] hei taonga mō-na.

PREP treasure for-3SG

‘His heart did not forget his thing that he had seen that would be a treasure for him.’

(Grey 2001:174)
What gets Genitive-marked?: not always subjects (puzzle 1)

(8) Ko tōna ngākau kīhai i wareware ki tana mea [i kite-a ai EQ his heart NEG T/A forget DO his thing T/A see-PASS PART ∅ subj ∅ by_phrase] hei taonga mō-na.

‘His heart did not forget his thing that he had seen that would be a treasure for him.’ (Grey 2001:174)

- The genitive-marked DP appears to be associated with an oblique phrase, making this sentence an exceptional instance of the GRC

(9) a. thing [which₁ t₁ was seen by him]
    b. his thing [which₁ t₁ was seen (by) ∅]

- We will show that this puzzle goes away if we analyze Māori as a split-ergative language
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Māori as a split-ergative language

Māori has traditionally been described as a nominative-accusative language with an active (10) and a passive (11) construction

- henceforth “pattern I” and “pattern II”

(10) e kai ana ngā tamariki i ngā āporo
TAM eat TAM the.PL children DO the.PL apple
‘the children are eating the apples’

(Bauer 1997: 40)

(11) i patu-a te kuri e te tamaiti
TAM hit-Cia the dog AGT the child
‘the dog was hit by the child’

(Bauer 1997: 42)
Māori as a split-ergative language

- Māori has also been argued to be an ergative language (e.g. Sinclair 1976, Modini 1985)
  - Under the ergative analysis, what we have been calling the passive is actually an active sentence with ergative marking
- Pucilowski (2006) proposes that Māori is a split-ergative language (see Otsuka 2011 for a similar analysis)
  - ‘active’ constructions have nominative-accusative alignment; used in low-transitivity sentences
  - ‘passive’ constructions have ergative-absolutive alignment; used in high-transitivity sentences
- Our claim: the identity of the Genitive-marked noun receives a natural characterization under the split-ergative analysis
Māori as a split-ergative language
Pucilowski 2006

- The ‘split’ is based on the transitivity of a clause (in the sense of Hopper and Thompson 1980)
  - factors include aspect, affectedness and individuation of O, punctuality and dynamism

- Pattern I (low transitivity):

  (12) e here ana a Huia i ngā kurī
  TAM tie TAM PERS Huia ACC the.PL dog
  ‘Huia was tying up the dogs’
  (Bauer 1997: 477)

- Pattern II (high transitivity):

  (13) i here-a e Huia ngā kurī
  TAM tie-Cia AGT Huia the.PL dog
  ‘Huia tied up the dogs’
  (Pucilowski 2006: 44)
Pucilowski (2006)’s split-ergative proposal draws on evidence from:

- topicalization
- question formation
- relative clauses

- all three have relative clause-like structure and make use of the GRC
Pattern II (high-transitivity) clauses use the gap strategy on S and O, but this strategy is unavailable for A.

Pattern I (low-transitivity) clauses use the gap strategy on S and A, and the GRC on O, where the gap strategy is unavailable.

Table 1: Availability of Gap Strategy

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>High transitivity (Pattern II)</th>
<th>Low transitivity (Pattern I)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>✗</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>O</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✗</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Māori as a split-ergative language

- If we analyze pattern II sentences (previously ‘passive’) as ergative-absolutive constructions, then (8’) is less surprising
  - Puzzle 1 goes away (Gen-marked thing no longer associated with oblique)
- Like in Pattern I GRC, the genitive-marked DP in (8’) is associated with the subject of the relative clause, and the object position is relativised

\[(8')\]

\[
\text{Ko tōna ngākau kīhai i wareware ki tana mea [i kite-a ai EQ his heart NEG T/A forget DO his thing T/A see-Cia particle}\\ \text{∅ subj ∅ obj]} \text{hei taonga mō-na. PREP treasure for-3SG}\\
\]

‘His heart did not forget his thing that he had seen that would be a treasure for him.’ (Grey 2001:174)

(14) a. Passive: his thing [which₁ t₁ was seen (by) ∅] 
   b. Ergative: his thing [which₁ ∅ saw t₁]

- Adopting the split-ergative analysis allows us to more naturally characterize the GRC’s distribution, in turn providing evidence for that analysis
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What position gets relativised? (puzzle 2)
Herd et al. (2011)

- Extraction restriction: no gap strategy on the direct object in Pattern I ('active') [bottom-right corner of Table 1]
  (or on the agent of transitive in Pattern II ('passive'))

- GRC as a rescue strategy to get around the extraction restriction (Herd et al., 2011)

(15)  D NP of-DP [ Op₁ [ V \stackrel{t_1}{\longrightarrow} t_{obj₁} ] ]

- Under this view, the GRC is expected to be found only when the direct object position is relativised

- We will show that the GRC has a wider distribution than that
What position gets relativised? (puzzle 2)
Herd et al. (2011)

- GRC compatible with relativisation on the object position in Pattern II (bottom-left corner of Table 1)

(8') Ko tōna ngākau kīhai i wareware ki tana mea [i kite-a ai EQ his heart NEG T/A forget DO his thing T/A see-Cia particle
PREP treasure for-3SG

‘His heart did not forget his thing that he had seen that would be a treasure for him.’ (Grey 2001:174)

(16) Ergative: his thing [which₁ ∅ saw t₁]

- Expected to be extractable (bottom-left cell)
- GRC not expected to occur here under the rescue strategy view, contrary to fact.

(17) D NP of-DP [ Op₁ [V-ClA t₁ obj ∅ subj ] ]
What position gets relativised? (puzzle 2)

Herd et al. (2011)

In the nom-acc view: **the subject position of passive**

- Passivization + GRC: Not expected under the ‘GRC as a rescue strategy’ analysis
  - There is no extraction issue here
  - We lose the hypothesized motivation for GRC

(18) \[ D \ NP \ [ \ Op_1 \ [ V-PASS \ t_t \ t_{obj_1} ] ] \]

(19) \[ D \ NP \ of-DP \ [ \ Op_1 \ [ V \ t_t \ t_{obj_1} ] ] \]

(8) Ko tōna ngākau kīhai i wareware ki tana mea [i kite-a ai \( \varnothing_{subj} \)\]
EQ his heart NEG T/A forget DO his thing T/A see-PASS PART
\( \varnothing_{by\_phrase} \) hei taonga mō-na.
PREP treasure for-3SG

‘His heart did not forget his thing that he had seen that would be a treasure for him.’ (Grey 2001:174)

(9b) his thing [which\( _1 \ t_t \) was seen (by) \( \varnothing \)]
What position gets relativised? (puzzle 2)
Herd et al. (2011)

- Two more cases where the use of GRC does not appear to be a rescue strategy
- Relativisation on positions other than objects of canonical transitives:
  1. Oblique DP positions
  2. Object positions of experience (or ‘middle’ verbs)
- These positions crucially allow relativisation using other (non-GRC) strategies
- Therefore they don’t need to be rescued.
What position gets relativised? (puzzle 2)
Herd et al. (2011)

- Oblique DPs
  - marked with a preposition, syntactically distinct from direct objects

GRC used in relativisation on an oblique DP position:

(20) I hoe mai hoki te waka rā i muri i te kōtiro rā i TAM paddle hither also the canoe DEIX at behind at the girl DEIX at te wā ōna [i rere rā ∅_subj ki te wai ∅_oblq].
the time her TAM jump DEIX to the water
‘The canoe had also rowed up behind the girl at the same time when she had jumped into the water.’ (Bauer et al. 2003)

(21) at her time [when₁ ∅_subj₂ had jumped into the water ∅_oblq₁]
‘at the time when she had jumped into the water’
What position gets relativised? (puzzle 2)
Herd et al. (2011)

- Objects of experience (or ‘middle’) verbs: e.g. pīrangi “want”, mōhio, “know”, and wareware “forget”
- GRC used in relativisation on the object position of an experience verb

(22) Ko tēnei te whare a Hata [i pīrangi ai Øsubj Øobj].
PRED this the house of Hata TAM want PART
‘This is the house that Hata wanted.’ (Bauer et al. 2003)

(23) the house of Hata [ Op₁ Øsubj₂ wanted Øobj₁]
‘the house that Hata wanted’

In sum, the GRC has a wider distribution than just direct object relativisation, which is surprising in Herd et al.’s (2011) analysis.
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Summary and next steps

Our goal: to characterize the distribution of GRC by focusing on:

(24) **What gets Genitive-marked?**
   a. Not just Subject, but also Obliques in passives (8) (puzzle 1)
   b. The puzzle disappears under the split-ergative analysis of Māori

(25) **What position gets relativised?**
   a. Not restricted to direct object; GRC compatible with a wider range of relativised positions than previously thought
   b. The GRC is used in ways that cannot be characterized purely as a rescue strategy (puzzle 2)
   c. Instead of tying the GRC to the extraction restriction, we could say that the GRC is available with relativization on any position (other than the subject position).
Summary and next steps

- The mechanism of generating Genitive subjects outside relative clauses
  - Needs to capture: Genitive-marked argument – always interpreted as Subject/Agent in the relative clause
  - Movement relation?
  - Connections to Samoan Possessor-Agent-Goal (PAGO) readings? (Homer, 2009)
Acknowledgments

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Appendix 1: Obliques and objects of experience verbs relativised without the GRC

- Gap strategy used to relativise object of experience verb:

(26) Kua ngaro te **pukapuka** [e pīrangi ana a Huia ∅_{obj}].
TAM missing the **book** TAM want TAM PERS Huia
‘The book that Huia wants is missing.’ (Bauer et al. 2003)

- Pronoun strategy used to relativise oblique:

(27) Ko Tamahae te **tamaiti** [i mau nei i a ia te
PRED Tamahae the **child** TAM be.caught DEIX CAUSE PERS 3SG the
terakihi].
terakihi
‘Tamahae is the child by whom the terakihi was caught.’ (Bauer et al. 2003)
Appendix 2: The ‘ai’ strategy

- ‘Ai’ used on an agentive subject:

(28) He nui ngā tauira [i whakatūtū ai i te puehu].
DET many the.PL student TAM raise PART DO the dust
‘There were many students who raised the dust.’ (Kelly 2015:77)

- ‘Ai’ absent in a relative clause on a pattern II patient:

(29) Ka mōhio ahau ki te tangata [i kōhuru-tia _ e Hone].
TAM know I to the man TAM murder-PASS by John
‘I know the man who was murdered by John.’ (Bauer et al. 2003)