The syntax and semantics of bare nominals in Wolof

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Overview of lecture #4

- Number neutrality: what it is and how it contrasts with an exclusively singular interpretation.
- Background on Wolof: overview of some properties of the language and an analysis of the structure and morphosyntax of full nominals.
- Diagnostics to probe into number interpretation.

1 Background on bare nominals

A. Several, often unrelated, languages allow for their nominals to occur in bare form.

- Bare form: without the functional morphology that usually appears in the nominals of a given language, including determiners and number morphology. These nominals are bare nominals (BNs)
- Correspondingly, full nominal: nominals that do contain that functional morphology.

1) Brazilian Portuguese

a. Eu vi un-s cachorro-s no parque.
   I saw one-PL dog-PL in.the park
   ‘I saw some dogs in the park.’
   full nominal

b. Eu vi cachorro no parque.
   I saw dog in.the park
   ‘I saw a dog/some dogs in the park.’
   bare nominal

B. Number neutrality

- Crosslinguistically stable property of BNs: they are number neutral.

2) a. Brazilian Portuguese (Müller 2002, (51))
   Unicórnio tem chifre.
   unicorn has horn
   ‘Unicorns have (an unspecified number of) horns.’

b. Mandarin (Rullmann & You 2006, (1))
   Zuotian wo mai le shu.
   yesterday I buy ASP book
   ‘Yesterday, I bought one or more books.’

C. Not all BNs are number neutral.

- Crosslinguistically stable property of BNs: they are number neutral.
- It is often taken to be a signature property of BNs crosslinguistically (Dayal, 2011, and rereferences therein).

1 Abbreviations: CAUS = causative, CM = class marker, COMP = complementizer, COP = copula, DEF = definite, GEN = genitive, IMPF = imperfective, ITER = iterative, NA = sentential particle for neutral sentences (na), NEG = negation, NON.FIN = nonfinite, OBJ = object, OBL = oblique, PL = plural, POSS = possessive, PREP = preposition, PROG = progressive, RECIP = reciprocal, REFL = reflexive, SG = singular.
(3) Gis-na-a nonggo darra senegalee. 
see-NA-1SG student Senegalese
‘I saw a Senegalese student.’

(Speaker commented that this sentence is false if I saw more than one Senegalese student.)

D. Teasing apart number neutrality vs. exclusively singular interpretation (preview; more on §3)

- One way to distinguish between number neutrality and exclusively singular interpretation: saturation of collective predicates.
- Setting the stage: requirement imposed by plural predicates:

(4) Brazilian Portuguese

A Maria agrupou o-s cachorro-s / *o cachorro no the Maria grouped the-PL dog-PL / *the dog in.the quintal. 
backyard
‘Maria gathered the dogs/*the dog in the backyard.’

- This sentence demonstrates that collective predicates like agrupar ‘gather’ require a plural object.

- Some languages where BNs are number neutral:

(5) Brazilian Portuguese

A professora agrupou aluno no parque. 
the teacher grouped.together student in.the park
‘The teacher gathered students in the park.’

(6) Mandarin (F. Chen, p.c.)

Laoshi zai gongyuan-li jihe-le xuesheng. 
teacher at park-in gather-PERF student
‘The teacher gathered the students in the park.’

- Compare with Wolof:

(7) * Jangalekat b-i dajeele-na xale ci bayaal 
teacher CM.SG-DEF gather-NA.3SG child PREP park 
b-i. 
CM.SG-DEF
Lit.: ‘The teacher gathered child in the park.’

- Making sense of this contrast:
  - If the BN is number neutral (Brazilian Portuguese and Mandarin), a plural interpretation is available, hence why the BN can saturate a collective predicate.
  - This implies that BNs in Wolof are not number neutral, otherwise (7) would be grammatical.

2 Background on Wolof

A. Head directionality: head initial

- Wolof is a head-initial language. For instance, verbs, prepositions, and complementizers precede their complements.

(8) a. Verb precedes its complement

Binta mungi lekk ceeb-u jën. Binta PROG.3SG eat rice-GEN fish
‘Binta is eating ceebu jen.’

b. Preposition precedes its complement

Jangalekat b-i dajeele-na a-y xale 
teacher CM.SG-DEF gather-NA.3SG INDEF-CM.PL child 
bo bayaal b-i. 
PREP park CM.SG-DEF
‘The teacher gathered some students in the park.’

c. Complementizer precedes its complement

Defe-na-a ne macc-ña-ñu màngo b-i. 
think-NA.1SG COMP suck-FIN-3PL mango CM-DEF.SG
‘I think that they sucked the mango.’

[(a) and (c) from Torrence 2013, p. 77; glosses adapted for uniformity]

- But: some determiners like the definite determiner i surface post-nominally. Indefinite determiners follow the head-initial pattern of the language.

(9) a. Plural and singular definite determiners (post-nominal)

Xale y-i lekk-ña-ñu gato b-i. 
child CM.PL-DEF eat-NA-3PL cake CM.SG-DEF
‘The children ate the cake.’
b. Singular indefinite determiner (pre-nominal)
   Xadi gis-na **a-b** sàcc
   Xadi see-NA.3SG INDEF-CM.SG thief
   ‘Xadi saw a thief.’

c. Plural indefinite determiner (pre-nominal)
   Awa jàpp-na **a-y** sàcc
   Awa catch-NA.3SG INDEF-CM.PL thief
   ‘Awa caught some thieves.’

   [Tamba et al. 2012, (2a/32a/33b); glosses adapted for uniformity]

B. Class markers

- Determiners contain a class marker (gloss: cm) affixed to them (Babou & Loporcaro, 2016).
- Besides the class a noun belongs to, the class marker encodes number information (singular or plural).
- For instance, sàcc ‘thief’ remains constant in (9b) and (9c); whether the DP it heads is interpreted as singular or plural is correlated with the class marker used, b and y, respectively.
- The class markers in Wolof are listed below:

   (10)
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number</th>
<th>Noun</th>
<th>CM-DEF</th>
<th>Gloss</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>a. Singular</td>
<td>yàmbaa</td>
<td>j-i</td>
<td>‘marijuana CM.SG-DEF’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b.</td>
<td>nit</td>
<td>k-i</td>
<td>‘person CM.SG-DEF’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c.</td>
<td>xaj</td>
<td>b-i</td>
<td>‘dog CM.SG-DEF’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>d.</td>
<td>nit</td>
<td>k-i</td>
<td>‘person CM.SG-DEF’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>e.</td>
<td>mbagg</td>
<td>m-i</td>
<td>‘shoulder CM.SG-DEF’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>f.</td>
<td>weñ</td>
<td>w-i</td>
<td>‘metal CM.SG-DEF’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>g.</td>
<td>suuf</td>
<td>s-i</td>
<td>‘ground CM.SG-DEF’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>h.</td>
<td>ndap</td>
<td>l-i</td>
<td>‘pot CM.SG-DEF’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>i.</td>
<td>góór</td>
<td>g-i</td>
<td>‘man CM.SG-DEF’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>j. Plural</td>
<td>xaj</td>
<td>y-i</td>
<td>‘dog CM.PL-DEF’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>k.</td>
<td>góór</td>
<td>ñ-i</td>
<td>‘man CM.PL-DEF’</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

   (Tamba et al., 2012, tab. 17.2; adapted)

C. An analysis of class markers and the morphosyntax of full nominals

- Why this is relevant: as we are going to see, a common analysis of BNs is that they have fewer layers than full nominals. Following this assumption, we need an analysis of full nominals in Wolof in order to provide an analysis for their BNs.

- It is clear from (10) that there are more class markers for singular nouns than for plural ones.
- We could assume that there are as many Vocabulary Items as there are class markers.
  - While this analysis is consistent with the facts, it misses the asymmetry in the amount of singular and plural class markers.
- Alternative: I propose that class marker is a feature which is a specification of the categorizer n.
  - I follow Acquaviva (2009) in assuming that gender and other rootspecifc morphology is encoded in the categorizer that merges with the root.
  - Furthermore, I postulate a single head (AgrP) that probes both for a class marker and a number feature.
  - It is this single head (Agr) that is exponed as the class markers in (10).

   (11)
   \[
   \begin{array}{c}
   \text{DP} \\
   \text{D} \quad \text{AgrP} \\
   \text{Agr} \quad \text{NumP} \\
   \text{[cm:]} \quad \text{Num} \quad [\text{n} : \text{pl}] \\
   \text{[cm:]} \quad \sqrt{\text{xaj}} \\
   \end{array}
   \]

   - Preview of analysis: BNs lack a class marker, though they do have a particular number interpretation.
   - I will propose that BNs are smaller than full nominals in lacking at least an AgrP.

- The Vocabulary Items that I assume for class markers are in (12). I represent the class marker feature with a Greek letter that corresponds to the singular class marker.
Vocabulary Items for Agr

1. \([\text{CM}: \beta] \leftrightarrow /\beta/\)
2. \([\text{CM}: \kappa] \leftrightarrow /\kappa/\)
3. \([\text{CM}: \mu] \leftrightarrow /\mu/\)
4. \([\text{PLURAL}] \leftrightarrow /\gamma/\)
5. \([\text{CM}: \gamma; \text{PLURAL}] \leftrightarrow /\tilde{n}/\)

D. Sentential particles

- Wolof has a rich system of sentential particles, i.e., morphemes, which encode, among other things, information structure ([Zribi-Hertz & Diagne 2002; Torrence 2013; a.o.]).
- These are morphemes which are sensitive as to whether a constituent to its left is topical or focal, or if the whole sentence is new information, among other things.
- In (13) – and in most sentences in this course –, it is the morpheme for neutral sentences, \(na\).
- To the sentential particle is attached a morpheme that cross-references the \(\varphi\)-features of the subject, e.g. \(-\tilde{\eta}u\) in (13b).
- This cross-referencing follows a nominative-accusative alignment: the subject of both transitive and intransitive verbs is cross-referenced.

3. Diagnostics for number neutrality: BNs in Wolof are singular

A. In this section:

- Some diagnostics for number neutrality and how Wolof BNs behave with respect to these diagnostics.

B. Saturation of collective predicate

- Language where BN is number neutral

\begin{quote}
Brazilian Portuguese
\end{quote}

\begin{tabular}{ll}
| A: Maria agrupou o-s cachorro-s / *o cachorro no the Maria grouped the-PL dog-PL / *the dog in.the quinta.
\end{tabular}

\begin{tabular}{ll}
| backyard
\end{tabular}

\begin{tabular}{ll}
| ‘Maria gathered the dogs/*the dog in the backyard.’
\end{tabular}

- Full nominal in Wolof

\begin{tabular}{ll}
| (15) Dajeele requires a plural object
\end{tabular}

\begin{tabular}{ll}
| Jangalekat b-i dajeele-na *a-b xale / teacher CM.SG-DEF gather-NA.3SG *INDEF-CM.SG child / a-y xale ci bayaal b-i.
\end{tabular}

\begin{tabular}{ll}
| INDEF-CM.PL child PREP park CM.SG-DEF
\end{tabular}

\begin{tabular}{ll}
| ‘The teacher gathered some students in the park.’
\end{tabular}

- A singular full nominal can be the object of a collective predicate, if an oblique argument is added.

\begin{tabular}{ll}
| (16) Faatu dajeele-na a-b féckat ak
\end{tabular}

\begin{tabular}{ll}
| Faatu gather-NA.3SG INDEF-CM.PL dancer CONJ
\end{tabular}

\begin{tabular}{ll}
| a-b woykat. INDEF-CM.SG singer
\end{tabular}

\begin{tabular}{ll}
| ‘Faatu gathered a dancer with a singer.’
\end{tabular}

- BN in Wolof
BN in Wolof cannot be the object of dajeele

* Jangalekat b-i dajeele-na xale ci bayaal teacher CM.SG-DEF gather-NA.3SG child PREP park b-i.
CM.SG-DEF Lit.: ‘The teacher gathered student in the park.’

○ If an oblique argument is added, a BN behaves like a singular full nominal:

(18) **BN can be object of collective predicate if oblique argument is added**

Faatu dajeele-na féckati ak (a-b) woykati. Faatu gather-NA.3SG dancer CONJ (INDEF-CM.SG) singer
‘Faatu gathered a dancer with a singer.’

C. Discourse anaphora

- Language where BN is number neutral

(19) **Mandarin**

Zuotian wo mai le shu. Wo ba ta/tamen dai hui jia yesterday I buy ASP book. I BA it/them bring back home le.
ASP
‘Yesterday, I bought one or more books. I brought it/them home.’
(Rullmann & You, 2006)

(20) **Brazilian Portuguese**

Tem criança na sala. E ela está / elas estão ouvindo. has child in.the room and she is / they are listening
‘There is a child/some children in the room. And (s)he is/they are listening.’

[Schmitt & Munn 1999, (31a); glosses and translation added]

- Full nominal in Wolof

(21) **Discourse anaphora must match number of antecedent**

OBJ.3SG / *OBJ.3PL
‘I saw some teachers yesterday. Maymuna admires *her/them.’

OBJ.3SG / OBJ.3PL
‘I saw some teachers yesterday. Maymuna admires *her/them.’

- BN in Wolof

(22) **BN cannot be antecedent of plural discourse anaphora**

Gis-na-a jangalekat. Maymuna bëgg-na ko / see-NA.1SG teacher Maymuna like-NA.3SG OBJ.3SG /
*leen.
*OBJ.3PL
‘I saw some teachers yesterday. Maymuna admires her/*them.’

D. Plural reflexive

- Language where BN is number neutral

(23) **Brazilian Portuguese**

? O professor sempre manda aluno se abraçar depois de the teacher always order student SELF hug after of uma briga.
one fight
‘The teacher always demand that students hug themselves after a fight.’

- Full nominal in Wolof

(24) **Plural DP can be antecedent of reflexive**

a. Kadeer sang-aloo-na xale y-i seen Kadeer wash-CAS-NA.3SG student CM.PL-DEF POSS.3PL bopp. head
‘Kadeer made the children wash themselves.’

b. Kadeer sang-aloo-na xale b-i Kadeer wash-CAS-NA.3SG student CM.SG-DEF bopp=am. head=POSS.3SG
‘Kadeer made the child wash themselves.’
**BN in Wolof**

(25) **BN cannot be antecedent of plural reflexive**

* Jangalekat b-i sang-aloo-na nonggo darra
  teacher CM.SG-DEF wash-CAUS-NA.3SG student
  seen bopp.
  head
  Lit.: ‘The teacher made student wash themselves.’

- The BN can be the antecedent of a singular reflexive.
- As such, (25)’s ill-formedness cannot be caused by the BN’s inability to be an antecedent.

(26) **BN can be antecedent of singular reflexive**

Jangalekat b-i sang-aloo-na nonggo darra
  teacher CM.SG-DEF wash-CAUS-NA.3SG student
  bopp=am.
  head=POSS.3SG
  Lit.: ‘The teacher made some student wash himself/herself.’

4 Addition of modifier to BN in Wolof

4.1 Relative clause

A. Morphosyntax of relative clauses

- Relative clauses in Wolof contain a class marker prefixed to the relative complementizer *u*.
- The class marker cross-references the class and number of the head of the relative.

(27) a. Roxaya xam-na a-b jangalekat [RC]
  Roxaya know-NA.3SG INDEF-CM.SG teacher [ b-u Maymuna bègg ].
  CM.SG-COMP Maymuna like
  ‘Roxaya knows a teacher that Maymuna admires.’

  CM.SG-DEF
  ‘I helped some children who read the book.’

- Assuming a raising analysis of relative clauses (see overview in Bhatt 2002) for Wolof, Torrence (2013) analyzes the occurrence of the class marker as an instance of complementizer agreement.

(28)

B. BN and relative clauses

- BNs can be modified by either a relative clause with either a singular or a plural class marker.

(29) a. Samba tej-na palanteer [ b-u tilim ].
  Samba close-NA.3SG window [ CM.SG-COMP dirty ]
  ‘Samba closed some window that is dirty.’

b. Samba tej-na palanteer [ y-u tilim ].
  Samba close-NA.3SG window [ CM.PL-COMP dirty ]
  ‘Samba closed some windows that are dirty.’

C. Number interpretation of BN modified by relative clause

- Singular relative clause: singular interpretation.
- Plural relative clause: plural interpretation.

(30) **BN modified by plural relative clause can be object of collective predicate**

a. * Jangalekat b-i dajeele-na xale [RC]
  Jangalekat gather-NA.3SG student [ b-u Samba xam ]
  CM.SG-COMP Samba know ] ci bayaal b-i.
  Samba know ] PREP park CM.SG-DEF
  Lit.: ‘The teacher gathered student who Samba knows in the park.’

b. Jangalekat b-i dajeele-na xale [ y-u Samba xam ]
  Jangalekat gather-NA.3SG student [ CM.PL-COMP Samba know ] ci bayaal b-i.
  Samba know ] PREP park CM.SG-DEF
  ‘The teacher gathered some students who Samba knows in the park.’
BN modified by plural relative clause can be antecedent of plural discourse anaphora

a. Gis-na-a **jangalekat** [ b-u Roxya xam ] see-NA-1SG teacher [ CM.SG-COMP Roxya know ]
   Maymuna bëgg-na ko /*leen.
   Maymuna like-NA.3SG OBJ.3SG / "OBJ.3PL
   ‘I saw a teacher who Roxya knows. Maymuna admires her.’

b. Gis-na-a **jangalekat** [ y-u Roxya xam ] see-NA-1SG teacher [ CM.PL-COMP Roxya know ]
   Maymuna bëgg-na *ko /leen.
   Maymuna like-NA.3SG OBJ.3SG / OBJ.3PL
   ‘I saw some teachers who Roxya knows. Maymuna admires them.’

BN modified by plural relative clause can be antecedent of plural reflexive

a. **Jangalekat** b-i sang-oloo-na **nonggo darra** teacher CM.SG-DEF wash-CAUS-NA.3SG student
   [ y-u njool ] seen bopp.
   [ CM.PL-COMP tall ] POSS.3PL head
   ‘The teacher made some tall students wash themselves.’

b. * **Jangalekat** b-i sang-oloo-na **nonggo darra**
   teacher CM.SG-DEF wash-CAUS-NA.3SG student
   [ b-u njool ] seen bopp.
   [ CM.SG-COMP tall ] POSS.3PL head
   Lit.: ‘The teacher made a tall student wash themselves.’

4.2 Plain modifier

A. Morphosyntax of plain modifiers

- In Wolof, nominal modifiers are usually relative clauses (e.g. tall in (32a)).
- Nonetheless, expressions for nationality may occur without the syntax of a relative clause. I dub these expressions ‘plain modifiers’.

(33) a. Mareem dajeele-na a-y woykat brezilien.
   Mareem gather-NA.3SG INDEF-CM.PL singer Brazilian
   ‘Mareem gathered some Brazilian singers.’

b. Samba bëgg-na tew/ataaya angale.
   Samba like-NA.3SG tea/tea English
   ‘Samba likes English tea.’

- I assume that plain modifiers are compounded with the nominal they modify:

(34)

B. The number interpretation of BN modified by plain modifier

- Recall: plural relative clauses allow a BN to be plural.
- Plain modifiers do not have a “pluralizing” effect in the number interpretation of BN.

(35) **BN modified by plain modifier cannot saturate collective predicate**

   Roxya gather-NA.3SG dancer Brazilian
   Lit.: ‘Roxya gathered Brazilian student.’

b. * **Jangalekat** b-i dajeele-na **nonggo darra**
   teacher CM.SG-DEF gather-NA.3SG student
   angale ci bayaal b-i.
   English PREP park CM.SG-DEF
   Lit.: ‘The teacher gathered English student in the park.’

(36) **BN modified by plain modifier is referred back to with singular pronoun**

Gis na-a **woykat** brezilien. Maymuna bëgg na ko /*leen.
see NA-1SG singer Brazilian Maymuna like NA.3SG OBJ.3SG / *leen.
*OBJ.3PL
‘I saw a Brazilian singer. Maymuna admires her/*them.

(37) **BN modified by plain modifier cannot be antecedent of reciprocal**

* **Jangalekat** b-i desin-ante-loo-na
   teacher CM.SG-DEF draw-RECI-CAUS-NA.3SG
   nonggo darra brezilien.
   student Brazilian
   Lit.: ‘The teacher made student draw each other.’
4.3 Interim generalization and looking forward

A. Questions raised by the data:

(38) i. How can we account for the exclusively singular interpretation (and not number neutral) interpretation of BNs in Wolof?
   ii. Why does a BN without any plural morphology behave as if it were singular, while a BN merged that does contain plural morphology behaves as if it were plural?

B. We will see in the next section that the distinction between relative clauses (yes number morphology) and plain modifiers (no number morphology) is reproduced in the distinction between two types of possessive nominals.

5 Two types of possessive nominals

A. In Wolof, there are at least two types of possessive nominals.

- In (??), the possessive determiner sama ‘my’ is used. It precedes the possessum xaj ‘dog’.
- In (40), the genitive suffix $u$ is used. It is affixed to the possessum muus ‘cat’, which precedes the possessor Mareem.

(39) Possessive determiner

Gis-na-a sama xaj b-i ci baayal b-i.
see-NA-1SG POSS.1SG dog CM.SG-DEF PREP park CM.SG-DEF

(40) Genitive suffix

Toogakat b-i gis-na a-y muus-u Mareem.
cook CM.SG-DEF see-NA.3SG INDEF.CM.PL cat-GEN Mareem
‘The cook saw some cats of Mareem’s.’

5.1 Possessive with possessum-sensitive suffix

A. Basics of possessive determiners

- *Sama* is a 1st person possessive determiner that is linearly followed by a possessum.
- The possessive determiner is sensitive to the number of the possessum.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Poss’or SG poss’um</th>
<th>Translation</th>
<th>PL poss’um</th>
<th>Translation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1SG sama xarit</td>
<td>‘my friend’</td>
<td>sama-y xarit</td>
<td>‘my friends’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2SG sa xarit</td>
<td>‘your friend’</td>
<td>sa-y xarit</td>
<td>‘your friends’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3SG xarit = am</td>
<td>‘his/her friend’</td>
<td>ay xarit = am</td>
<td>‘his/her friends’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1PL suñu xarit</td>
<td>‘our friend’</td>
<td>suñu-y xarit</td>
<td>‘our friends’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2PL seen xarit</td>
<td>‘your friend’</td>
<td>seen-i xarit</td>
<td>‘your friends’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3PL seen xarit</td>
<td>‘their friend’</td>
<td>seen-i xarit</td>
<td>‘their friends’</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

B. Both full nominals and BNs can occur as the possessum.

(43) a. Gis-na-a sama xaj b-i ci baayal b-i.
see-NA-1SG POSS.1SG dog CM.SG-DEF PREP park CM.SG-DEF
‘I saw my dog in the garden.’

b. *Gis-na-a sama-y xaj b-i ci baayal see-NA-1SG POSS.1SG-PL dog CM.SG-DEF PREP park b-i.
CM.SG-DEF
Int.: ‘I saw the.SG dog of mine.PL in the garden.’

c. Gis-na-a sama-y xaj y-i ci baayal see-NA-1SG POSS.1SG-PL dog CM.PL-DEF PREP park b-i.
CM.SG-DEF
‘I saw my dogs in the garden.’

C. Homophony between possessum -y and plural class marker

(44) a. Gis-na-a nit y-i / nit ñ-i ci Boston.
see-NA-1SG person CM.PL-DEF / person CM.PL-DEF PREP Boston
‘I saw the people in Boston.’
b. Gis-na-a sama-y nit y-i / ñ-i ci 
   see-NA-1SG POSS.1SG-PL person CM.PL-DEF / CM.PL-DEF PREP
Boston déemba.
Boston yesterday
   'I met the people in Boston yesterday.'

D. Structure assumed

- (45) represents sama-y xaj y-i 'POSS.1SG-PL dog CM.PL-DEF (my dogs)).
- The head of PossP is proposed to probe for a number feature. This feature is valued by the possessum, which is in its c-command domain.

(45)

```
PossP
   /\  
 DP pos'or [1sg]  Poss'
   /\  
 Poss [Num: ]  DP pos'um
   /\  
xaj y-i
```

E. Number interpretation: BNs inside this type of possessive nominal have a singular interpretation, unless the plural possessum-sensitive -y occurs.

(46) Collective predicate

a. Dajeele-na-a sama-y muus ci tool b-i.
gather-NA-1SG POSS.1SG-PL cat PREP garden CM.PL-DEF
   'I gathered some cats of mine in the garden.'
b. * Dajeele-na-a sama muus ci tool b-i.
gather-NA-1SG POSS.1SG-PL cat PREP garden CM.PL-DEF
   Lit.: 'I gathered a cat of mine in the garden.'

(47) Discourse anaphora

   OBJ.PL
   'I showed Mareem a dog of mine. She likes him/*them.'

b. Wën-na-a sama xaj Mareem. Bëgg-na-a ko / show-NA-1SG POSS.1SG dog Mareem likeNA-1SG OBJ.SG /
   *leen.
   *OBJ.PL
   'I showed Mareem a dog of mine. She likes him/*them.'

(48) Plural reflexive

a. Jangalekat y-i sang-aloo-na-ñu seen-i
teacher CM.PL-DEF wash-CAUS-NA-3PL POSS.3PL
   nonggo darra seen bopp.
   student POSS.3PL head
   'The teachers made some students of theirs wash themselves.'
b. * Jangalekat y-i sang-aloo-na-ñu seen nonggo darra
teacher CM.PL-DEF wash-CAUS-NA-3PL POSS student
   seen bopp.
   POSS.3PL head
   Lit.: 'The teachers student of theirs wash themselves.'

5.2 Genitive possessive

A. We can now turn to the genitive possessive nominal.

(49) Gis-na-a doom-u Roxaya.
   see-NA-1SG child-GEN Roxaya
   'I saw a child of Roxaya’s.'

B. Possessum can be full nominal or BN.

(50) a. A-b muus-u Samba lekk-na céeb.
   INDEF-CM.SG cat-GEN Samba eat-NA-3SG rice
   'A cat of Samba’s ate rice.'
b. A-y muus-u Samba lekk na-ñu céeb.
   INDEF-CM.PL cat-GEN Samba eat NA-3PL rice
   'Some cats of Samba’s ate rice.'
c. Gis-na-a a-y doom-u Roxaya.
   see-NA-1SG INDEF-CM.PL child-GEN Roxaya
   'I saw some children of Roxaya’s.'
d. Bëgg-na-ñu Roxaya / *Roxaya b-i.
   like-NA-1PL Roxaya / *Roxaya CM.SG-DEF
   'We like Roxaya.'
e. Bëgg-na-ñu muus-u Roxaya b-i.
   like-NA-1PL cat-GEN Roxaya CM.SG-DEF
   ‘We like the cat of Roxaya’s.’

f. Muus-u Samba y-i lekk na-ñu na-3pl céeb.
   cat-GEN Samba CM.SG-DEF eat NA-3PL rice
   ‘Samba’s cats ate rice.’

C. Structure assumed

- (51) represents a-b muus-u Samba ‘INDEF-CM.SG cat-GEN Samba (a cat of Samba’s).

- For concreteness, I assume Den Dikken’s (2006) Relator Phrase, whose head is realized by the genitive morpheme -u.

- Contrary to the possessive in (45) examined above, in the genitive (51), there is no probe for number.

(51)

D. Number interpretation: in the genitive possessive construction, there is no morpheme sensitive to number. In that case, only a singular reading is available.

(52) Collective predicate

a. Roxaya boole-na a-y xaj-u Kadeer
   Roxaya put.together-NA.3SG INDEF-CM.PL dog-GEN Kadeer
   ‘Roxaya gathered some of Kadeer’s dogs.’

b. Roxaya boole-na xaj-u Kadeer *( ak xaj-u
   Roxaya put.together-NA.3SG dog-GEN Kadeer *( CONJ dog-GEN
   Kumba ).
   Kumba )
   ‘Roxaya put together Kadeer’s dog *(with Kumba’s dog).’

c. Isaa juboole-na muus-u Kadeer ?? ( ak muus-u Roxaya).
   Isaa unite-NA.3SG cat-GEN Kadeer ?? ( with cat-GEN Roxaya )
   ‘Isaa united a cat of Kadeer’s (with a cat of Roxaya’s).’

(53) Discourse anaphora

Gis-na-a muus-u Kadeer ci tool b-i. Bëgg-na-a
   see-NA-1SG cat-GEN Kadeer PREP garden CM.SG-DEF like-NA-1SG
   ko / *leen.
   OBJ.3SG / *OBJ.3PL
   ‘I saw a cat of Kadeer’s in the garden. I like him/her/*them.’

(54) Plural reflexive

Isaa sang-ooloo-na xaj-u Kadeer bopp=am / *seen
   Isaa wash-CAUS-NA.3SG dog-GEN Kadeer head=POSS.3SG / *POSS.3PL
   head
   ‘Isaa made a dog of Kadeer’s wash himself/themselves.’

6 Summary and looking forward

A. Generalization to be accounted for:

(55) BNs in Wolof are singular, unless there is some nominal-internal plural morphology.

B. How I will try to account for these facts:

- By proposing an extension of feature licensing (Béjar & Rezac, 2009; Kalin, 2017, 2019).
- In particular, I will propose that the interpretable and valued feature [Number: plural] in a nominal must be licensed by the operation Agree.

References


