Historical analysis of the Semi-Subjects in Baltic

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Partitive genitive as Subject case-marking in Indo-European and its later development
in Baltic and East Slavic

Notion of the partitive genitive

- The PG denotes "the extent to which its referent is involved in the utterance" (Jakobson 1936: 38);

- The PG-S's explicitly denote the partial participation in the action (cf. Babby 1978: 15; Crockett 1976: 314 for Russian genitive).

- Subjects are in PG because they are in the scope of quantification (Babby 1978: 18).

PG-S semantics

- PG-S are low in transitivity, have only one participant, represent a state, not an action, consequently low in agency, non-punctual, non-volitional. (Sands & Campbell 2001: 263).

- As was stated by Helasvuo (1996) for Finnish, the partitive marked subject has the discourse function in the existential clause - it provides background information for a discourse. The argument introduced as being in existence (i. e. PG-S) is generally not further mentioned in the discourse.

PG-S semantics

I assume that the non-adnominal PG is not about the amount of the whole; it serves rather to mark the non-referentiality of the participant(s) (non-referentiality within a concrete group).

Cf. the object position:

Adrēstoio   egēme   thugaterōn

Adrastos:gen.sg.   marry:aor.3.sg.   daughter:gen.pl.

"He married Adrastos' daughter" (Hom. Il. 14.121)

It is not the uncertain amount but rather the non-referntiality.

Content

1. Introduction / Semantics of the PG;
2. partitive genitive as subject case-marker in the Classical Languages; PG-S in the IE Proto-Language.
3. PG-S in the Baltic and Slavic languages

PG-S in Classical Languages

- i. e. Ancient Greek, Vedic and Avestan

  -> relatively few occurrences.

  The main reason is though the relatively restricted amount of texts;

  it has nothing to do with the phenomenon itsself.

PG-S in Classical Languages

- The PG-S can combine not only with the singular but also with the plural verb form (always 3d person);

-> Conti (2008) claims that the PG-S agrees with the verb in number (and person), cf:

Number agreement?

(1) kai   en   hosoisi   tu   liparu   enēn

 and in   bones   def:gen.sg. fat:gen.sg. be inside:3.sg.impf.

("As soon as the hot air reached the bones, [one coud see], that)
"there was some fat inside the bones" (Hp. Carn. 4.6)

(2) Eisi   gar   autōn

be:3.pl.act.   because   they:gen.pl.

  kai para basilei tō Perseōn
  and at the king of Persians

"Because the Persian king has some of them, which..." (about
  exotic animals)

BUT:

Cf. a passage from Demosthenes (OI.1 26.4-5):

tōn   atopōtatōn   ment-an   eiē,
def.:gen.**pl.**   awkward:superl.gen.**pl.**   irreal.particle   be:3.**sg.**opt.

ei ha nyn anoian ofliskanōn homōs ekalei, tauta dynētheis
    mē praxei.

"[it] would be, surely, of the most awkward [things], if,
    having the power, he should lack the will to carry out the
    threat which today he utters at the risk of his reputation
    for sanity."

PG-S in Ancient Greek

Eisi   gar   autōn

be:3.pl.act.   because   they:gen.pl.

kai para basilei tō Perseōn

and at the king of Persians

"Because the Persian king has some of them, which..."
(about exotic animals)

Semantic agreement

Thus I conclude that the GP-S triggered <u>semantic verb agreement</u> (and not simple verb agreement) in Ancient Greek (and in Vedic and Avestan) and in IE.

Semantic agreement

The verb agrees with the logical number of the S (not with the formal number), cf. Latvian:

Polite form about 1 female person in perfect:

Jūs	esat	bijusi	Parīzē
you:2nd.**pl**.	be:2.**pl**.	be:partc.nom.fem.**sg**.	in Paris

Unmarked form about some female persons in perfect:

Jūs	esat	bijušas	Parīzē
you:2nd.**pl**.	be:2.**pl**.	be:partc.nom.fem.**pl**.	in Paris

"You've been to Paris"

PG-S in Ancient Greek / Syntactic status

PG-S can agree with the nominatives:

Eisi   gar   autōn
be:3.pl.act.   because   they:gen.pl.

kai para basilei tō Perseōn
at the king of Persians

entheuten   thēreuthentes
there   catch:partc.pass.aor.nom.pl.

"Because the Persian king has some of them, which have
    been caught there." (about exotic animals)

PG-S can coordinate with the nominatives:

ka-an   gamē   pot'   autos
if   marry:subj.3.sg. somewhen   he:nom.sg.

ē   tōn sungenōn   ē   tōn filōn,
or   relatives:gen.pl.   or   friends:gen.pl.

husomen tēn nukta pasa ...

we will rain the whole night

„If he or [one] of relatives or [one] of friends will ever marry, we will rain the whole night" (Arist. Nub. 1128f).

Indo-Aryan: Vedic Sanskrit

ákāri   vām   *ándhaso*

make-3SG.AOR.PASS   you.two-DAT soma.juice-GEN

'Some soma-juice has been prepared for you two' (RV VI
   63.3)

ápāyi   *asya*   *ándhaso*

drink-3SG.AOR.PASSIVE   this-GEN   soma.juice-GEN

mádāya

inebriation-DAT

'[Some] of this soma-juice has been drunk for inebriation (i.e.
   in order to get inebriated)' (RV II 19.1)

Indo-Aryan: Avestan

ýat	hē	*stārąm*	*baχō.dātanąm*
so.that	he:dat.	stars:gen.pl.	set.up.by.the.gods:gen.pl.

aiβi	raocaiiāṇte
round	shine:3.pl.prs.

"so that stars, set up by the gods, shine around for him' (Vendīdād 19.23)

PG-S in IE

1. I assume that the PG-S triggered verb agreement in number, depending on its logical number (**semantic agreement**):

     - some of X triggers verb plural form

     -   one of X triggers verb singular form

2. The subject, marked with the partitive genitive could agree with the nominative-marked argument (e. g. participles)

PG-S in IE

3. these characteristics of the PG-S in IE suggest that the grammaticalization of the PG as subject case-marking is relatively recent and only partly completed;

4. I assume that PG-S has developed from the ellipsis of the indefinite pronoun, to which the partitive genitive argument was originally adnminal.

5. The grammaticalization of the elliptical use occurred both in the object and in the subject position of unaccusative verbs (cf. Moravcsik 1978), yielding inactive alignment in these cases.

- The regular omission of the indefinite pronoun was facilitated by the impersonal zero subjects, which also served to denote the non-referentiality, cf. Ancient Greek:

legousi

say:3rd.pl.pres.act.

"[people] say", cf. German "man sagt"

… hopōs   an   ethelē

as   modal particle   wish:3.sg.pres.subj.

"the law, which enjoins that a man has the right to dispose of his property as one wishes" (Is. 2.13.)

PG-S in IE

- As the partitive genitive agument was reanalyzed as the actual subject, it had still preserved the agreement properties, which were originally assigned to the impersonal / zero or indefinite subject.

PG-S in Baltic and (East) Slavic

PG-S in Baltic and (East) Slavic

- Baltic and some Slavic varieties still preserve the partitive genitive marked subject, cf. Lithuanian:

     Čia   buvo   žmonių

     here AUX:Past.3.pers.   people:gen.pl.

     "People have been here"

PG-S in (East) Slavic

- Standard Russian: the PG-S is almost extinct. It occurs mostly with the verbs with prefixal quantificational prefixes as *na-.*

- At the same time, however, in the North Russian, Belorussian varieties the construction with the PG in the subject position is attested at much broader range than in the Standard Russian (Filin 1972: 514-5; Karskij 1956: 319, 403), cf.:

  Segodn'a   budet   dožd'a

  Today   be:Fut.3.pers.   rain:gen.sg.

  "There will be rain today"

PG-S in Baltic and Slavic

Gostej   ponajexalo   (Russian)
guests:gen.pl.   arrived:3.sg.neutr.Past
"There came too many guests" ("as we have expected")

Žmonių   buvo   atsiradę (Lithuanian)
people:gen.pl.   be:3.past   appear:partc.act.nom.sg.neutr.
"People had appeared there"

=> **impersonal agreement: always 3d.sg.neutr. verb f.**

PG-S in Baltic and Slavic

- Baltic and Slavic has the impersonal agreement (i. e. invariant 3. sg. (neutr.) verb form).

- An agreement with the nominative case-marked attributes is not possible here.

=>

- the PG-S has developed further here than in the Classical languages.

- The use of the PG-S in Baltic and Slavic resembles the use of the PG-S in Finnic, where also only the **impersonal agreement** is possible.

PG-S in Baltic and Slavic

- Thus the PG-S has been grammaticalized further in Baltic and Slavic:

  - semantic agreement has been replaced with the impersonal agreement;

  - only genitives can concord with the PG-S in Baltic and Slavic (and not nominatives);

  - Finnic influence might have played a role.

Thank you for your attention!

Ancient Greek examples: from Conti 2008;
Indo-Aryan examples: from Dahl 2008

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