ARGUMENT CASE LEVELING TOWARD GENITIVE: AN UNEXPECTED OUTCOME IN A LANGUAGE CONTACT SITUATION

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Abstract

This article contributes to the study of a productive morphosyntactic mechanism in a peculiar type of linguistic variety, the Russian language of Odessa (OdR). This variety was born as a *lingua franca* in the city of Odessa soon after its foundation, implying the massive acquisition of the Russian language in a nonnative way in its initial stages. Afterwards, it was transmitted to successive generations as a native variety, albeit preserving some of the initial traits. One of the most characteristic traits of OdR is the leveling of argument marking not in favor of accusative/nominative cases, as expected, but in favor of genitive marking. The use of genitive case, i.e., differential genitive case marking on subjects and objects instead of nominative/accusative, is partially present in most Slavic languages. However, in OdR, genitive case spread massively to a wide range of new syntactic positions. We show that the reason for this extension lay in (i) the confluence of different languages and dialects, which involved incomplete acquisition by many inhabitants of the city and notably Yiddish speakers, and (ii) the transmission of innovative traits through bilingual speakers, who

followed specific language-internal rules operating also in Child Russian.

Keywords

Odessa, Russian, Ukrainian, Yiddish, differential argument marking, genitive case, bilingualism, language contact

1 Introduction

In this work, we aim to characterize the conditions of the extension of genitive case marking in a peculiar type of linguistic variety, the Russian language of Odessa (OdR). This variety was born as a *lingua franca* in the city of Odessa soon after its foundation, implying the massive acquisition of the language in a nonnative way in its initial stages. Then, the variety was passed on later to successive generations of bilingual speakers as one of their native languages, albeit preserving some of the initial traits, which arose due to incomplete acquisition.

The term 'argumental case' refers to morphological case marking on subjects and direct objects (arguments of a verb). Argumental case marking in Slavic usually corresponds to so-called direct cases, i.e., nominative case for subjects and accusative case for direct objects. However, there are exceptions, and some arguments in Slavic can be marked with oblique cases, such as dative subjects (experiencers: *Mne nravitsja kofe* 'I.DAT.SG. like coffee'), instrumental objects (*Korol' pravit stranoj* 'The king rules the country.INST.SG.'), or genitive subjects and objects of the types reviewed in this paper. The use of genitive case in the place of direct cases (nominative and accusative) will be referred to here as "genitivization" (*genitivizacija*).

Genitivization, i.e., the extension of genitive marking instead of direct cases (nominative and accusative) is common in Slavic, namely in those languages that have preserved declension, but it is quite restricted in most standard varieties. East Slavic displays the highest number of syntactic environments requiring argumental genitive case marking, as we will explain in Section 3.1.[1] In dialectal Russian and Ukrainian, as well as in 18th–19th-century Russian, argumental genitive case is found additionally in a few more instances (see Section 3.2).

In OdR, the extension of argumental genitive case marking was much more extensive compared to other varieties of Slavic. More specifically, genitive in OdR was able to encode virtually any kind of direct object (not necessarily indefinite, partitive, or under negation), nonexistential and causative low-individuated inanimate subjects in

[1] East Slavic is the subgroup of Slavic languages spoken in the easternmost Slavic territories; it comprises Byelorussian, Russian, and Ukrainian. Throughout this paper, we will often refer to phenomena found in both Ukrainian and Russian with the term East Slavic.

affirmative sentences, fragmentary statements, titles, exclamations, and complements of prepositions. The nonnormative extension of genitive case is renowned because of OdR expressions like *Takix del!* (genitive) 'that's the way it is!, lit. such things', instead of the normative *Takie dela!* (nominative). We will refer to this massive use of genitive case in the place of direct cases in OdR as "extended genitivization".

Case leveling of direct cases toward genitive is not the outcome we expect in morphologically fusional languages. This development is unusual even in conditions of "natural" historical development, i.e., in the absence of a situation of extensive language contact. In the case of objects, it has been argued that leveling occurs most often toward accusative or nominative, depending on the level of morphological attrition that the specific language undergoes (Mertyris, 2014). For example, in Modern Greek, genitive plural was leveled in 1st and 2nd person plural pronouns (in Cypriot, additionally in masculine plural nouns) toward accusative, giving rise to genitive forms syncretic with the original accusative ones: Modern Greek *emás* 'us', *esás* 'you'; Cypriot Greek: *tous anthrópous* 'the men'.

In case of massive language contact, leveling of direct cases toward genitive is even more surprising. In most heritage Russian varieties, genitive of negation (1a) is lost in favor of nominative and accusative cases (1b) (Polinksy, 2006; Zemskaja and Glovinskaja, 2001: 90–91).[2] Another widespread outcome would be total loss of noun case, characteristic in contact situations of massive L2-learning (Bentz and Winter, 2013).

Standard Russian – genitive of negation

(1) a. *U neë net muž-a.*
at her neg.exist husband-GEN.SG
'She does not have a husband.'

American Russian

(1) b. *U neë net muž.*
at her neg.exist husband.NOM.SG
'She does not have a husband.'
(Polinsky, 2006: 218)

In this paper, we describe extended genitivization in OdR, evaluate its sources (language-internal rules and possible substrata), and explain the similarities and differences with respect to other genitivization processes in other Slavic varieties. We show that

[2] We do not commit ourselves to any specific assumption about complexity and simplification in heritage language acquisition. The genitivization patterns we found in OdR are not much simpler than the standard. Recent studies focus on analogous cases, in which heritage languages complexify rather than simplify patterns (Polinsky, Putnam, and Salmons, 2024). Here, we will argue that leveling of argument case marking in OdR is partially simpler and partially more complex than in other varieties, and is the natural outcome of a confluence of diverse conditions of different nature.

genitivization in OdR must be attributed to the initial stage of extensive incomplete acquisition of the language by non-Slavic speakers, combining phenomena present in the substrata and general rules of language development (see Mufwene, 1986). On the one hand, only a few nonstandard "genitivizing" patterns observed in OdR are traceable to the available substrata as possible sources. They are found in (dialectal, 18th–19th- century) Russian, Ukrainian, or some other language of the initial pool of languages that took part in the creation of the OdR variety. On the other, the rise of new patterns in language contact is a congruent outcome for a situation of massive L2-acquisition by a community with disparate native languages, which later passed on their variety to successive generations of bilingual native speakers.

In this paper, we account for the unexpected fact that language contact leads to a seemingly more complex outcome, namely, leveling of argument marking in favor of genitive case, instead of nominative or accusative case. While the new pattern is morphologically more complex, we will show that it partially simplifies other aspects of argument case marking. We characterize this phenomenon as a special type of contact-induced change, which fits Dahl's (2004) definition of suboptimal transmission (incomplete acquisition). At the same time, we rely on the idea that this phenomenon is due to internal developments rather than direct transfer from surrounding or underlying languages (Poplack and Levey, 2010), or rather a combination of both (Mufwene, 1986). This study can also be viewed as a contribution to the debate over whether linguistic transfer in high-contact varieties must necessarily show structural simplification (Trudgill, 2001), or whether they can result in other outputs that display more complexity (Heath, 1978; Trudgill, 2004; Kuteva, 2007 and references therein). In short, we will argue that OdR extended genitivization seems to be a combination of both.

In Section 2, we offer a brief description of Odessa Russian (OdR) as a contact variety. Section 3 introduces the phenomenon of argumental genitive case in standard and older East Slavic. In Section 4, we describe genitivization in dialectal East Slavic and evaluate the role of the substrata in the extension of genitivization in OdR. Section 5 details the environments and conditions under which the extension of genitive in OdR took place, and shows that they cannot be traced back straightforwardly to the patterns present in the available substrata. Section 6 aims at an explanation for this phenomenon.

2 The Russian language of Odessa (OdR) as a contact variety

Odessa is a Russian-speaking million-city, located in Southern Ukraine by the Black Sea, which was officially founded by Catherine the Great in 1794. Soon after its foundation, Odessa became a strategic port

center in the Southern Russian Empire. The increasing economic importance of the city attracted a migration flow of diverse nationalities such as Albanians, Armenians, Bulgarians, Crimean Tatars, French, Germans, Greeks, Italians, Jews, Poles, Romanians, Russians, Turks, Ukrainians, and others.

Because of this huge and rapid migration flow, foreigners came to constitute roughly half the population of the city. Stepanov (2004) defined this initial OdR variety as an *urban koiné*, due to the presence of a majority of speakers of Slavic languages that were very close to each other; namely, Russian (dialectal and standard), Ukrainian, Polish, and also Jewish Russian varieties that were likely brought by those Jews who came later from other parts of the Russian Empire (Estraikh, 2008).

Within a few decades after this initial linguistic situation, Russian stopped being a mere *lingua franca* and was partially transmitted to successive generations of speakers as a native linguistic variety, preserving some of the initial characteristic features produced by the first generations of speakers. It is important to point out that the diglossia occasioned by the coexistence of OdR with standard Russian, the literary (and imposed) variety, "softened" most of the initial linguistic processes of OdR.

According to the 1897 census, 55 languages were spoken in Odessa. Less than half the population defined themselves as Russian speakers, while almost a third identified themselves as Yiddish speakers. Ukrainian and Polish speakers together made up almost 15% of the total number of speakers, and the rest of citizens spoke other languages.

Table 1. Native language of the population of Odessa in 1897 (adapted from Stepanov, 2004: 16)

Language	Percentage of speakers	Number of speakers
Russian	48.8 %	197,232
Yiddish	30.8 %	124,511
Ukrainian	9.4 %	37,925
Polish	4.3 %	17,395
German	2.5 %	10,248
Greek	1.25 %	5,086
Other languages	2.95% (>1% each)	11,418

The figures in Table 1 match Trudgill's (2011) calculation of the percentage of nonnative speakers necessary to perform contact-induced changes, as roughly half the population had to adopt Russian, the language of the Empire, as a lingua franca, acquiring it as nonnative speakers.

It should be pointed out that, among the nonnative speakers in the city, there were Russian speakers at different levels; some were L2-speakers of Russian, some were bilingual speakers (at different levels), and some were probably speakers of other varieties of Russian that originated in other parts of the Russian Empire, including Jewish Russian speakers.

However, we do not consider Odessa Russian as a mere variety of so-called Jewish Russian, a cluster of post-Yiddish ethnolects in the sense of Verschik (2013), but rather as a multiethnolect (see Verschik, 2018: 637). There are several reasons for this. First, Yiddish speakers constituted a third of the population of the city by the end of the 19th century, but the other 70% of native and nonnative speakers of Russian also contributed to the formation of OdR (in the 1800 census, Jews made up only 10% of the population). In fact, some of the idiosyncrasies of OdR, even lexical, are calques from other languages in the city other than Yiddish (Stepanov, 2004). Second, deviations of OdR morphosyntactic phenomena from the standard do not fit the characterization of varieties of Jewish Russian as being differentiated from each other in the degree of "copying" from Yiddish. Some phonetic and most lexical phenomena (including phraseology, idioms, and fixed expressions such as *imet'* 'have' plus infinitive in the sense 'need to, have to do something') in OdR are clearly calques from Yiddish (Stepanov, 2004; Verschik, 2013, 2018). However, when we turn to purely morphosyntactic phenomena, which are clearly understudied or almost inexistent in the studies on Jewish Russian, there is no way to trace back the corresponding processes to Yiddish as mere calques. As we will show in this paper, genitivization in OdR does not 'copy' Yiddish at all. The same observation applies to morphological gender in OdR (see Madariaga and Romanova, 2022).

Finally, OdR does not fit the definition of a Jewish ethnolect (or the definition of an ethnolect in general terms), as it was widely used by the citizens of the city other than the Jews.

If we take Yiddish speakers as the best studied case, the number of Yiddish speakers in Odessa grew from 10% in 1800 to 37% in 1926, according to the corresponding censuses (Stepanov, 2004: 14–15). In addition, the degree of knowledge of Russian among Yiddish speakers varied during the 19th century, which was the period in which Jewish Russian varieties emerged (Estraikh, 2008). As such, the early Yiddish speakers in the city (by 1800) managed worse in Russian than their counterparts in 1926. For example, Estraikh (2008) reports than, in the 1897 census of the Russian Empire, in general terms, around 98% of Jews declared Yiddish as their mother tongue. However, among them, 30% of men and 16% of women could understand texts in Russian. If we extrapolate these data to Odessa, then, in 1897, at least 7% of the citizens of Odessa were bilingual Russian-Yiddish speakers (22% of the total number of Yiddish speakers), that is, the fourth largest group

of speakers in the city. This observation can be applied to other groups in the city, who declared themselves as speakers of languages other than Russian.

After the 1950s, with the exodus of the Jews and the pressure of the standard language, OdR faded out in favor of standard Russian, the variety spoken nowadays in the city. In other words, the morpho-syntactic features relevant for the present work are out of use nowadays (Stepanov, 2004: 411–443). Thus, for the underlying varieties that took part in the formation of OdR, we take into account the Russian standard and dialectal varieties spoken between the 19th and mid-20th centuries. In this paper we analyze linguistic material dating from the last period of the 'stable use' of OdR (Stepanov, 2004: 82ff), that is, roughly the first half of the 20th century. For this reason, when we describe the correspondent patterns, we give preference to grammars and works on dialectology written within or near the period under study, rather than current linguistic descriptions.

Fortunately, the period under study here remains chronologically very close to the present day, so we have access to plenty of data in the form of oral and written linguistic productions. More specifically, the sample used in this paper was extracted "by hand" from Smirnov's (2005) four-volume dictionary of expressions and lexicon of OdR. In a few cases, when we need to discuss a pattern that is not sufficiently attested in our sample, we illustrate it with the help of data extracted from Stepanov's (2004) monography, Èjdel'man's (2012) dictionary, or other literary or popular sources of the OdR variety. Èjdel'man (2012), Stepanov (2004), and Smirnov (2005) include testimonies in the shape of recorded speech of elder speakers of OdR, written texts produced in the city, as well as other oral sources, such as movies set in Odessa, jokes, songs, folklore, etc.

Extraction "by hand" consisted in going through the texts and entries, collected by Smirnov (2005), and writing down only those examples illustrating the relevant patterns of extended genitivization. Smirnov's four volumes comprise 2,070 pages of attested usages of the variety spoken in Odessa in the period under study, illustrating cc. 4,800 words and vernacular expressions. We worked with the hard copy of the books, because none of the volumes is available in digital format. After the extraction of the relevant examples, we eventually put together a sample of 128 different instances of extended genitivization in OdR. A few examples of genitivization, which were repeated in different entries, had been excluded from the final counting of instances in the sample.

As a final caveat, we need to point out that, like in most non-normative varieties, we cannot speak of a stable norm in OdR whatsoever. Together with Stepanov (2004: 81), then, we will take as characteristic traits of OdR the most salient differential phenomena

observed in the sample. Most of the genitivization patterns we describe in this paper, in the case of both dialectal East Slavic and Odessa Russian, are not regular or compulsory, but optional and maybe characteristic of specific speakers. This means that we often found in the corpus normative variants in exactly the same contexts as genitivized variants, seemingly in free variation.

3 Argumental genitive case in standard Russian

Genitive case in Slavic is characteristic of adnominal and adnumeral uses, covering most of the typologically common instances in these positions. For instance, in Russian: possessor (*kartina kollekcionera* 'the collecter's.GEN.SG picture'), adnominal subject (*kartina Maleviča* 'the picture by Malevich.GEN.SG'), adnominal object (*portret Puškina* 'Pushkin's.GEN.SG portrait'), and quantified NP (*mnogo avtobusov* 'many buses.GEN.PL', *pjat' avtobusov* 'five buses.GEN.PL').

However, genitive case can be also used in adverbal positions as an argument marker. Argumental genitive marking or "genitivization" in Slavic is defined as the extended use of genitive case in argument positions instead of the corresponding direct cases, i.e., nominative for subjects, accusative for direct objects. This phenomenon, to a greater or lesser degree, is common to those Slavic languages that have preserved declension, whether historically or still today (Comrie, 1978).

Argumental genitive marking developed in Slavic in more or less independent and successive processes; from prehistoric times up until the independent branches of Slavic. The specific contexts of genitivization in the case of East Slavic were established by the 15th century (Krys'ko, 1994), with subsequent smaller changes.

3.1. Argumental genitive case in present-day standard Russian

In this section, we briefly describe the most salient instances of argumental genitivization that have been established in the history of Russian and that prevail to this day (Švedova, 1980: 427–430).

3.1.1 Animate direct objects

So-called genitive/accusative case on animate objects, i.e., Differential Object Marking in Russian is morphologically determined. It affects masculine singular noun class II and plural of all noun classes.[3] In other words, in East Slavic, the requirements for Differential Object

[3] Following Corbett (1982), we assume a four-part classification of noun classes in East Slavic, characterized by their ending in nominative singular case; thus, class I comprises those nouns ending in *–a* (like *sestra* 'sister)', class II is formed by masculine nouns ending in consonant (like *brat* 'brother'), class III is represented by feminine nouns ending in palatalized consonant (like *mat'* 'mother'), and class IV includes neuter nouns with a final *–o* (like *okno* 'window').

Marking are the “animacy” feature and belong to a specific noun class, while other semantic features, such as (in)definiteness, are irrelevant.

Present-day standard Russian

(2) *My* *vidim* *mal’čik-a* *i*
we see boy-GN/ACC.SG.CLASS-II and
devoček
girls.GN/ACC.PL.CLASS-I
‘We see the/a boy and the/some girls.’

3.1.2 Partitive genitive and abstract objects of intensional verbs

Partitive genitive encodes indefinite quantities, usually mass nouns (3a), while the genitive of abstract object affects objects of weak intensional verbs (to want, to seek, to ask, to require, and so on, see i.a., Kagan, 2003) (3b).

Present-day standard Russian

(3) a. *Ja* *xoču* *čaj-u.*
I want tea-GEN.SG
‘I want some tea.’

(3) b. *Ona* *iščet* *pokoj-a.*
she seeks calm-GEN.SG
‘She looks for tranquility.’

3.1.3 Existential subjects under negation

These are represented by existential subjects (4a) and possessed subjects in existential possessive structures (4b), i.e., subject encoding with so-called genitive of negation. This case marking applies equally to definite and indefinite subjects, to all noun classes, and numbers (Ickovič, 1982; Timberlake, 1986). In addition, intransitive subjects of verbs of motion and position, and similar verbs, which are perceived as existential, can be genitivized in the presence of negation (4c–d):

Present-day standard and colloquial Russian

(4) a. *Len-y* *ne* *byl-o* *doma.*
Lena-GEN.SG not was-N.SG at home
‘Lena was not at home.’

(4) b. *U* *nego* *ne* *byl-o* *mašin-y.*
at him not was-N.SG car-GEN.SG
‘He did not have a car.’

(4) c. *Tut* *tarakan-ov* *ne* *begae-t.*
here cockroach-GEN.PL not runs-3SG
‘There are no cockroaches running around here.’

(4) d. *Vas* *tut* *ne* *stojal-o.*
you.GEN.PL here not stand-N.SG
‘You were not standing here (e.g., in a queue).’

3.1.4 Direct objects under negation

The conditions of licensing genitive case on negated direct objects are fuzzier nowadays than in the case of subjects, and this type of genitive

case is almost never obligatory (see a full description in Ickovič, 1982: 37ff). In general terms, currently this pattern is largely optional and loosely determined by stylistics, morphology, the scope of negation, and individuation of the object. In a nutshell, the more individuated (definite, concrete, proper, animate, singular, topicalized, and so forth) the object, the less likely it undergoes genitive of negation (see i.a., Timberlake, 1986; Padučeva, 2006; Kagan, 2013).

Present-day standard Russian

(5)	a.	*On*	*ne*	*čitaet*	*podobn-yx*	*knig.*
		he	not	reads	such-GEN.PL	books.GEN.PL
		'He does not read that sort of books.'				
(5)	b.	*Ot nego*	*ne*	*ždi*	*xoroš-ego*	*sovet-a.*
		from him	not	wait	good-GEN.SG	advice.GEN.SG
		'Do not expect good advice from him.'				

3.2 Argumental genitive case in 18th and 19th-century Russian

In this section, we describe old-fashioned instances of genitivization that are no longer in use. In the recent history of standard Russian, especially from the early 20th century onward, there was a decline in the environments in which the genitive case was used instead of nominative or accusative (Peškovskij, 2001 [1938]: 298; Švedova, 1964; Gorbačevič, 1971: 232–237).[4] Because these previous centuries correspond to the formation of OdR (see Section 2), 18th–19th-century Russian is key to understanding OdR genitivization.

There were two genitivization environments in 18th–19th-century Russian that are out of use nowadays and that are relevant to understanding genitivization in OdR. In what follows, we will describe: (i) the retreat of genitive marking on objects (whether negated or not) and (ii) the loss of indefinite genitive subjects in affirmative sentences.

(i) Regarding genitive case object marking, we notice that, during the 18th and 19th centuries, only definite or individuated objects could be marked with accusative case under negation. At the same time, *all indefinite objects under negation* were marked with genitive case. Thus, in the last two centuries, objectual genitive marking in negative sentences has been in clear retreat (see Timberlake, 1986: 353–54, 359 and references therein).

In 18th- and 19th-century Russian, in *affirmative sentences*, objects could be marked with genitive case if they were interpreted as "non-complete" objects (6a), in Peškovskij's (2001 [1938]: 298) words. This is the same partitive genitive case that is today restricted to mass nouns (cf. example 3a in Section 3.1.2). Some verbs that currently

[4] Objectual genitive case in Slavic is the story of a progressive loss. In East Slavic, verbs of perception, verb of saying, verbs of sorrow, and some others lost genitive case government at different moments in the history of the language, and replaced it with other cases (see Madariaga, 2009, and references therein).

preserve genitive marking only with abstract objects (cf. example 3b in Section 3.1.2) could take concrete objects in genitive case in 18th- and 19th-century Russian (6b):

Older Russian

(6) a. *Ja podaval ej v postel čto-nibud' naprimer rostbif-a.*
I Gave her in bed something for instance roastbeef-GEN.SG
'I used to bring her some food to bed, for example, roast beef' (A. P. Chekhov, ap. Peškovskij 2001 [1938]: 298)

(6) b. *(zlodeev), kotorye trebovali ot nego ključ-ej.*
criminals who demanded from him keys-GEN.PL.
'(the criminals) who required the keys from him.' (A. S. Pushkin, ap. Peškovskij, 2001 [1938]: 297)

The example in (6b) can be described, following Seržant (2014), as a partitivity marker as far as it denotes "delimitative" predication, i.e., the action has taken place for a while and then has stopped before reaching its endpoint, i.e., in our example, the criminals were not eventually given the keys. This is an additional value of genitive case besides the more standard encoding of partitivity (quantification), indefiniteness, non-referentiality, or decreased referentiality of the object itself (see Section 3.1 and example 6a).

(ii) Concerning indefinite subjects in affirmative sentences (singular and plural) with a partitive meaning, in 18th–19th-century Russian these could be marked with genitive case in existential sentences (7a), with perception verbs, verbs expressing necessity, and with verbs of movement or position (7b) (Švedova, 1964). Nowadays, in standard Russian, genitivization in these contexts requires the presence of negation.

Older Russian

(7) a. *Byl-o mne zabot-y obsušit' golubku.*
was-N.SG me concern-GEN.SG dry dove
'Getting dry the little one was a pain for me (lit. there was a concern for me).' (N. A. Nekrasov, ap. Švedova, 1964: 315)

(7) b. *Čto-to tam komissioner-ov naexal-o.*
some there commissioner-GEN.PL. came-N.SG
'For some reason, there came a lot of commissioners.' (M. Ye. Saltykov-Shchedrin, ap. Švedova, 1964: 315)

4 Genitivization in underlying varieties of OdR

In this section, we discuss possible sources of genitivization in OdR. Several examples of nonstandard genitivization are found in dialects of Russian, mostly North-(Western) Russian in contact with Finnish (thus geographically unrelated to OdR), but also in Southern Russian dialects and dialectal Ukrainian. Then we turn to Jewish Russian, to which OdR speakers traditionally attributed the use of the pattern under study here.

4.1 Dialectal East Slavic varieties

In general terms, dialectal Russian and Ukrainian do not seem a straightforward source of extended genitivization in OdR. Dialects make use of several nonstandard instances of genitive case, but not all of these instances are represented in OdR and/or not all these dialects are related to OdR, as we will argue in Section 5. We will take into account here only those dialectal varieties surrounding Odessa.[5]

4.1.1 Dialectal Ukrainian and Russian spoken in Ukraine[6]

Western dialectal Ukrainian displays existential genitive plural subjects (8a) and subjects with verbs of motion / position (8b) in affirmative

[5] An interesting case of extended argumental genitivization are affirmative sentences in North-(Western) Russian dialects and Finland Russian. On the one hand, these dialects display indefinite and partitive subjects in existential and movement / positional affirmative sentences (Trubinskij, 1972: 211–212; Leisiö, 2006: 299), a pattern shared with 18th- and 19th-century Russian (see Section 3.2): *Est′ u menja drov* 'there is for me firewood.GN.PL.'; *Muraš-ej pribežit* 'ants-GN.PL will come' (Trubinskij, 1972: 211). But most interestingly, these dialects share some patterns with Finnish partitive case on objects in affirmative sentences, not necessarily related to partitivity or indefiniteness of the object, but rather to low transitivity of the verb and low individuation of the object (Kuz'mina, 1993: 28–37; Leisiö, 2003); (i) with certain verbs of perception and feeling: *My ljubili narod-a èto-go* 'we loved those-GN.SG people-GN.SG.'; (ii) with other verbs of low transitivity: *Tak-ix šapok nosjat v gorode?* 'do they wear those-GN.PL hats.GN.PL in the city?' (Kuz'mina, 1993: 31–35). We disregard these North-(Western) Russian dialects here because genitivization in these varieties is due to contact with Finnish, and they do not constitute a direct substratum of OdR.

[6] We disregard so-called "facultative animacy", i.e. the extension of the *-a* morpheme, typical of masculine animate accusative singular, to inanimate singular direct objects in Czech, Polish, and Western Ukrainian. This morpheme spread to lexically defined groups of borrowings denoting a range of concrete objects (Mausch, 2003). In the Polish example *Widzę ananas-a i ogórek* 'I see a pineapple-GN.SG and a cucumber.ACC.SG', the masculine borrowed word denoting the fruit 'pineapple' displays facultative animacy (*-a* morpheme), while the native denomination of "cucumber" is marked with regular nominative / accusative case. In OdR this pattern is totally absent, and the extension of genitive case has a completely different nature, as we show in Section 5.

sentences, but only when the subject includes a numeral, a construction considered a polonism (Bevzenko, 1980: 166; Matvijas, 1984: maps 268, 281):

Western Ukrainian

(8) a. *Bul-o* *dv-ox* *mudr-yx* *bratyj…*
was-N.SG two-GEN.PL wise-GEN.PL brothers.GEN.PL
'There were two wise brothers…' (Bevzenko, 1980: 166)

(8) b. *Tut* *ji-x* *dv-ox* *sydil-o.*
here them-GEN.PL two-GEN.PL sitted-N.SG
'The two of them were sitting here.' (Bevzenko, 1980: 166)

In addition, in the Russian language of Ukraine, we find the so-called "genitive of temporal transfer", i.e., when the object is affected by the main event only "for a while", a pattern shared with most dialectal varieties of Ukrainian (Ižakevič, 1981: 318). This pattern is attested in old East Slavic, and is common in Russian in the 18th and 19th centuries, but was later preserved only in peripheral (Southern and Northern) varieties of the language (Kuz'mina, 1993: 31–32). Seržant (2014) includes this genitive in the "delimitative" partitive instances, because a transfer event is quantified temporally and, therefore, can become delimited.

Russian in Ukraine

(9) a. *Voz'mi* *nož-u.*
take knife-GEN.SG
'Hold the knife.' (Ižakevič, 1981: 318)

(9) b. *Daj* *karandaš-a* *narisovati.*
give pencil-GEN.SG draw
'Give me the pencil to make a sketch.' (Ižakevič, 1981: 318)

Interestingly, if we turn to dialectal Ukranian, the *Atlas of the Ukrainian language* characterizes not only the genitive construction illustrated in (8), but also the one in (9), as unattested in the Ukrainian dialects surrounding Odessa (Zales'kij and Matvijas, 2001: 176, 180, map 79). This suggests that these dialectal patterns probably had little impact in the genitivization processes that took place in OdR.

As for genitivization of other types of objects, Ukrainian could not have a strong impact in OdR either, as it displays a preference for accusative case in the presence of negation, even in cases in which standard Russian favors the genitive, i.e., with abstract or indefinite objects; Russian varieties spoken in Ukraine at least follow this pattern (Ižakevič, 1981: 318).

Russian in Ukraine

(10) *Ne* *znaju* *vaš-e* *uslovi-e.*
not know your-ACC.SG condition-ACC.SG
'I am not aware of your condition.' (Ižakevič, 1981: 318)

4.1.2 Southern and South-Western Russian dialects

In these dialects, we find the 'genitive of temporal transfer', shared with Ukrainian (Trubinskij, 1972: 244–45; Ižakevič, 1981: 318); cf. example (9) above.

South-Western Russian

(11) *Daj* *mne* *toporik-a.*
give me ax-GEN.SG
'Give me the ax.' (Trubinskij, 1972: 244)

Another pattern of genitivization in Southern dialects is that of genitive plural nouns after prepositions usually requiring prepositional case. This identification only takes place in plural number, initially due to the syncretism between genitive and prepositional cases in adjectives and pronouns (ending *-yx/-ix*) (Trubinskij, 1972: 245).

Southern Russian

(12) a. *O* *materej* *i* *ne* *dumajte.*
about mothers-GEN.PL and not think
'Forget about the mothers.' (Trubinskij, 1972: 245)

(12) b. *Uexali* *na* *lošad-ej.*
left on horses-GEN.PL
'They left riding on horses.' (Trubinskij, 1972: 245)

In short, genitive argumental marking in dialectal East Slavic is richer than in standard Russian and Ukrainian. In Ukrainian Russian, genitive objects under negation decreased even faster than in standard Russian (Ižakevič, 1981); however, in Southern dialectal Russian and dialectal Ukrainian, there are a few more uses of genitive marking in the place of the accusative and nominative, such as the genitive of temporal transfer, genitive subjects including a numeral, and the replacement of prepositional case with genitive after certain prepositions.

4.2 Yiddish in contact with East Slavic

Citizens of Odessa popularly attribute genitivization to the Jewish community of the city, and some authors echo this opinion without any further explanation; for example, Mečkovskaya (2006) considers this trait as an "influence of Ukrainian or Yiddish," but does not mention specifically from which pattern(s) or in which way it happened. In this section, we will consider potential underlying patterns of genitivization in Yiddish in contact with East Slavic.

Yiddish case morphology is poorer than in East Slavic. It has nominative, accusative, and dative cases, expressed only on definite articles and adjectives, but not on nouns (with a few exceptions) (Jacobs, 2005: 161ff). Yiddish does not have genitive morphological case, except for human possessors, which can take the suffix *-s* (similarly to the English Saxon possessive). Otherwise, the preposition *fun* 'of' is used. In indefinite quantified expressions, the quantity simply follows the quantified object (*a ful gloz heyse tey* 'a full cup of hot tea');

if the object is definite, it takes the preposition *fun* (*a ful gloz fun der heyser tey* 'a full cup of the hot tea'). Therefore, at first glance, it does not seem that Yiddish could be a suitable source for genitivization in OdR, at least in a direct way.

As for Yiddish in contact with East Slavic and Polish, we find an interesting pattern. In negative existential sentences, definite or pronominal subjects in Yiddish are marked with the accusative case, instead of the expected nominative case (Taube, 2015).

Yiddish

(13) a. *Ništo* *Berl-en*
not be Berl-ACC
'Berl is not here.' (Taube, 2015: 29)

(13) b. *Ništo* *im*
not be him.ACC
'He is gone / He is not here.' (Taube, 2015: 30)

Taube (2015), following Kagarov (1929: 426), argues that Yiddish created this pattern by analogy with Polish / East Slavic, mirroring Slavic genitive of negation, which is known to mark differentially existential negated subjects (see Section 2). In the case of Slavic, genitive is used, but Yiddish speakers adopted their accusative case for this pattern, because genitive case does not exist as a morphological case. According to Taube, the identification between Slavic genitive and Yiddish accusative was possible because, in East Slavic, genitive and accusative cases overlap in several forms (pronouns, animate plural forms, and animate masculine singular forms in -*a*).

Ukrainian

(14) a. *Nema* *jo-ho* *tut.*
neg.exist him-GN=ACC here
'He is not here.'

Russian

(14) b. *E-go* *net* *zdes'.*
him-GN=ACC neg.exist here
'He is not here.'

Again, this pattern cannot constitute by itself a direct source for OdR genitivization, but we will come back to it in Section 6, and explain how it was important for the phenomenon analyzed here.

5 Extended genitivization of arguments in OdR

One of the most striking and famous distinctive features in the morpho-syntax of OdR was the extension of argumental genitive marking to environments not found in other varieties of East Slavic, what we refer to as extended genitivization. In this section, we will describe the instances of extended genitivization in OdR, and specify

whether they can or cannot be traced back straightforwardly to the patterns of genitivization presented above.

5.1 Previously described extended genitivization in OdR

Let us take as a starting point the patterns previously described in the literature. In his monography on OdR, Stepanov (2004: 427–428) describes two types of extended genitivization in OdR.

5.1.1 "Qualitative" genitive case

Verbs of phase change can take what Stepanov calls "qualitative" genitive, i.e., genitive direct objects conveying an evaluative semantic nuance (15a–b) in the absence of partitivity, animacy, temporal transfer, or negation, and therefore different from the genitivization instances reviewed in Section 3 and 4:

Odessa Russian

(15) a. *Bros'* *èt-ix* *glupost-ej,* *Benja!*
stop those-GEN.PL silly things-GEN.PL Benia
'Stop saying nonsense, Benya!' (Isaak Babel' 1926, *Benja Krik*)

(15) b. *I* *pust'* *on* *tol'ko* *poprobuet*
and let he only try
ploxo *rešit'* *naš-ix* *problem.*
badly solve our-GEN.PL problems.GEN.PL
'He won't dare not to help us solve our problems.'
(Smirnov, 1997: 92; *ap.* Stepanov, 2004: 427)

Stepanov (2004: 428) includes in this pattern those complements of prepositions depending on phase verbs that take qualitative genitive case instead of the normative accusative:

Odessa Russian

(16) *Opjat'* *vy* *vzjalis'* *za* *svo-ix* *štuček.*
again you take by your-GEN.PL little tricks.GEN.PL
'You're up to your old tricks again.' (Smirnov, 1997: 196; *ap.* Stepanov, 2004: 428)

As in the previous case, (16) does not have a direct source in the varieties reviewed so far, as the only pattern of genitivization after prepositions in Section 4.2 affected prepositions regularly taking prepositional but not accusative case.

5.1.2 Abstract "causators"

These are abstract subjects that provoke a situation associated with a verb of experience. This pattern is rare; we did not find a single instance in our sample, but we provide here two of Stepanov's examples (17). These arguments are regularly marked with nominative case in other Slavic languages, even in the presence of negation. Again, there is no potential underlying model among the varieties

reviewed so far that replaces nominative case with genitive in the case of this kind of subject. Example (17b) has a remarkable property; the causator does not trigger plural verbal agreement, but remains in default 3rd person singular.

Odessa Russian

(17) a. *Menja radue-t vaš-ego*
me cheer-3SG your-GEN.SG
ščast'j-a.
happiness-GEN.SG
'Your happiness cheers me up.' (Stepanov, 2004: 428, personal interview 25.10.1997, Greek woman, 73 y-o, Slobodka district)

(17) b. *Ix ne pečë-t naš-ix*
them not worry-3SG our-GEN.PL
bolezn-ej i stradanij.
sickness-GEN.PL and suffering.GEN.PL
'Our illness and suffering do not worry them.' (Stepanov, 2004: 428, personal interview 09.07.1998, Jewish man, 78 y-o, Moldavanka district)

In the rest of the section, we will show that extended genitivization in OdR is wider than described in Stepanov (2004), that is, it surfaces in environments other than Stepanov's qualitative objects or abstract causators. Let us describe these environments one-by-one.

5.2 Subjects

5.2.1 Existential subjects in affirmative sentences

Any indefinite (18a-b) or definite (18c-e) existential subject, including possessed subjects in existential possessive structures (18c), can be genitivized in OdR, i.e., the same type of subjects that undergo genitivization under negation in standard Russian, but in the absence of negation. There are 19 instances of this pattern in our sample (in all likelihood, some of the fragmentary examples in Section 5.4 can be interpreted as existential as well). A similar pattern but only with subjects including a numeral is found in dialectal Ukrainian (see Section 4.1). In 18th–19th century Russian, only intransitive subjects with partitive meaning could be occasionally genitivized (see Section 4.2).

Odessa Russian

(18) a. *Roza, neuželi dlja tebja est'*
Roza maybe for you exist
če-go-to nevozmožn-ogo?
something-GN.SG impossible-GN.SG
'Roza, is there anything impossible for you?' (Smirnov, 2005, I: 70)

(18) b. *Est' v Odesse arxitektor-ov*

exist in Odessa architects-GEN.PL
v tom čisle talantliv-yx
in that number gifted-GEN.PL
i očen' talantliv-yx.
and very gifted-GEN.PL
'In Odessa there are architects, among them, gifted and very gifted architects.' (Smirnov, 2005, II: 492)

(18) c. *V Odesse u každogo byl-o,*
in Odessa at each was-N.SG
est' i bude-t svo-ix
exist and will be-3SG self-GN.PL
pesen po povodu gosudartsvenny-x
songs.GN.PL by occasion national
karmanov.
pockets
'In Odessa, each of us had, has and will have our own songs about the government's pockets.' (Smirnov, 2005, I: 177)

(18) d. *- S čego vdrug vy vybrali temoj*
why sudden you chose topic
knigi prostituciju, ili drug-oj ne
book prostitution or other-F.GEN.SG not
byl-o?
was-N.SG
-Pozvolju sebe otvetit' po-odesski:
let myself answer like Odessian
drug-oj byl-o...
other-F.GEN.SG was-N.SG
'- Why did you choose prostitution as the topic of your book, maybe there was not any other? - Let me answer in the Odessa way: there was another one...' (Aleksandr Rozenbojm about his book *Ulitsy nestrogix dev*, interview from 2015)

(18) e. *A začem nam svoj alfabit? A*
and why us our alphabet and
zatem, čto svo-ego gosudarstvenn-ogo
because our-GEN.SG national-GEN.SG
jazyk-a uže est'.
language- GEN.SG already exists
'Why do we need our own alphabet? Because we already have our national language.' (Smirnov, 2005, III: 192)

Genitive plural subjects in OdR (18c) can behave in the same way as existential genitive negated subjects in standard Russian (example 4 in Section 3), and existential genitive affirmative subjects in dialectal

Russian (examples 7-8 in Section 4). In all these examples, we see that the verb is used in (neuter) singular default form, and displays no person / number agreement.

5.2.2 Other intransitive subjects in affirmative sentences

Intransitive subjects of verbs of motion / position and semantically similar verbs can be genitivized in OdR (19a–c), albeit not very commonly (there are only 5 instances in our sample). These subjects can be genitive in standard Russian only under the scope of negation, when they are perceived as existential (cf. example 4c above). As in the previous case, these subjects can be genitivized in affirmative sentences in dialectal Ukrainian only with subjects including a numeral (see Section 4.1). In contrast, genitivization in OdR applies to subjects of verbs of motion and, occasionally (only 2 instances in our sample), subjects of nominal predicates, as in (19d):

Odessa Russian

(19) *a.* *Gde* *delis'* *tvo-ix* *sbereženij?*
where went.PL your-GEN.PL savings.GEN.PL
'Where did your savings go?' (Smirnov, 2005, III: 359)

(19) b. *Ne* *budut* *lit'sja* *slëz.*
not will.3PL pour tears.GEN.PL
'Tears will not be poured.' (Èjdel'man, 2012: 247)

(19) c. *S* *ètoj* *bumagi* *vod-y* *ne* *tol'ko* *kapaet* *a* *bryzgaet,* *kak* *na* *Niagara.*
from this paper water-GEN.SG not only leaks but splashes like in Niagara
'From that paper (a stock share) water not only leaks, but even splashes like the Niagara.' (Smirnov, 2005, I: 208)[7]

(19) d. *Èto* *uže* *sovsem* *drug-ix* *vešč-ej.*
this already completely other-GEN.PL

[7] As we explained in Section 2, extended genitivization is often found in free variation with respect to normative direct cases (accusative or nominative). The sentence in (19b), for example, contrasts with the following (normative) variant:

Odessa Russian

(i) *S* *cennyx* *bumag* *vod-a* *daže* *ne* *kapaet,* *a* *struëj* *bežit.*
from valious papers water-NOM.SG even not leaks but stream runs
'From stock shares water not just leaks, but runs like a stream.' (Smirnov, 2005, I: 493)

things-GEN.PL
'This a completely different matter.' (Smirnov, 2005, II: 171)

An interesting property of these genitive plural subjects in OdR is that they are not perceived as existential and trigger plural verbal agreement (19a–b), unlike quasi-existential negated genitive subjects in the standard (cf. example 4c in Section 3) and existential affirmative sentences in OdR (cf. example 18c), which display default verbal agreement.

5.3 Objects

5.3.1 Direct objects

There are plenty of instances of extended objectual genitivization in our sample (78 instances). From a semantic point of view, virtually any definite or indefinite singular or plural object can be genitivized in OdR, in the absence of overt negation, animacy, partitivity, temporal transfer, delimitative predication, and qualitative meaning. However, there seems to be an interesting morphological restriction: extended objectual genitivization in our sample overwhelmingly affects masculine singular noun class II and plural of any noun class, but not singular noun classes I or III (see footnote 3). In other words, this genitivization pattern displays the same morphological generalization affecting Differential Object Marking on animate objects in standard Russian (see Section 3), but in the absence of the corresponding animacy feature.

The first group of examples we provide illustrates *indefinite objects* in the absence of overt negation, partitivity, animacy, and so on. The examples in (20) illustrate indefinite objects in *plural number*. Even if the objects are indefinite, none of the examples in (20) fits into the description of genitivized objects reviewed in Sections 3 and 4; none expresses temporal transfer or delimitative predication and there are no verbs of perception or modals.

Odessa Russian

(20) a. *Začem* *gonjat'* *stol'ko* *ljudej,* *esli*
why gather so many people if
možno *prosto* *pomenjat'* *ix*
is possible just change their
štan-ov?
trousers-GEN.PL
'Why do you need to gather so many people, if you can simply change their outfits? (Smirnov, 2005, I: 125)

(20) b. *Madam,* *vaši* *prekrasnye* *glaza* *zastavljajut*
madame your beautiful eyes force
mne *zabyvat'* *padež-ov.*
me forget cases-GEN.PL

‘Madame, your beautiful eyes make me forget grammatical case.’ (Smirnov, 2005, III: 208)

(20) c. *Bol’nye* *i* *simuljanty* *tak* *bystro*
patients and fakers so quickly
vleteli *v* *kojki* *slovno* *glavvrač*
flew to beds as if doctor
propisal *im* *pendal-ej.*
prescribe them kick-GEN.PL
‘Patients and pretenders went back to their beds as quickly as if the chief doctor prescribed them a kick in the ass.’ (Smirnov, 2005, III: 272)

Pronominal indefinite objects (singular number) of different types are also quite often involved in genitivization (21).

(21) a. *Odessa* *tože* *koe-č-ego* *sdelala* *dlja*
Odessa also something-GEN.SG did for
ètogo *vida* *sporta.*
this type sport
‘Odessa also contributed to this type of sport.’ (Smirnov, 2005, IV: 266)

(21) b. *Rebe,* *ja* *govorju* *Šnapalju* *t-ogo*
Rebe I tell Shnapal this-GEN.SG
že *sam-ogo.*
part same-GEN.SG
‘Rebe, I tell Shnapal the same thing.’
(Smirnov, 2005, IV: 482)

The second group of examples comprises definite plural (22a–c) and definite singular objects (22d–f). Genitivization of definite objects in affirmative sentences is especially striking in East Slavic. The reason is that definite objects, even under negation, are always accusative in standard contemporary and older Russian (see Section 3). In dialectal Ukrainian, genitivization can take place in affirmative sentences in a series of environments, but never on definite objects. The only varieties that display genitivization on definite objects are North- (Western) and Finland Russian, because of the influence of Finnish partitive case, which is unrelated to OdR (see footnote 5). Notice that none of the examples conveys temporal transfer, delimitative predication, verbs of perception, and so forth.

Odessa Russian

(22) a. *Poberegite* *vaš-ix* *zub-ov* *dlja*
preserve your-GEN.PL teeth-GEN.PL for
podaročnyx *stakanov.*
gift glasses
‘Preserve your teeth for gift glasses.’ (Smirnov, 2005, III: 125)

(22) b. *Ètot* *russkij* *jazyk* *imeet* *tr-ëx*
this Russian language has three-GEN.PL

stepen-ej *sravnenij…* *blizko,* *bliže*
degrees-GEN.PL comparison near nearer
i *o-to-to!*
and right here
'Russian has three degrees of comparison: near, nearer and right here!' (Smirnov, 2005, III: 239)

(22) c. *My peli ètix pesen i plakali.*
we sang these songs. GEN.PL and cried
'We sang these songs and cried' (Smirnov, 2005, III: 152)

(22) d. *Xotite vyučit' odessk-ogo jazyk-a,*
want learn Odessian-GEN.SG language-GEN.SG
čitajte "Avizo".
read "Avizo"
'If you want to learn the Odessian language, read "Avizo"' (Smirnov, 2005, III: 181).

(22) e. *Xoču podarit' tebe binoklj-a.*
want give you binocular-GEN.SG
'I want to give you these binoculars.' (Smirnov, 2005, I: 223)

(22) f. *Vsju dorogu boitsja brat' mjač-a v ruki.*
all way fears take ball-GEN.SG in hands
'He is afraid to take the ball in his hands all the way long.' (Smirnov, 2005, III: 208)

Finally, there are 7 examples (out of 78) of genitivized direct objects in singular feminine class I in our sample (and none of feminine class III or neuter class IV). In six cases, they are inanimate definite singular objects (23a–b); one example stands for a low-individuated animal, cooked fish (23c). Again, none of the conditions listed in Section 3 and 4 for genitivization apply in these examples:

Odessa Russian

(23) a. *Madam Perel'man ugomonilas' i*
Madam Perelman gave in and
zakryla svo-ej pomojnic-y.
closed her-F.GN.SG landfill-F.GN.SG
'Madam Perelman gave in and closed her rubbish dump.' (Smirnov, 2005, III, 358)

(23) b. *Oni skommunizdili mo-ej*
they communized my-F.GN.SG
sberknižk-i.
savings book-F.GN.SG
'They communized my savings bank book.' (Smirnov, 2005, II: 468)

(23) c. *Dva časa xomjačit mo-ej ryb-y.*
two hours swallows my-F.GN.SG fish-F.GN.SG
'He has been gulping down my fish for two hours.' (Smirnov, 2005, IV: 350)

5.3.2 Complements of prepositions

Genitivization of singular NPs after prepositions requiring accusative case does not impose semantic restrictions, such as qualitative meaning or animacy. In our sample, only singular masculine nouns of class II undergo this type of genitivization (11 instances).

Odessa Russian

(24) a. *Takie xorošie rebjata, na mostovoj v mjač-a begali.*
such good boys on street to ball-GEN.SG ran
'They were such good boys, they used to play football right on the street.' (Smirnov, 2005, I: 83)

(24) b. *On zabyl položit' prezent v mo-ego valenk-a*
he forgot put present in my-GEN.SG boot-GEN.SG
'He forgot to put a present in my boot.' (Smirnov, 2005, IV: 48)

(24) c. *- Tol'ko učtite, ètot preparat nado brat' vo vnutr'.*
only consider this compound need take in inside
- Čerez rot-a?
through mouth-GEN.SG
'- Take into account that you need to take this medicine. – Through my mouth?' (Smirnov, 2005, I: 146)

(24) d. *Matvej nalil glaza krov'ju i zaskakal vyše potolka v sobstvenn-ogo kabinet-a.*
Matvej poured eyes blood and jumped higher roof in own-GEN.SG office-GEN.SG
'Matvey's eyes turned red and he jumped beyond the roof into his own office.' (Smirnov, 2005, II: 460)

5.4 Other environments

Extended genitivization can affect nonverbal predicates, fragmentary or incomplete statements, exclamations, titles, and so on, both in singular (25) and plural number (26) (12 instances in our sample). These are expressions like the famous Odessian *Takix del* 'those-GEN.PL things.GEN.PL' ('that's the way it is!'), in genitive case (Evgenij Golubovskij, "Pamjati druga"), instead of the normative nominative *Takie dela*. The fact that these instances are fragments or incomplete sentences sometimes makes it difficult to decide which grammatical case (nominative or accusative) has been "replaced" by genitive. A few

of the examples, e.g., (25a), could be interpreted as quasi-existential, but not univocally, as they lack the characteristic existential *est'*. In any case, the examples in (25–26) cannot be traced back to the patterns reviewed in Section 3 and 4; as in the previous groups of examples, no partitivity, temporal transfer, or animacy can be detected; only example (25a) could be interpreted as temporal transfer, although not necessarily.

Odessa Russian

(25) a. *Vot va-m krest-a!*
here you-DAT cross-GEN.SG
'Here you have the cross!' (Smirnov, 2005, III: 166)

(25) b. *Znakomyj pristav božilsja, čto na znameni bylo vyšito "Doloj samoderžavij-a!" v roditel'nom padeže.*
Known bailiff sworn that on flag was seamed down autocracy-GEN.SG in genitive case
'A bailiff friend of mine sworn that the seamed caption on the flag was "Down with autocracy!" in genitive case'. (Vladimir Žavotinskij, 1936, *Pjatero* "Vdol' po Deribasovskoj")

Odessa Russian

(26) a. (There was a book, which became sadly famous, written by some pitiful writer, who published it with his own money.)
Knižonka nazyvalas' "Tvo-ix noč-ej."
book was called your-GEN.PL nights-GEN.PL
'The title of the book was "Your nights"' (Eduard Bagritskij, 1926, *Duma pro Opasana*)

(26) b. *Dajte učastkovomu 10 rublej – i vs-ex del.*
Give policeman 10 rubles and all-GEN.PL things.GEN.PL
'Give the police officer ten rubles, and that's it.' (Smirnov, 2005, I: 232)

(26) c. *V Odesse turist uvidel na ovoščnom kioske nadpis' "Ovošč-ej".*
in Odessa tourist saw on vegetable kiosk sign "Vegetables-GEN.PL"
'In Odessa, the tourist saw the sign "Vegetables" on a kiosk' (Smirnov, 2005, III: 123)

By way of a summary thus far, genitivization in OdR was much more extensive than in other Slavic varieties, and was even wider than previously described in the literature. Genitive case can replace accusative case on virtually all semantic kinds of definite and indefinite objects and after prepositions (under certain morphological conditions), as well as replace nominative case on definite and

indefinite subjects (in existential / possessive sentences, nonverbal predication, with verbs of motion, and as abstract causators of experience verbs), and also in fragments, exclamations, and titles.

6 Extended genitivization in OdR as a contact phenomenon

In this section, we evaluate the potential sources and explain the linguistic mechanisms underlying the phenomenon under study. We will argue that a substratum account is not enough to explain OdR genitivization, but it constitutes an initial basis for the process. But most importantly, we show that (i) the language-internal rules of Russian itself were determinant for genitivization in OdR, as we see in children's Russian productions, and (ii) the key factor for its widespread extension had to be the reinterpretation of genitive argumental case by L2 learners and bilinguals.

6.1 Dialectal varieties as the initial basis for extended genitivization

In Table 2, we summarize the main types of extended genitivization found in OdR and compare their presence to the potential substrata.

Table 2. The presence/absence of OdR extended genitivization contexts in the potential sources

OdR extended genitivization	Dialectal / 19th-century Russian	Dialectal Ukrainian	Yiddish
Existential / possessive subjects in affirmative sentences	✓	✓	(accusative of negation)
Subjects of verbs of movement in affirmative sentences	(only indefinite or partitive)	(only with numerals)	--
Active abstract subjects (causators)	--	--	--
Direct objects of all sorts in affirmative sentences	(only temporal transfer, delimitative predication, some indefinite objects)	(only temporal transfer)	--
Fragments, titles, Exclamations	--	--	--
After prepositions, replacing accusative	(only replacing prepositional plural)	--	--

As illustrated in Table 2, the only pattern of genitivization in OdR, which is fully represented in the available sources, is genitive case of existential / possessive subjects in affirmative subjects. It is remotely represented in the form of accusative of negation in Yiddish as well.

The other instances of extended genitivization in OdR are either completely absent in the underlying varieties or only represented in an extremely restricted way, as compared to OdR. Therefore, they cannot be considered a straightforward model for extended genitivization in OdR. Nonetheless, dialectal East Slavic and the standard language of the moment (19th-century Russian) contained the "ingredients" that served as the initial basis for further extension of genitivization. In fact, these constituted the majority of varieties spoken in Odessa, and produced the largest part of the linguistic input received by learners of OdR.

In the following section, we will show that the key factor for OdR genitivization was a combination of (i) the language-internal conditions of the acquisition of the Russian language, following Poplack and Levey's (2010) idea that some phenomena can be due to internal developments of the language, rather than transfers from surrounding languages, and (ii) the general conditions of incomplete acquisition by non-Slavic L2 learners, fitting Dahl's (2004) definition of suboptimal transmission, which led successive generations of bilinguals to reinterpret and spread argumental genitive case marking widely.

6.2 Child Russian

Child Russian is the key to understand the language-internal conditions of the phenomenon under study. Children of short age acquiring the Russian language show a certain "confusion" between certain morphological cases. These nonnormative instances of case marking are eliminated later on, as the child maturates her morpho-syntax.

Gvozdev (1961: 379ff), for example, reports that children start to use accusative and genitive case after 2 years, along with nominative case. At this point, genitive case is used only in *partitive* uses, i.e., expressing an indefinite quantity of a plural or mass noun (27). Genitive plural appears relatively late, according to Gvozdev (1961: 388), around 2;2 years; it is not frequently used, and adopts the unique form *–of* (*-ov*) for all classes and genders.

In this initial phase, genitive as a partitive case can replace nominative and accusative (singular and plural, all noun classes) whenever there is a partitive meaning. This also happens in combination with verbs that in adult Russian require accusative (27a–b) or nominative case (27c):

Child Russian

(27) a. *rvat'* *gurc-of* (2;2)
uproot cucumbers-GEN.PL
(adult: *ogurc-y*)
(cucumbers-ACC.PL)

‘Pull out some cucumbers.’ (Gvozdev, 1961: 385)

(27) b. *pašla* *n’eg-a* *kapat’* (adult: *sneg*) (2;0)
went snow-GEN.SG dig (snow.ACC.SG)
‘I am going to dig some snow.’ (Gvozdev, 1961: 385)

(27) c. *mak-a* *kipit* (adult: *molok-o*) (1;9)
milk-GEN.SG boils (milk-NOM.SG)
‘Milk is boiling.’ (Gvozdev, 1961: 385)

In absence of a partitive meaning, Child Russian makes use of nominative case, even in contexts in which adult Russian requires a genitive case (see Section 3); in adnominal contexts (28a), quantificational uses (28b), and under negation (28c):

Child Russian

(28) a. *mes’ic* *kusoč’ik* (adult: *mesjac-a*) (2;6)
moon.NOM.SG piece (moon-GEN.SG)
‘A small part of the moon.’ (Gvozdev, 1961: 385)

(28) b. *noga* *gl’ušk-i* (adult: *igrušek*) (2;0)
many toys-NOM.PL (toys.GEN.PL)
‘A lot of toys’ (Gvozdev, 1961: 385)

(28) c. *net* *den’g-i* (adult: *deneg*) (2;8)
neg.exist money-NOM.PL (money.GEN.PL)
‘There is no money.’ (Gvozdev, 1961: 385)

This is the first pattern underlying extended genitivization in OdR. Early acquisition of Russian displays a complete overlapping of partitive meaning and genitive case marking. This leads to the *over-generalization* of the genitive case to all partitive arguments, replacing both nominative and accusative cases in all noun classes and numbers. A partitive connotation of the genitive case is also characteristic of dialectal as well as 18th–19th-century Russian genitivization (see Sections 3.2 and 4.1).

The second acquisitional phenomenon, which is important to understanding genitivization in OdR, is acquisition of Differential Object Marking, or genitivization related to animacy (see Section 3.1.1). According to Gvozdev (1961), children largely ignore the animacy of direct objects until they are approximately 4-years-old. Thus, little children can encode animate objects of noun class II (29a) and plural objects (29b) with accusative/nominative case, instead of adult accusative/genitive case. The replacement of other cases by default nominative case is the expected effect in the period in which morphological case is not very stable, as it is still being acquired:

Child Russian

(29) a. *mn’e* *slon* *padar’ila* (3;10)
me elephant.ACC/NOM.SG gave
(adult: *slon-a*)
(elephant ACC/GEN.SG)

‘She gave me the/an elephant as a present.’ (Gvozdev, 1961: 380)

(29) b. *kladut* *kuric’k’-i* *(adult: kuroček)* (2;8)
put hens-ACC/NOM.PL (hens-ACC/GEN.PL)
‘They put (the) hens.’ (Gvozdev, 1961: 380)

But interestingly, the reverse replacement is also observed. From their earliest productions, children can apply the morpheme *–a*, corresponding to genitive (=accusative animate) singular masculine case in class II in adult Russian, to inanimate nouns (30a–b). This environment requires nominative (=accusative inanimate) case in adult Russian. Notice that these productions correspond to a period in which children have *not* yet acquired genitive case, except for partitive uses (Gvozdev, 1961: 383).

Child Russian

(30) a. *daj* *tankan-a* (1;11)
give glass-“ACC/GEN.SG”
(adult: *stakan*)
(glass.ACC/NOM.SG)
‘Give me the glass.’ (Gvozdev, 1961: 383)

(30) b. *bl’os’* *kanton-a* (1;11)
throw potato-“ACC/GEN.SG”
(adult: *kartofel’*)
(potato.ACC/NOM.SG)
‘Throw out the potatoes.’ (Gvozdev, 1961: 383)

In later years, this pattern surfaces less frequently, but is still present (*vitri nos-a* ‘clean nose-“ACC/GEN.SG”’ 2;1; *mes’ic-a matet’* ‘moon-“ACC/GEN.SG” look’ 2;1).

Tsejtlin (2009) examines optionality in child object marking in the CHILDES database, and lowers the age of acquisition of animacy as a key feature for object marking to 3-years-old. More recent studies on acquisition lower the age of acquisition even more. Hzrzica et al. (2015) analyzed the same CHILDES database, and concluded that Vania and Liza acquired Differential Object Marking by the age of 1;9–1;10, although the errors persist for a few more years. The number of errors between 2- and 4 years-old is low (3%–9%), and depends on the child. Some 80% of Vania’s errors were ‘omission errors’, i.e., using accusative/nominative on animate objects (31a), while Liza showed the reverse pattern, ‘commission errors’: namely, 75% of the errors constituted the use of accusative/genitive on inanimate objects (31b).

Child Russian

(31) a. *Iskal* *tak-ie* *ščuk-i*
seeked such-NOM.PL pikes-NOM.PL
(adult: *ščuk*)
(pikes.ACC/GEN.PL)
‘He looked for such pikes.’ (CHILDES, Vania: 2;7)

(31) b. *Vot* *èt-ogo* *mjačik-a* *nado*
here this-GEN.SG ball-GEN.SG need
pomyt' *objazatel'no* (adult: *mjačik*)
wash necessarily (ball.ACC/NOM.SG)
'We need to wash this ball here.' (CHILDES, Liza: 3;3)

Interestingly, Hrzica et al. (2015) report on children's use of genitive case after prepositions requiring accusative/nominative case on inanimate complements. This is the same pattern we described for OdR (Section 5.3.2). The following example is from CHILDES:

Child Russian

(32) *On ne vyjdet v magazin-a.* (adult: *magazin*)
he not go out to shop-GEN.SG (shop.ACC.SG)
'He will not go to the shop.' (CHILDES, Vanja 3;4)

The key property of this acquisitional phenomenon is that children ignore the animacy feature on direct objects and complements of prepositions for a longer or shorter period of time, and therefore can generalize the morphological exponents *-a* and *-ov* ("genitive" form of masculine singular and masculine plural, respectively) to direct objects and complements of prepositions, as a purely morphological device, prior to the acquisition of any of the semantic values of genitive case other than partitive.

6.3 Language contact and incomplete acquisition

Now let us evaluate the role of language contact in the reanalysis and extension of OdR genitivization. As we mentioned initially in Section 2, foreign citizens, nonnative speakers, and bilingual speakers of Russian constituted half the population of Odessa until the mid-20th century. On the other hand, there exists a popular belief in the city, supported by certain authors, that extended genitivization is characteristic of the Jewish residents of the city (Mečkovskaja, 2006). However, according to our Table 2 in Section 6.1, Yiddish is, at least in a direct way, the poorest contributor to OdR genitivization.

Nonetheless, if we consider that extended genitivization in OdR was a contact-induced change, in the sense of Dahl's (2004) suboptimal transmission, genitivization can be easily attributed to massive incomplete acquisition by non-Slavic speakers in the city.[8] The idea is that non-native learners of Russian reanalyzed the argumental genitive instances from dialectal and standard Russian in the linguistic input they received in a similar way as in Child Russian. Thereafter, bilingual (more proficient) learners transmitted the reanalyzed pattern to successive generations.

[8] In a similar way, idiosyncrasies in gender assignment, as well as occasional disruption of gender and case agreement in OdR not traceable to any of the underlying varieties, reveal an initial situation of incomplete acquisition of Russian by speakers of non-Slavic languages, as shown in Madariaga and Romanova (2022).

We expect to detect this process most notably in Yiddish and Jewish Russian speakers, who constituted the overwhelming majority of the nonnative and bilingual speakers in the city. This expectation is met in the existence of an accusative of negation in Yiddish (see Section 4.2). The existence of a syntactic calque of the Slavic genitive of negation in Yiddish evidences a high degree of bilingualism and interrelation of the two languages among Yiddish speakers, which was enough for a morpho-syntactic linguistic transfer. The reason is that morphological and structural transfers require a deep interrelation between the languages involved, i.e., a higher or lower degree of bilingualism, as opposed to other types of transfer, such as culturally-motivated lexical borrowing (Thomason and Kaufman, 1988; Haspelmath and Tadmor, 2009; Matras, 2009).

Moreover, this morpho-syntactic calque was transferred later into Hebrew by Jews formerly living in the Russian Empire, in a pattern first noticed in the 1950s (33) (see Taube, 2015, and references therein). Interestingly, the transfer into Hebrew was performed in the same way as extended genitivization in OdR, that is, the accusative case replaced nominative case in existential/possessive sentences not only under negation (33a), but also in the *absence* of negation (33b), unlike Yiddish and normative Russian:

Modern Hebrew

(33) a. *ʔeyn* *lo* *ʔet* *hadavar* *haze.*
neg.exist to.him ACC thing this
'He does not have this thing (= lit. this thing does not exist to him.') (Taube, 2015: 28)

(33) b. *ʔeyze* *mazal* *še-yeš* *li* *ʔotxa*
which luck that-exist to.me you.ACC
'What luck that I have got you! (= lit. you exist to me)' (Taube, 2015: 29)

If we put all the pieces together, we get the following picture: first, we observe the existence of a number of genitivization instances in the linguistic input of the citizens of Odessa. Together with normative instances of genitivization (animate direct objects, negated subjects and objects, some indefinite subjects / objects in affirmative sentences), the inhabitants of Odessa received evidence of additional instances of non-negated genitive subjects and objects (deviations from the standard in dialectal Russian and Ukrainian).

The existence of genitivization itself in normative Russian creates certain language-internal conditions that allow non-native learners to interpret the use of genitive case in different ways and replace direct cases with it (inanimate masculine singular and plural objects, intransitive partitive subjects), as is observed in Child Russian.

The language contact situation in the city of Odessa, in which half the population was made up of speakers of other languages, implied

the massive acquisition of Russian as a L2. The nonnative acquisition of Russian gave way to the extension of genitivization in those instances found in child language (definite direct objects, after prepositions) and even new instances, such as causators and fragmentary statements. Widespread bilingualism, on the other hand, gave way to linguistic transfers from Russian to Yiddish (accusative of negation) and further into Hebrew (existential accusative in negative and affirmative sentences).

Genitive case is characteristic of animate direct objects in Standard Russian — masculine singular class II and all plural — versus accusative case in other noun singular classes (34a). In 19th-century Russian, genitive case was very frequently used with direct objects under negation, but not always (34b). Thus, genitive case as an object marker regularly alternated with accusative case.

Russian — genitive / accusative alternations

(34) a. *Ja vižu mal'čik-a / devočk-u.*
I see boy-GN/ACC.SG / girl-ACC.SG
'I see a/the boy / I see a/the girl.'

(34) b. *Ja ne vižu vyxod-a / gorod.*
I not see way out-GEN.SG / city-ACC.SG
'I do not see a way out / I do not see a/the city.'

According to Taube (2015), because of the alternations in (34), and given the loss of genitive morphological case in Yiddish, the bilingual mind of Yiddish speakers identified Russian argumental genitive with their own accusative marker. Because argumental genitive case in Russian was also used in negated contexts (direct objects and existential subjects), these speakers extended their own (Yiddish) accusative to negated existential subjects as well.

Russian - genitive negated subject

(35) a. *Net vyxod-a.*
neg.exist way out-GEN.SG
'There is no way out.'

Yiddish - accusative negated subject

(35) b. *Ništo Berl-en.*
neg.exist Berl-ACC.SG
'Berl is not here.'

Thereafter, genitive marking could be overgeneralized to other quasi-existential subjects and, from them, to fragmentary statements in affirmative sentences and causators (following their own model of Yiddish accusative of negation, see the extension of the transfer to Hebrew, in the absence of negation), and to all types of direct objects and complements of prepositions (following the use of their own Yiddish regular accusative).

The extended genitivization pattern of OdR in the case of *objects* gave preference to the initial morphological restriction operating in the identification between genitive and accusative cases in direct object

case, as illustrated in (34). That is, it affected most often masculine singular objects in class II and plurals (see Section 5.3). The extension of genitive argumental marking to feminine nouns of class I did take place, but in a much more restricted way (only 9% of the instances of objectual genitivization in our sample).

As for extended genitivization on *subjects* in OdR, there was no such initial morphological restriction and genitive was extended to all noun classes. In the model for this second extension (genitive of negation in existential sentences and partitive subjects in affirmative sentences), the only requirement was low transitivity of the subject; most often an existential subject. In this case, default verbal agreement was preserved, mirroring the normative structure of genitive of negation. A few more instances of other intransitive low-individuated subjects were also affected by genitivization; in this case, the subjects were perceived as non-existential and could preserve or not plural verbal agreement (cf. examples 17a-b vs. examples 19a-b).

7 Final remarks

Extension of genitive case in the place of direct cases, as described in the case of OdR, is not the outcome we expect in morphologically fusional languages, especially in a situation of massive language contact. On the contrary, languages tend to level argumental case toward accusative and/or nominative, or lose nominal case completely (see Section 1). Mertyris (2014) explains this tendency in terms of markedness. Genitive is more marked than accusative or nominative and, thus, case leveling takes place toward accusative or nominative case. However, this is not the case of OdR, in which we cannot speak of markedness, but rather of loss of morpho-syntactic features.

As we pointed out in footnote 5, Northern and Finland Russian constitute a notable exception to Mertyris's (2014) observation. In these varieties, genitive of negation was not only preserved, but even extended because of the influence of partitive case in Finnish, which provides clear positive evidence in favor of argumental genitivization (Leisiö, 2006).

Kyyrölä Russian

(36) *Ėto-go* *jazyk-a* *uvažajut.*
this-GEN.SG language-GEN.SG respect
'They respect this language.' (Leisiö, 2006: 308)

In OdR, in contrast, there is no substratum or source language (such as Finnish) that can account for the extension of genitive case further than the standard in a straightforward way. In this paper, we have suggested a satisfactory explanation for this process on the basis of the internal conditions of Russian genitivization itself, together with the idiosyncratic conditions of language contact in Odessa.

First, the process seems to be an internally conditioned development of the grammatical rules of Russian itself, rather than a

transfer from underlying languages. In general terms, OdR genitivization involves those environments in which standard Russian levels genitive and accusative or nominative case-marking; (i) existential / possessed subjects and existential subjects of verbs of motion under negation (a syntactic environment), and (ii) those objects which undergo Differential Object Marking in the presence of animacy (a morphological environment).

Further, incomplete acquisition and later bilingualism in the city gave way to the actual innovation, which consisted of a process of feature loss. The requirement of the features of negation, partitivity, and animacy for standard genitivization in these environments was just eliminated in OdR, resulting in case leveling in favor of argumental genitive case. This conveyed the univocal morphological marking of all masculine singular class II and plural objects, regardless of their level of individuation, and neutralization of the 'negation' feature in the case of existential or quasi-existential subjects (occasionally extended to low-individuated causators).

The outcome of argumental case marking in OdR contradicts the hypothesis that linguistic transfers in intense language contact derive into structural simplification (Trudgill, 2001), because case leveling here is performed toward a "less marked" option. The opposite idea is that high-contact can result in complexification or diversification (Heath, 1978; Trudgill, 2004; Kuteva, 2007, and references therein). According to Trudgill (2004: 437ff), simplification is obtained in situations of massive adult L2 acquisition, while complexification may occur in situations of long-term contact and childhood bilingualism.

A combination of both situations is the immediate case of OdR. The peculiar language contact situation in Odessa combined massive L2 learning and extended bilingualism; thus, extended genitivization in OdR involves, at the same time, a simplification process (elimination of semantic features from the syntactic construction) and a complexification process (leveling of argumental case marking in favor of the non-default option).

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