DIFFERENCES IN USING (NOT ONLY) ADNOMINAL PARTITIVE GENITIVE IN CHOSEN CZECH JOURNALISTIC TEXTS

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Abstract

In this paper, we try to analyze the adnominal genitive with a focus on the partitive genitive, i.e. one of the adnominal genitive semantic subtypes, in Czech journalistic texts from two different periods: one from 1848 to 1915 and a more recent one from 1950 to 2000. We compare the usage of the adnominal genitive in Czech in these periods and in these texts, and, based on our data, we point out that there is a decrease in the use of specific types of adnominal genitives, e.g. partitive or possessive genitives, on the one hand, and that there is an increase of the genitive of affiliation, at least in this text type.

KEYWORDS: adnominal genitive, partitivity, partitive, enumerative, semantics, syntax, journalism

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1. Introduction

Fundamental contributions by V. Skalička (2004 [1960]: 767; [1963]: 859, etc.), K. Hausenblas (1958), Lamprecht – Šlosar – Bauer (1986: 361) and O. Uličný (2003) indicate that the genitive in Czech has, at least in the last few centuries, gradually profiled as an adnominal case (most often in the syntactic function of an incongruent attribute), while its use in adverbial positions (in the function of an object) has been weakening.[1]

The research described in this paper is part of a more extensive project focused on the adnominal genitive in Czech and other languages, e.g. German, English, Slovak, and other Slavic languages, particularly West Slavic languages (Janečka & Bláha 2020).[2] Our goal was to analyze and classify the syntactic and semantic functions of the genitive case. We limited ourselves to the adnominal genitive – the remaining types of genitives (such as genitives following an adverb, adjective, or preposition, etc.), which were described elsewhere, have remained outside our attention. We have two main goals in the present study: 1) to discuss general tendencies of decrease or increase of some certain specific types of adnominal genitives in Czech; 2) to focus on the use of the adnominal partitive genitive in Czech in chosen older and more recent journalistic texts.

2. Case in Czech

Considering the category of case in Czech, Uličný and Veselovská (2017) claim that case is a grammatical category that corresponds to the relationship between the noun and the next expression in the sentence by which this noun is controlled.[3]

In Czech, which is an inflected language, we can differentiate seven cases for singular and plural. Within a sentence, case meanings together with their formative basis and relation to other expressions realize part-of-sentence relations.

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[1] Vladimír Skalička: *Vývoj jazyka*, Praha, Státní pedagogické nakladatelství, 1960. Reprinted in Skalička, Vladimír: *Souborné dílo. Tři svazky*, Praha, Karolinum. 2004–2006; Vladimír Skalička: Typologie a komparatistika, in B. Havránek – I. Němec – Š. Peciar – K. Rosenbaum – O. Říha – S. Wollman (eds.): *Československé přednášky pro V. mezinárodní sjezd slavistů v Sofii*, Praha, 1963, 41–45. Reprinted in Skalička, Vladimír. *Souborné dílo. Tři svazky,* Praha, Karolinum, 2004–2006; Karel Hausenblas: *Vývoj předmětového genitivu v češtině*, Praha, ČSAV, 1958; Arnošt Lamprecht – Dušan Šlosar – Jaroslav Bauer: *Historická mluvnice češtiny*, Praha, Státní pedagogické nakladatelství, 1986; Oldřich Uličný: K deflektivizačním tendencím ve slovanských jazycích, in I. Pospíšil – M. Zelenka (eds.): *Česká slavistika 2003: české přednášky pro 13. mezinárodní sjezd slavistů v Lublani*, Praha, Academia, 2003, 155–163.

[2] Martin Janečka – Ondřej Bláha: *Genitiv adnominální v češtině: vývoj a současný stav*, Olomouc, Vydavatelství FF UP, 2020.

[3] Oldřich Uličný – Ludmila Veselovská: Pád, in P. Karlík – M. Nekula – J. Pleskalová (eds.): *CzechEncy: nový encyklopedický slovník češtiny*, 2017, https://www.czechency.org/slovnik/PÁD (accessed 03 December 2023)

Still, the vocative is typically excluded because it is not attached to other syntactic relations in a sentence. To express the fact that the phenomenon named by the noun enters into specific relationships with other events, the noun has accusative, genitive, dative, local, and instrumental cases (indirect case) and these, together with the nominative case (direct case), form the case category.

We can also look at the category of case from the viewpoint of parts of a sentence. Different functions are realized by the case form so that we can differentiate cases of the subject (usually nominative), cases of the object (cases without prepositions), cases of adverbs, or cases of the incongruent attribute (specifically genitive). The most common case of the object of a transitive verb in Czech is the accusative; it is called a direct object. If the verb has a second object, it is mostly dative. When we want to describe syntactic functions of case forms of the noun, we describe their functions on the surface syntactic level, so we can speak about direct or indirect object, subject or attribute. To describe the semantic functions of case forms, i.e. functions in the deep structure of the sentence, terms such as 'agent', 'patient', and others are used.

The genitive is typically carried by a noun related to another noun, normally directly, or as part of a prepositional construction. There are two possible options for a genitive noun: (1) a noun in the position of a postponed incongruent attribute (e.g. *trest smrti* 'punishment of death', *klíče od bytu* 'keys of the apartment'); (2) a noun belonging to a verb or an adjective, either directly or as part of the prepositional construction (e.g. *litovat činu* 'to regret an act', *vidět bez brýlí* 'to see without glasses', *plný vína* 'full of wine', etc.) (Karlík 2017).[4] In what follows, we deal with only type (1). The adnominal genitive is grammatically characterized by a single feature, a position by another noun that is superior to it and that requires it as a facultative addition.

The different types of the adnominal genitive found in examined Czech journalistic texts are: genitive of affiliation (*koruna stromu* 'tree crown'), genitive of the bearer of the quality (*směnitelnost koruny* 'convertibility of the crown'), genitive of the possessor (*zahrada našeho souseda* 'our neighbor's garden'), authorial genitive (*román Milana Kundery* 'a novel by Milan Kundera'), genitive of defining (*povinnost mlčenlivosti* 'a duty of confidentiality'), subjective genitive (*běh biatlonistů* 'running of biathletes'), objective genitive (*porušení smlouvy* 'breach of contract'), partitive genitive (*část území* 'a part of the territory'), genitive of time (*vítězství 5. ledna* 'victory on January 5'). For a detailed list of these genitive types, see the semantic classification in Karlík (2000).[5] In our previous corpus analysis (Janečka & Bláha 2020), we pointed out that not all types described in that list are

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[4] Petr Karlík: Genitiv, in P. Karlík – Marek Nekula – Jana Pleskalová (eds.): *CzechEncy: Nový encyklopedický slovník češtiny*, 2017, https://www.czechency.org/slovnik/GENITIV (accessed 03 December 2023)

[5] Petr Karlík – Marek Nekula – Zdenka Rusínová (eds.): *Příruční mluvnice češtiny*, 2nd revised edn., Praha, Nakladatelství Lidové noviny, 2000.

present in current Czech, e.g. the genitive of comparison (in older literature, called the Hebrew genitive, e.g. *kniha knih* 'a book of (all) books').[6]

3. The partitive (not only) in Slavic languages

In many Slavic languages, the genitive case forms of nouns and pronouns are the most prominent means of expressing a partitive meaning. This can also be found in Molise Slavic (Breu 2020); a competition of partitive vs. genitive (vs. accusative) in Russian and Polish as described in Fischer (2003); and the partitive function of the genitive is also described in Lithuanian (Seržant 2021), i.e. in a typologically very similar language to Slavic languages.[7]

The partitive and enumerative are also treated as adnominal genitives, although these are not standard adnominal genitives. Numerals take the position of the determining noun, but they have a substantive inflection. Thus, cases such as *kus plechu* 'a piece of sheet metal' or *stovka mostů* 'a hundred bridges' are traditionally included here. The partitive genitive is governed by a noun with a quantifying meaning (*kus plechu* 'a piece of sheet metal'); its special case is the enumerative, i.e. the genitive of the counted object after basic definite and indefinite numerals (e.g. *šest gólů* 'six goals', *několik hráčů* 'several players', *mnoho peněz* 'a lot of money', etc.).

However, these genitives are very specific because of their partitive, enumerative semantics, which makes them different from other types of adnominal genitives. This functional profiling of the genitive case is one of the manifestations of a wider developmental process that affects the entire case system of Czech. First, there is a tendency to suppress the surface semantics of the case, e.g. partitivity (the type *nabral vody* 'he took water', in the meaning 'he took a little water'). On the contrary, there is also a tendency to strengthen more abstract semantics or the tendency for individual cases to be profiled to fulfil very specific syntactic functions (subject, attribute, object, etc.). The case system thus tends towards a formalization that is to some extent parallel to the processes that had already taken place earlier in the Romance and Germanic languages of Western Europe. These phenomena are the background of what Roman Jakobson (1936: 269) already calls the "decomposition" of the system of case opposites (see also Janečka & Bláha 2020: 19).[8]

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[6] Janečka – Bláha: Genitiv adnominální v češtině: vývoj a současný stav.

[7] Walter Breu: Partitivity in Slavic-Romance language contact: the case of Molise Slavic in Italy, *Linguistics* 58 (2020). 837–868, https://doi.org/10.1515/ling-2020-0092; Susann Fischer: Partitive vs. genitive in Russian and Polish: an empirical study on case alternation in the object domain, in S. Fischer – R. van de Vijver – R. Vogel (eds.): *Linguistics in Potsdam 21,* Potsdam, Universitätsverlag, 2003, 73–89; Ilja A. Seržant: Typology of partitives, *Linguistics* 59 (2021), 881–947, https://doi.org/10.1515/ling-2020-0251

[8] Roman O. Jakobson: Beitrag zur allgemeinen Kasuslehre, in *Travaux du Cercle Linguistique de Prague*, vol. 6, Prague, Jednota československých matematiků a fysiků, 1936, 240–288.

From our viewpoint, there is a very valuable contribution to the description of the partitive in the Indo-European area from Koptjevskaja-Tamm (2001).[9] According to her, within the Indo-Europeanistic tradition, the term "partitive" is normally associated with case semantics, primarily concerning the genitive case. Lists of meanings attributed to genitives often include "partitive (meanings/uses of) genitives". These terms are used inconsistently in different works (Koptjevskaja-Tamm 2001: 525).[10] Partitive genitive may cover:

> reference to parts of the body and "organic" parts of objects: 'the roof of the house', 'the middle of the street';
> reference to a set from which a subset is selected through various non-semantic words, e.g. quantifier nouns like 'a section of the barbarians' or adjectives in their superlative forms ('the best among the Troyans');
> definite quantification, i.e. indication of the kind of entity that is quantified by a nominal quantifier, a numeral, a quantifying adjective, etc. ('dozens of soldiers');
> indefinite quantity, i.e. reference to "partial objects" of certain verbs ('to eat', 'to drink', etc.).

There are examples like 'amphora of wine', where the term "partitive" could be misleading because these constructions do not refer to a part in any sense, because there is no well-defined "whole" to which it could refer. Selkirk (1977) introduced the term "pseudo-partitives" for such constructions.[11] Koptjevskaja-Tamm (2001: 527) concludes this general description with the words that both partitive constructions (PC) and pseudo-partitive constructions (PPC) are noun phrases consisting of two nominals, one of which is a quantifier (e.g. 'cup', 'pile').[12] Although the same quantifiers may appear in both types of NPs, their nature is different: Partitive nominal constructions and pseudo-partitive nominal constructions are two types of nominal quantification. Partitive constructions involve a presupposed set of items, while pseudo-partitive constructions only quantify the entity indicated by the other nominal. The two constructions differ both in the referentiality and specificity of substance components.

Reprinted in Jakobson, Roman O.: *Selected writings, II: word and language*, Hague, Mouton, 1971, 269; Janečka – Bláha: *Genitiv adnominální v češtině: vývoj a současný stav*, 19.

[9] Maria Koptjevskaja-Tamm: "A Piece of Cake" and "a Cup of Tea": Partitive and Pseudo-partitive Nominal Constructions in the Circum-Baltic Languages, in Ö. Dahl and M. Koptjevskaja-Tamm (eds.): *The Circum-Baltic Languages. Typology and Contact.* Vol. 2, Amsterdam, Philadelphia: John Benjamins, 2001, 523–568.

[10] Ibid., 525.

[11] Elisabeth O. Selkirk: Some remarks on noun phrase structure, in P. W. Culicover – T. Wasow – A. Akmajian (eds.): *Formal syntax*, New York, Academic Press, 1977, 285–316.

[12] Koptjevskaja-Tamm: "A Piece of Cake" and "a Cup of Tea", 527.

4. Material and methods

Within our analysis, we decided to use journalistic texts because journalism tends to reflect contemporary phenomena in the spoken language so certain developmental tendencies can be shown relatively well on these texts (e.g. Bláha 2017: 17–18).[13]

Since the relationship between the verb and nominal parts of speech is largely bound by style and the oldest journalistic texts that could be compared with contemporary texts date back to the 1840s, the analysis of the development of the adnominal genitive entails certain material difficulties. We decided to examine the development of this type of genitive in two different series of texts: on the one hand, in journalistic texts from three historical periods (1848–1860, 1882–1885, and 1915), and, on the other hand, journalistic texts published in the years 1950, 1970 and 2000. Thus, we worked with a total of six samples of journalistic texts from different periodicals, the scope of each sample being set at 20,000-word forms. The sample of the latest texts from 2000 was limited to using the Czech national corpus (syn2013pub). The reason is that we can use the Czech national corpus for this period but not for older periods; for data from older periods, we had to examine our texts manually. These periods were chosen randomly; we always wanted an interval of at least two decades between historical periods, meaning one generation.

To be more concrete, we examined the following amount of text for analysis: the corpus of texts from the three January issues of *Rudé právo* [Red Law] from 1950 contains 20,099 words, the corpus of texts from the three January issues of *Rudé právo* from 1970 contains 20,058 words, the corpus of texts from 2000 was created from 40 texts of the news section on the www.idnes.cz portal and contains a total of 20,302 words. The samples from the 1950s and 1970s are almost identical in extent, the sample of the year 2000 is approximately 200 words larger than the samples from the earlier periods, however, we do not consider this difference of approximately 1% to be statistically significant. Thus, we continue to consider these three samples from the examined periods as being equivalent in extent.

Regarding journalistic texts from the period 1848 to 1860, we examined four different newspapers, i.e. *Prostonárodní holomoucké nowiny* [Free National Newspaper of Olomouc], *Holomoucké nowiny* [Newspaper of Olomouc], *Morawský národnj list* [Moravian National Paper], and *Pražské noviny* [Prague Newspaper]. Regarding journalistic texts from the period 1882 to 1885, we examined three different newspapers, i.e. *Našinec* [Our Countryman], *Národní listy* [National Paper], and *Moravská orlice* [Moravian Eagle]. Regarding journalistic

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[13] Ondřej Bláha: Syntaktické funkce pádu v češtině (na materiálu publicistických textů z roku 1915 a 2015, in O. Uličný (ed.): *Struktura v jazyce, jazyk v komunikaci*, Liberec, Technická univerzita, 2017, 17–18.

texts from 1915, we examined three different newspapers, i.e. *Národní listy, Moravská orlice,* and *Našinec.*

5. Results

Table 1. Types of adnominal genitives in chosen journalistic texts between 1848 and 1915 with indication of frequency ranking in brackets

	1848–1860		1882–1885		1915	
	In total	%	In total	%	In total	%
AFF	159	20.5 (2)	194	23.1 (1)	302	31.9 (1)
AUT	0	0 (9)	5	0.7 (9)	0	0 (9)
BoQ	13	1.7 (8)	24	2.9 (8)	18	1.9 (8)
DEF	83	10.7 (4)	78	9.3 (5)	121	12.8 (3)
OBJ	140	18 (3)	164	19.6 (2)	214	22.6 (2)
PAR	75	9.7 (5)	74	8.9 (6)	66	7 (6)
POS	60	7.7 (7)	44	5.3 (7)	22	2.3 (7)
SUB	68	8.7 (6)	79	9.4 (4)	105	11.1 (4)
TIM	172	22.1 (1)	141	16.9 (3)	75	7.9 (5)

Table 2. Types of adnominal genitives in chosen journalistic texts between 1950 and 2000 with indication of frequency ranking in brackets

	1950		1970		2000	
	In total	%	In total	%	In total	%
AFF	786	44.2 (1)	829	50.7 (1)	557	48.3 (1)
AUT	44	2.5 (6)	16	1 (7)	7	0.6 (9)
BoQ	23	1.3 (7)	40	2.4 (6)	20	1.7 (7)
DEF	151	8.5 (4)	129	7.9 (4)	137	11.9 (3)
OBJ	449	25.3 (2)	348	21.3 (2)	218	18.9 (2)
PAR	77	4.3 (5)	58	3.5 (5)	50	4.3 (5)
POS	0	0 (9)	0	0 (9)	22	1.9 (6)
SUB	212	11.9 (3)	204	12.5 (3)	123	10.7 (4)
TIM	14	0.8 (8)	11	0.7 (8)	14	1.2 (8)

Explanatory note:
AFF = genitive of affiliation, AUT = authorial genitive, BoQ = genitive of a bearer of a quality, DEF = genitive of defining, OBJ = objective genitive, PAR = a partitive genitive = partitive, POS = possessive genitive, SUB = subjective genitive, TIM = genitive of time.

6. Discussion

We have found that in the texts of the 19th century, there are more various semantic types of the adnominal genitive (e.g. POS) and the share of individual types is more even than in the texts from the later periods; nevertheless, some other semantic types of genitives were marginal (e.g. genitive of grading or dedicative genitive, but we did not consider these types in our analysis). In general, the examined texts showed decreased partitivity expressed by the adnominal genitive (Janečka & Bláha 2020: 33).[14]

When looking at Table 1, we can see that, in the first period observed, TIM is in the 1st place, since the texts were full of time data, reporting where something happened, which is not to be found in more recent journalism. The AFF is in 2nd place. This is the most general genitive category, so it is not surprising that this subtype is the second most frequent, similarly to the very general DEF taking 4th place.

Rather than the originator of the event, something that is affected by the event was reported, so OBJ taking 3rd place was more frequent than SUB taking 6th place. Thus, little emphasis was placed on the originator of the event. There was also a lot of reference to the ownership of something by someone expressed by POS, taking 7th place. BoQ is more of a marginal type. After all, there were occasional reports about subjects bearing some characteristic, e.g. when someone was missing, and it was necessary to describe this person in the newspapers.

In the next observed period, TIM and POS decrease more significantly. On the contrary, AFF, OBJ and SUB subtypes increase. In the last observed period, SUB, OBJ, AFF, and DEF still increased. On the contrary, the frequency of POS and TIM increasingly drops, just as affiliation increases significantly. Concerning PAR, it only slightly decreases throughout these earlier periods.

When looking at Table 2, we can see that AFF clearly leads, so the tendency continues from the first period observed. DEF, as another general type of genitive, is in 4th place and in 3rd place in the last period. Subtypes OBJ and SUB hold the other two places among the first four, i.e. the emphasis is on the originator of the action, as well as on the action caused by the originator. PAR is in 5th place (having a similar position in Table 1 for the first three periods), with AUT and BoQ marginally present. Subtype AUT is found there because it is often reported in directives, decrees, or written statements issued by politicians. BoQ is present there for a similar reason as in texts from the 19th century, and from the beginning of the 20th century, but also, more precisely, due to an emphasis on references to the characteristics of ordinary people, workers, etc., i.e. their daily activities in "building a society".

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[14] Janečka – Bláha: Genitiv adnominální v češtině: vývoj a současný stav, 33.

In texts from the year 2000, POS was identified in 22 occurrences, representing 1.9 % of the total number of adnominal genitives, but not, curiously, in 1950 and 1970. Thus, this fact could be a downward trend, traceable from Table 1 (for a more detailed analysis see Bláha 2017), if it were not for the most recently observed period, i.e. the year 2000.[15]

Both SUB and OBJ weaken slightly, more in terms of absolute frequency than in percentage terms, i.e. the emphasis is shifting concerning the originator of the event, as well as to the thing affected by the event. Nevertheless, subtype SUB shows a smaller drop than subtype OBJ, with its share increasing even in the middle period. Interestingly, in 1970, AFF was at its highest point in 1970, regarding the number of occurrences as well as percentage. DEF is relatively constant after a slight drop in the middle part; in 2000 it almost reverts to the value in the first part. AUT and BoQ are decreasing in the last period. Interestingly, the share of PAR in 2000 and 1950 is 4.3 % of the total number, while its absolute number in 2000 is only 50 compared to 77 in 1950. At the same time, 77 occurrences mean the highest number of PAR in all the observed periods.

We tried to analyze the formal and semantic diversity of constructions expressing partitivity, i.e. to select all possible PARs from 1848 to 2000. However, we did not find them to be significantly different formally or semantically. Examples are given below:

Examples from the older periods

pluk	*pevnostního*	*dělostřelectva*
regiment.NOM.SG	fortress.GEN.SG	artillery.GEN.SG

‘regiment of fortress artillery’

většina	*italského*	*obyvatelstva*
most.NOM.SG	Italian.GEN.SG	population.GEN.SG

‘most of the Italian population’

pytel	*mouky*
sack.NOM.SG	flour.GEN.SG

‘a sack of flour’

Examples from the more recent periods

část	*domu*
part.NOM.SG	house.GEN.SG

‘part of the house’

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[15] Bláha: Syntaktické funkce pádu v češtině (na materiálu publicistických textů z roku 1915 a 2015.

kus   *cesty*
part.NOM.SG   road.GEN.SG
　　　'part of the road'

polovina   *zadržených*   *demonstrantů*
half.NOM.SG   arrested.GEN.PL   protester.GEN.PL
　　　　　'a half of arrested protesters'

We can probably claim that concrete names were more often used in place of a controlling constituent in texts from the 19th century and from the beginning of the 20th century. In texts from the second half of the 20th century, e.g. indefinite numerals are more often used in place of a controlling constituent. Even though it is possible to mention the fact that the frequency of the partitive is slightly increasing in time, i.e. maybe it is replaced by some other construction, we still do not know what exactly could compete with the partitive on a similar principle e.g. 'house of my father' / 'my father's house', when discussing the concurrence of the possessive genitive/possessive adjective. Thus, this possible competition may be one of the research topics for future investigation.

Considering the differentiation between PC and PPC established by Selkirk (1977) and examined in detail in many Indo-European languages by Koptjevskaja-Tamm (2001), we do not see a significant difference in using these two types between texts chosen from the 19th century and from the beginning of the 20th century on the one hand, and texts chosen form the second half of 20th century on the other hand.[16] We can only claim that PC slightly predominate in earlier as well as in the more recent texts because, in journalistic texts, authors usually report on parts of a more or less specific whole, e.g. part of the population of a certain country, part of the electorate, part of the members of a political party, etc.

7. Conclusion

Based on the data analysis, we found, on the one hand, that in our journalistic texts from the 19th century, there is a strong tendency to prefer some semantic types of the adnominal genitive (namely AFF, DEF, OBJ, and TIM – this last one especially in the first two subperiods). The reasons for this state are not clear yet and it requires further research. On the other hand, other semantic types of genitives were already peripheral at this time, and they remain peripheral even in more recent texts (genitive of grading, genitive of product,

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[16] Selkirk: Some remarks on noun phrase structure; Koptjevskaja-Tamm: "A Piece of Cake" and "a Cup of Tea".

or dedicative genitive). Compared to the earlier texts, we can also consider TIM as peripheral in the more recent texts. Particularly in our journalistic texts between 1848 and 1915, an increase in various actant subtypes of the adnominal genitive was observed. This fact can be associated with the formalization of sentence structure in Czech, or with functional case specialization. Based on the data analysis, we showed that it is possible to observe a decrease in the partitivity expressed by the adnominal genitive in journalism and possessiveness in particular. The highest frequency is detectable in the oldest examined texts, and the lowest frequency in the most recent texts. We also showed that there is a strong increase in the use of the genitive of affiliation in the more recent examined texts.

List of abbreviations

GEN.SG – Genitive Singular
GEN.PL – Genitive Plural
NOM.SG – Nominative Singular
PC – Partitive Construction
PPC – Pseudo-partitive construction

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