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## The Spread of the Phrasal clitic *sa* in Faroese

### 1 Introduction

The *sa* clitic is usually ignored in prescriptive Faroese grammars as in the influential grammar of J. Dahl (1908), and it is not mentioned at all in others, like Davidsen & Mikkelsen (1993; 2011) and Andreasen & Dahl (1997). It is first mentioned in Lockwood (1964[1977]: 106).<sup>1</sup> The most extensive treatment of *sa* is in Staksberg (1996), who is the first to argue, to my knowledge, that *sa* is a phrasal clitic; the presentation in Thráinsson et al. (2004/2012: 64–65) builds to some extent on Staksberg's analysis and description, but they have added more examples and provide a

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<sup>1</sup> Lockwood (1964: 106) has the forms *Jákupsa(r)*, *Marjunsar(r)*, *Ólavsa(r)*, *Altasa(r)*, *Tórasa(r)* and *Siggusa(r)* with an optional word final *r*. These forms, with word final *r*, are unknown to the author of the article, a native speaker of Faroese, and no one I have consulted is familiar with a form like *Ólavsar*. The *-sar* ending is not used in spoken Faroese, but can be found in place names like *Jóannesargerði* 'J. fenced-in plot of land'. These forms are normalized from *Jóannesa gerði* to *Jóannesar-* with addition of *r*, to make the construction look more like a proper genitive ending as in *sonar* 'son-GEN.SG.' An anonymous reviewer suggests that *sar* could have its origin in old compounds from the time when the genitive compounds were natural and productive in Faroese. I doubt this is the case, as *r* is often falsely inserted in the historical genitive as *til jóla* > *til jólar* 'to Christmas'. A form like *Jóannesar-* is rather a normalized form. Additionally it is well known that syntactic rules can manipulate the elements inside phrases but they cannot manipulate the elements inside words (Katamba, 1993: 299–300). Compounds belong to morphology, clitics to syntax, and the *sa* clitic does not belong to the morphological component of grammar.

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**Abstract:** In Faroese the phrasal clitic *sa* is used in possessive constructions like *Jákup=sa skegg* 'Jákup's beard'. Originally the clitic could only be attached to kinship nouns or proper nouns of persons and other nouns with a similar function, but in recent years the *sa* has spread to other host nouns like animate, human nouns and pronouns partly as the result of convergence. This article explores the origin of *-sa*. It will be posited that a form like *hansa* 'his' in the Ballad Language in all likelihood shows that the old genitive plural ending *a* at some point in the history of Faroese was productive.

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description of the syntax of the *sa*-constructions in Modern Faroese. The syntax of *sa*-clitic is also discussed in Einar F. Sigurðsson (2009a/b) and in Einar F. Sigurðsson (2013).

In the following I will give a short overview of the *sa* clitic in Faroese. Before I proceed to the current use of *sa* in section 4, I will give a short overview of possessive constructions in Faroese; see section 2. The possible origin of *sa* is discussed in section 3. In section 5 I will present the results from a grammaticality judgment test carried out by students at *Føroyamálsdeildin* (Department of Faroese) as part of their course in Field Work between Feb. and Apr. 2015. Finally there is a discussion in 5.1 and a conclusion in section 6.

### 1.1 The *sa* clitic

The genitive is not syntactically productive anymore in Faroese and the language has developed different strategies for expressing possession; see section 2 *Possessive Constructions in Faroese. A short Overview*. One of these strategies is a possessive construction with the phrasal clitic *sa*, which, originally, could only be attached to a kinship noun or to ‘proper names of persons and other nouns with a similar function’ (Thráinsson, 2004/2012: 64–65); see also Lockwood (1977: 106) and Staksberg (1996). The examples in (1) illustrate the use of *sa* in colloquial speech. I have concentrated on examples where the nature of the host noun is clear. For more on the syntax of *sa*, I refer the reader to Thráinsson et al. (2004/2012: 64–65; 249–251) and Einar F. Sigurðsson (2013).

- (1) a. [*Mammu*]=*sa*<sup>2</sup> *bilur*  
           mother-OBL=*sa* car  
           ‘Mother’s car’
- b. [*Ólavur*]=*sa* *bilur*  
           Ólavur-NOM=*sa* car  
           ‘Ólavur’s car’
- c. [*Jákup har Uppi*]=*sa* *bilur*  
           Jákup-NOM/ACC there Up=*sa* car  
           ‘The car of Jákup who lives up in the village’
- d. *Hetta er* [*Beintu og Róa*]=*sa* *hús*  
           this is Beinta-OBL and Rói-OBL =*sa* house  
           ‘This is the house of Beinta and Rói’

<sup>2</sup> In the examples clitic boundaries are marked by equals sign, as required in the *Leipzig Glossing Rules*. This is done both in the object language, Faroese, and in the gloss.

- e. *Snar=sa*                      *skál*  
 Snar-NOM/ACC =sa   bowl  
 'Snar's bowl'

(Staksberg, 1996)

The example in (1a) shows that the clitic is attached to an oblique case of a weak noun like *mamma*-NOM/*mammu*-OBL in the singular. Weak masculine nouns end in *i* in the nominative (*granni* 'neighbour'), and in *a* in the oblique cases in the singular: *granna* 'neighbour'. Weak feminine nouns end in *a* in the nominative (*mamma* 'mother'), and *u* in the oblique cases in the singular, *mammu* 'mother', and weak neuter nouns end in *a* in the singular, *eyga* 'eye'. In (1b) the *sa* is added to the nominative ending *ur*, a very common practice, although *Ólav=sa* seems to be possible according to Thráinsson et al. (2004/2012: 250), who say that although *Ólav=sa* may look like the accusative of *Ólavur*, this is not the case since the name with the form *Ólav* also exist in the nominative.

The sentences in (1c) and (1d) illustrate that *sa* is a phrasal clitic, as it is attached to the whole phrase in (1c) [*Jákup har Uppi*]=*sa* and in (1d), [*Beintu og Róa*]=*sa*. If *sa* was a head marker, it should be possible to attach it to the head of the phrase. The ungrammaticality of \**Jákup=sa har Uppi hús* 'Jákup's-from-up-Yonder' shows that this is not the case. Similarly one might expect that \**Beintu=sa og Róa=sa hús* was grammatical. In this case the -*sa* clitic is added to the heads *Beintu* and *Róa*, and it is not possible to do so. Note that one can say *Beintu=sa og Róa=sa hús* in the sense 'Beinta's house and Rói's house', that is, two different houses.

The example in (1e) shows further use of *sa* with proper nouns (a dog's name), but note that it cannot be added to all proper nouns. Something like \**Ísland=sa framtíð* 'Iceland's future' is not heard in the colloquial language.<sup>3</sup>

Thráinsson et al. (2004/2012) mentioned in a footnote that *sa* was heard with the name of a hotel in the centre of Tórshavn, the capital of the Faroe Islands, and they observe that this suggests that this type of construction may be spreading:

- (2) *Hetta var í Hotell Hafnia=sa tíð*  
 this was in Hotel Hafnia=sa time-DAT  
 'This was during the time of Hotel Hafnia'

<sup>3</sup> Proper nouns refer to single words like *Snar* 'Fast', a dog's name, and *Jógvan* 'John'. Proper names include all proper nouns (in their primary applications) as well as noun phrases as [NP *Jákup har Uppi*]=*sa bilur* lit.: 'Jákup there Up's car'.

Petersen & Adams (2009) mention the word form *teirra=sa* lit.: their=sa ‘their’ with addition of *sa* to a personal pronoun and Thráinsson et al. (2004/2012: 251) mention *systir mín=sa vegna* lit.: sister mine=sa because of ‘because of my sister’ where *sa* is added to a determiner phrase that contains a possessive pronoun. In colloquial Faroese *okkara=sa* ‘our’ and *tykkara=sa* ‘your’ is also possible.

The word order is usually as in (1) and (2), that is possessor + possessed, but there are examples with the opposite word order, possessed + possessor in *Staðarnavnasavnið* (Collections of Place Names at the Department of Faroese):

- (3) a. *Dráttur* *Tummas=sa*<sup>4</sup>  
           pulling-place-NOM Tummas=sa  
           ‘Tummas’ slipway’
- b. *Keksið* *Jákup=sa*  
           fold-DEF-NOM Jákup=sa  
           ‘Jákup’s fold’

The word order possessed + possessor is in other place names like these two from Sandavágur: *Seiðaberg Magnus Heimara* lit.: fishing-place on the shore Magnus-ACC Nearest-to-the-Home = ‘The fishing place of Magnus that is closer to the village’ and *Seiðaberg Magnus Ytra* lit.: fishing-place on the shore Magnus-ACC Outer = ‘The fishing place of Magnus that is further out from the village’. Both examples are with accusative of possession, see Lockwood (1977: 103), as also in *troyggja Einar* lit.: sweater-NOM Einar-ACC ‘Einar’s sweater’ and *sonur norska kongin* lit.: son-NOM Norwegian-ACC king-ACC ‘son of the Norwegian king’, see section 2, where there is a short overview of possessive constructions in Faroese. Adding *sa* to an accusative of possession construction in order

<sup>4</sup> The noun *dráttur* refers to a place where boats are pulled on land. Other examples in *Staðarnavnasavnið* with the word order possessed + possessor are: *Trøð Tummas Petur=sa* lit.: piece of land fenced in-NOM Tummas Petur=sa ‘Tummas Petur=sa piece of fenced in land’; *grymma Niklas=sa* lit. shoal-NOM Niklas=sa ‘Niklas’s shoal’; *Torvan Tjørnuvíks-Jógvan=sa* lit.: grassy patch on a rock surface Tjørnuvík.NPLLE-Jógvan=sa, which means: ‘Tjørnuvíks-Jógvan’s grassy patch on a rock surface’; NPLLE is an abbreviation of ‘non-paradigmatic linking element’ (Petersen & Szczepaniak, 2014); it is a non-paradigmatic linking element, as the paradigmatic linking element should be *ar* as *vík* is a strong feminine noun; *ryggjin Jákup=sa* lit.: ridge-NOM Jákup=sa ‘Jákup’s ridge’; *Trøð Tummas Petur=sa* lit.: Piece of land fenced in-NOM Tummas Petur=sa ‘Tummas Petur’s piece of land that is fenced in’; *skarðið við Steini Magnus=sa* lit.: pass-DEF-NOM at stone-DAT Magnus=sa ‘The Pass at Magnus’s Stone’. These constructions were originally accusative of possession constructions: *Trøð Tummas Petur* lit.: piece of land fenced in-NOM Tummas Petur-ACC; *-sa* is simply added to highlight possession.

to highlight possession is not new in Faroese, as I will show when I discuss an example from Schrøter's translation of Matthew from 1823.

In Petersen (2015) further examples with the *sa*-clitic are presented, where the host is something other than a proper noun or a kinship noun. An example is *Tað er SEV=sa ábyrgd* lit.: it is SEV=sa responsibility-NOM = 'it is the responsibility of SEV', where SEV<sup>5</sup> is the company that provides the islands with electrical power.

## 2 Possessive Constructions in Faroese.

### A short Overview

Here is a very short overview of possessive constructions in Faroese. For more information I refer the reader to Thráinsson et al. (2004/2012) and the references they cite, but it should be noted that Faroese possessive constructions require more careful, in-depth study, with emphasis on the historical development and the distribution in the spoken and written language of today.

Adnominal genitives do not exist in Faroese as shown in (4), where (b) and (c) are examples with definite genitives.

- (4) a. \**Her eru ríks mans hús*  
here are rich-GEN man-GEN house-NOM  
'Here is the house of a rich man'
- b. \**tak húsins*  
roof house-DEF-GEN  
'The roof of the house'
- c. \**hali kúgvárinna*  
tail cow-DEF-GEN  
'The tail of the cow'
- (Thráinsson et al., 2004/2012: 63)

Although the sentences in (4) are absent from spoken Faroese and sound strange, adnominal genitives in fixed expressions with the historical genitive exist, e.g. *ársins tíð* lit.: year-DEF-GEN time-NOM = 'time of the year',

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<sup>5</sup> SEV, an abbreviation of Streymoy-Eysturoy-Vágar, can formally be in the nominative, the accusative or the dative, though the case here is not relevant for the points being made in this paper.

*landsins siður* lit.: country-DEF-GEN custom-NOM ‘custom of the country’ and *á mansins ævi* lit.: on man-DEF-GEN life-span-DAT ‘as long as one lives’.

Barnes & Weyhe (1994: 207–208) mention *rikisins ovasta umboð* ‘the kingdom’s foremost representative’, but such constructions are revitalized and modelled on Icelandic/Old Norse. They are supported by language contact with the Danish phrase *rigets øverste repræsentant* ‘the kingdom’s foremost representative’ and restricted to written Faroese.

Kinship relations are expressed as in (5), which is an example of accusative of possession<sup>6</sup>:

- (5) a. *Sonur norska kongin*  
       son-NOM Norwegian-ACC king-ACC  
       ‘Son of the Norwegian king’
- b. *Mamma Kjartan*<sup>7</sup>  
       mother-NOM Kjartan-ACC  
       ‘Kjartan’s mother’

Barnes & Weyhe (1994: 208) note that a construction like (5b) has been losing ground in the last 40–50 years, and they also mention that earlier it was not restricted to personal relationships, although they do not give any examples. Weyhe (personal communication, see also Weyhe, 2015: 427) says that in the dialect of Suðuroy one could hear accusative of possession-constructions like *troyggja Einar* lit.: sweater-NOM Einar-ACC ‘Einar’s sweater’ and *bátur Petur* lit.: boat-NOM Petur-ACC ‘Peter’s boat’. Furthermore he points to the place name in Fugloy (an island): *Hav Hálvdan Úlvsson* lit.: heavy stone-to-lift-NOM Hálvdan Úlvsson-ACC ‘Hálvdan Úlvsson’s stone’.<sup>8</sup> Another example with *hav* ‘heavy stone to

<sup>6</sup> The term ‘accusative of possession’ is from Lockwood (1977: 103). He mentions *pápi drongin* lit. father NOM boy-DEF-ACC ‘the boy’s father’, *mamma brúðrina* lit.: mother-NOM bride-DEF-ACC ‘the bride’s mother’, *abbi lítla Jógvan* lit.: grandfather-NOM little-DEF-ACC Jógvan-ACC ‘little John’s grandfather’ and *døtur keypmannin* lit.: daughters-NOM grocer-DEF-ACC ‘the shop-keeper’s daughters’. In all these cases, the postnominal noun is in the accusative, and they are not recent, as Jakobsen (1898–1901: XLV) has *pápi gentuna* lit.: father-NOM girl-DEF-ACC ‘the girl’s father’. The place-name *Hav Hálvdan Úlvsson* ‘Hálvdan Úlvsson’s stone’ was written down by around 1850 by Hans David Matras according to Ei. Weyhe. Hammershaimb (1846: 315) does also have examples of accusative of possession.

<sup>7</sup> *Kjartan* can formally be in the nominative or the accusative. Based on the example in (5a), it is obvious *Kjartan* in this construction is in the accusative.

<sup>8</sup> This particular name has been normalized to *Hav Hálvdan Úlvssonar* with the historical *ar* genitive ending in *Staðarnavnasavnið*. Unfortunately such corrections are frequently done by some of the collectors, and therefore the collection of place-names has to be handled with care.

lift' is *Hav Tofta-Katrin* lit.: stone-NOM Tofta-Katrin-ACC 'Tofta-Katrin's stone' in the village Viðareiði, and I have mentioned the place-names in Sandavágur *Seiðaberg Magnus* lit.: fishing-place-NOM Magnus-ACC' above which also is an example of accusative of possession. In section 3, where I discuss the origin of *sa*, I have an example from Schrøter's translation of the Gospel of Matthew from 1823. He translates in Matt. 8:14 *kom inn í hús Petur=sa* lit.: came in into house-ACC Peter-ACC=*sa* 'came into Peter's house'. This is, I will argue, originally an accusative of possession construction *hús Petur* lit.: house Peter-ACC 'Peter's house', just like *troyggja Einar* lit. sweater-NOM Einar-ACC 'Einar's sweater'. In *hús Petur* 'Peter's house' speakers have added *sa* in order to highlight possession.

In spoken Faroese, kinship relations like the one in (5b) are often expressed with the preposition *til* + accusative, *mamma til Kjartan* lit.: mother to Kjartan-ACC 'Kjartan's mother'. In this context it is worth noting that the proper name *Kjartan* in (5b) is in the accusative instead of an expected genitive, *til Kjartans*, as the preposition *til* used to govern the genitive, (Hamre, 1961; Thráinsson et al., 2004/2012: 176–180; Steintún, 2013). The other prepositions that governed the genitive are: *innan* 'inside', *uttan* 'outside', (*i*)*millum* 'between', the aforementioned *til* 'to', and *vegna* 'because of', which is also a postposition (Thráinsson et al. 2004/2012: 176–180).<sup>9</sup>

The most common way of expressing possession is with the preposition *hjá* 'with' as in (6a). Other possessive prepositional uses are presented in (6) as well. Here *at* 'to' and *til* 'to' are used to denote kinship relations, and *á* 'on' and *í* 'in' are used to denote inalienable possession (Thráinsson et al. 2004/2012: 62–63):

- (6) a. *báturin hjá mær*  
boat-DEF-NOM at me-DAT  
'my boat'
- b. *abbi at dreinginum*  
granddad-NOM at boy-DEF-DAT  
'The grandfather of the boy'
- c. *mamma til Kjartan*  
mother-NOM to Kjartan-ACC  
'Kjartan's mother'

<sup>9</sup> In the case of *innan* + NP and *uttan* + NP there is univerbation of the preposition + noun phrase so that for example [<sub>PP</sub> *innan* [<sub>NP</sub> *veggja*]] lit.: inside walls-GEN has changed category to an adverb *innanveggja* 'inside'.

- d. *hárið á gentuni*  
 hair-DEF-NOM on girl-DEF-DAT  
 'The girl's hair'
- e. *eyguni í dreinginum*  
 eye-DEF-NOM in boy-DEF-DAT  
 'The boy's eye'
- f. *motorurin í bilinum*  
 engine-DEF-NOM in car-DEF-DAT  
 'the engine of the car'
- g. *takið á húsinum*  
 roof-DEF-NOM on house-DEF-DAT  
 'The roof of the house'

Of these the *hjá* 'at; with' possessive prepositional construction is becoming more and more frequent so that it is not uncommon to hear e.g. *hárið hjá mær* lit.: hair-DEF-NOM at me.DAT 'my hair' (*Teldutøka tekstsavnið Føroyamálsdeildarinnar* = a text database at the Department of Faroese) for *hárið á mær* lit.: hair-DEF-NOM on me-DAT 'my hair'. See also Thráinsson (2015: 202–206).

Possessive pronouns usually precede the noun they modify in spoken Faroese, unless the noun is a kinship noun. This word order is illustrated in (7) from Petersen (2010: 157), which builds on the FADAC<sup>10</sup> database in Hamburg:

- (7) a. *...umvera pápa sín*  
 avoid father-ACC his-GEN  
 b. *...mín hundur*  
 ...my-NOM dog-NOM  
 ...'my dog'

Faroese has five indeclinable possessive pronouns *hansara* 'his', *hennara* 'her', *okkara* 'ours', *tykkara* 'yours' and *teirra* 'their' as in:

- (8) a. *Vit eiga ein bil. Hetta er okkara bilur*  
 we have a car. This is our car-NOM-MASC  
 'We have a car. This is our car'

<sup>10</sup> The FADAC database contains informal interviews with young speakers, speakers of the mid generation and speakers that are 70+. They speak Faroese and Faro-Danish. For more information on FADAC see Petersen (2010) and the following link: <http://www.uni-hamburg.de/sfb538/k8daenisch.html>.



- b. *Vit eiga eina gentu. Vit hjálpa okkara gentu*  
 we have a girl. We help our girl-DAT-FEM  
 ‘We have a girl. We help our girl’
- c. *Vit eiga eitt skip. Vit síggja okkara skip*  
 we have a ship. We see our ship-ACC-NEUT  
 ‘We have a ship. We see our ship’

In Old Norse the pronoun agreed with the noun it modified (Katrín Axelsdóttir, 2002). Faroese does not show any agreement as the examples in (8) show.

To summarize: Modifying genitive forms are not part of the grammar of speakers of Faroese. Kinship relations are expressed with the accusative; otherwise there are different possessive prepositional constructions, of which *hjá* ‘at; with’ is gaining ground as pointed out in Höskuldur Thráinsson (2015).

In spoken Faroese, the word order is possessive pronoun + noun (*mín bilur* ‘my car’) unless the head noun is a kinship noun, where the word order is noun + possessive pronoun (*mamma mín* lit.: mother mine ‘my mother’). Both word orders can be found in written Faroese (Barnes, 2002).

How exactly labour is divided between all the possessive constructions in Faroese is a matter of further investigation, where the diachronic and synchronic dimensions must be taken into consideration.

### 3 The possible common Origin of *sa* and the Forms of the Personal Pronoun *hansara* ‘his’, *hennara* ‘her’, *okkara* ‘our’, *tykkara* ‘your’

In colloquial Faroese *sa* can sometimes be added to personal pronouns like *teirra* ‘their’ and *okkara* ‘our’, presumably because they are not felt to be possessive genitives anymore:

- (9) a. *okkara=sa bilur*  
 our car
- b. *tykkara=sa bilur*  
 your car

In a similar vein the genitive plural marker *a* was added to older Faroese *okkar* ‘our’ and e.g. *hennar* ‘her’ and *hans* ‘his’ as a possessive marker during a time when the genitive was in decline:

- (10) a. *okkar-a bátur*  
           our       boat  
       b. *hennar-a maður*  
           her       husband  
       c. *hans-a kona*  
           his       wife

The forms *okkara* ‘our’ and *hennara* ‘her’ are the forms in Modern Faroese, and one should expect to find *hansa* in older Faroese, for example the ballads.

Faroese does not have many written records, but one place to look for possible changes and older language forms is in the ballads, of which the oldest date back to the Middle Ages. I have looked through Svabo’s collection of ballads from 1781 to 1782. All in all, there are 56 ballads that were edited in their original form by Matras in 1939. Svabo used, in his own words, the rule of Quintilian to ‘write as one speaks’ (Matras 1970: X), and his phonemic alphabet is nuanced and quite an achievement, as this was the first time Faroese was written since 1400. In Svabo’s manuscript interesting forms of the personal pronoun in the third person singular are found. The actual forms are given in Table 1, and among them are *hansa* ‘his’ and *henna* ‘her’.

Svabo uses *hans* (Old Norse *hans* ‘his’), *hansa*, *hansara* (Modern Faroese *hansara* ‘his’). The form *hansar* is only found once, and it is used for rhythmic reasons, hence I will leave it out of the present discussion

Table 1. The distribution of the personal pronoun in the third person singular in Svabo’s manuscript. \_\_C stands for ‘in front of a consonant’; \_\_V stands for ‘in front of a vowel’, and verse\_\_# means verse-finally.

	__C	__V	verse__#	Translation
<i>hans</i>	64	12	36	‘his’
<i>hansa</i>	17	2	8	‘his’
<i>hansara</i>	11	0	0	‘his’
<i>hansar</i>	1	0	0	‘his’
<i>hennar</i>	0	0	0	‘her’
<i>henna</i>	9	1	3	‘her’
<i>hennara</i>	13	1	0	‘her’
<i>hennas</i>	1	0	0	‘her’

(it is in *Ánananiasartáttur* verse 64; in verse 63 he has *hansara*). In the feminine Svabo uses *henna* as well as *hennara* (Modern Faroese *hennara* ‘her’) and once *hennas* ‘her’. Note that *hennar* (Old Norse *hennar*) is nowhere to be found in the ballads of Svabo, and Weyhe (2011: 74) mentions that *hans* ‘his’ and *hansara* ‘his’ are frequent in a manuscript from 1819, but he did not, as is the case with my findings in Svabo’s manuscript, find *hennar* (< Old Norse *hennar* ‘her’), only *hennara* ‘her’.

Thráinsson et al. (2004/2012: 411) explain the origin of *sa* and *hansara* ‘his’ and *hennara* ‘her’ as the result of sandhi-rules. They asserted that the personal pronoun in the feminine had the form *hennar* in front of vowels and *henna* ‘her’ in front of words that began in a consonant. Furthermore they say that this pattern spread to the masculine forms of the personal pronoun, so that *hans* ‘his’ would be used before vowels and *hansa* ‘his’ before consonants. This is in turn copied by a proper name like *Jógvans* + vowel and *Jógvansa* + consonant. A later development is *hennar* ‘her’ to *hennara* ‘her’ and *hansa* to *hansara* ‘his’ in Modern Faroese where *hansara* ‘his’ is an analogical form based on *hennara* ‘her’.

This explanation, although plausible, can be rejected since *henna* + vowel (expect: *hennar* + vowel according to Thráinsson et al. (ibid.)) and *hansa* + vowel (expect: *hansar* + vowel according to Thráinsson et al. (ibid.)) are indeed encountered in the ballads as shown in Table 1. Note furthermore that *hennar* (Old Norse *hennar*) ‘her’ is nowhere in Svabo’s ballads or in the manuscripts that Weyhe (2011) edited. The form *hennar* is the exact form we should expect to find in front of words beginning with vowels according to the explanation in Thráinsson et al. (2004/2012). Additionally, one should presumably not expect to have *hansa* ‘his’ and *henna* ‘her’ in final position in the ballad verses, although this position is not mentioned at all in Thráinsson et al. (2004/2012).

Examples from Svabo with *hansa* ‘his’ and *henna* ‘her’ in front of words that begin with a vowel are shown in (11). The page numbers refer to the pages in Matras (1939):

- (11) a. *Hansa er brúður klædd so bald...* (verse 25, page 59)  
           his is bride dressed so well  
           ‘His bride is so well dressed’
- b. *hann tók henna orð við reiði* (verse 211, page 235)  
           he took her word with anger
- c. *...so fór hansa yndi at...*, (verse 75, page 502)  
           ...so went his love that...

The *sa* clitic is first attested in the *táttur* ‘satirical ballad’ *Jákupsa skegg* ‘Jacob’s beard’. According to Eivind Weyhe (p.c.), a specialist in Faroese Ballads, *Jákupsa skegg* dates back to the mid 1700s. He bases his dating on the persons that are mentioned in the satirical ballad. The examples show that the *sa* clitic can be dated back to at least the middle of the eighteenth-century.

The next occurrences I have found with *sa* are in Schrøter’s translation of the Gospel of Matthew from 1823. Curiously the word order is possessed + possessor, not possessor + possessed, in 16 cases opposite to 5 cases with the word order possessor=*sa* + possessed.

- (12) ...kom inn í hús *Petur=sa* (Matt. 8:14)  
 ...came in in house ACC Peter-ACC=*sa*  
 ‘came into Peter’s house’

Braunmüller (2015) claims that the origin of Faroese *sa* is the genitive singular *s*, which ‘received an emphasising weak-tone vowel in order ‘[to] highlight the possessor more than an ordinary *s*-suffix could have done’ (ibid.: 6). The idea is that speakers can add ‘more phonological weight and distinctiveness to the possessor in *Ólavur=sa bilur* versus *Ólav=s bilur*’ ‘Ólav’s car’.

This is not impossible, but not quite correct; the choice did not fall on the vowel *a* by coincidence. After all, speakers could just as well choose *i* or *u*, two very common unstressed vowels in Faroese. The origin of *sa* is the genitive plural ending *a* that was used to emphasize the possessor, so that e.g. older Faroese *okkar bátur* became *okkara bátur* ‘our boat’. This must have happened at a time when *okkar bátur* ‘our boat’ was not felt to be a possessive genitive, but at the same time the old genitive plural *-a* must have had some possessive meaning, and it was used as a possessive marker just as in South Swedish, where *a* is used as a morphological marker on names in simplex words like *Erik-a* ‘Erik’s’ and *s* as a phrasal clitic: *Erik i Nygård-s* ‘Eric in Nygård’s’ (Dialect A). Speakers of dialect B use the genitive *a* with different variants as a phrasal clitic (Josefsson, 2009: 215).<sup>11</sup> Josefsson does not claim that the genitive *-a* is derived from

<sup>11</sup> I can mention that *sa* is in the dialect of Bornholm (Danish) (Text 673, Øster Marie, speaker: J. P. Kuhre). In the transcript, line 23 /hɑj læ:zər pɑ pær=sa rydz/ = *han læser på Pær=sa ryg* he-NOM reads on Per=*sa* back-OBL = Standard Danish *han læser på Pær ryg* ‘he reads on Per’s back’. According to Wimmer (1908: 97) *sa* in the dialect of Bornholm is used especially in names of males like *Pær* and *Pær=sa*, and when the names end in *a* as in *Ola* and genitive *Olə=sa*. Names with word final *s* show up with *sa* as: *Hans*, *Jens*, *Anars*, *Mas* and gen. *Hansa*, *Jensa*, *Anarsa*, *Masa* where *-a* is added to the genitive *-s*. Compare Faroese names that end in *-s* as *Jóannesa klettur* ‘Johanne’s cliff’ (Staðarnavnasavnið ‘The Collection of Place Names’). Corresponding to Faroese *hansa* ‘his’ and *henna* ‘her’ the Bornholm-dialect has *hansa* ‘his’ and *hæna* ‘her’ (Wimmer 1908).

the plural, and many of the noun classes had a genitive form *-a(r)* in the singular with deletion of *r* to *a*, but that does not necessarily mean that the source of *sa* in Faroese is genitive singular *ar* that changed to *a*. This *a* should then combine with the singular ending *s* to *sa*. In fact *r* deletion is not what we find; instead *r* is analogically inserted as in *til bjarga* > *til bjargar* ‘to the cliffs’; *til Føroya* > *til Føroyar* ‘to the Faroe Islands’, and there is even addition of *a* in *tína vegna* ‘because of you’ and *mína vegna* ‘because of me’ for the expected forms *tín vegna* and *mín vegna* (the preposition *vegna* ‘because of’ governed the genitive). Addition of *a* is also in the the dialect of Suðuroy in *til Lopra* ‘to Lopra’ > *til Loprar-a*, *til Froðbiar* ‘to Froðba’ > *til Froðbiar-a*, *til Hvalbiar* ‘to Hvalba’ > *til Hvalbiar-a*, and the place name *við Á* ‘at the River’ (in Porkeri) *til Áar-a* for expected *til Áar*. (Ei. Weyhe, personal communication). These forms show that *a* must have been somewhat productive at some point in the history of Faroese.

My suggestion is that the development was as follows, where the third stage is essentially the stage described in Thráinsson et al. (2004/2012: 64–64) and in section 4 below.

Once speakers had *hansa orð* ‘his word’, the pattern could spread to proper names like *Jákups-a skegg* ‘Jákup’s beard’. This means that just as speakers of dialect A have *a* in South Swedish dialects as a morphological marker on names in simplex words like *Erik-a* ‘Erik’s’ (Josefsson, 2009), Faroese had *Jákups-a skegg* ‘Jákup’s beard’. There was then a phonological reanalysis of the morphological structure *Jákups-a* ‘Jákup’s’ to the unmarked CV syllable structure: *Já.kup.sa*, and from here the *sa* became the phrasal clitic we know, as in *Jákup har Uppi=sa hús* ‘Jákup there Up=sa house’. At the time of Schrøter’s writing in 1823, *-sa* had the status of a possessive marker in *hús Petur=sa* (for the expected word order

Figure 1. From *a* to *sa*

First stage	Second Stage	Third Stage
<i>-a</i> as a possessive marker on personal pronouns	<i>-a</i> added to names	Spread of <i>sa</i> ; also used as clitic
okkar-a ‘our’	Jákups-a	Jákup.sa, see section 4.
tykkar-a ‘your’		
hans-a ‘his’		
hennar-a ‘her’		

*Petur=sa hús* ‘Peter’s house’). *Hús Petur=sa* must originally have been an accusative of possession construction *hús Petur* lit.: house Peter-ACC ‘Peter’s house’, and speakers have added *sa* as *hús Petur* must have felt somewhat opaque opposite to *hús Petur=sa* ‘Peter’s house’. This is exactly the same pattern that is in place names in the modern language in *Seiðaberg Magnus* lit.: fishing-place-NOM Magnus-ACC ‘Magnus’ fishing place’ and *Trøð Hans Jákup=sa* lit.: piece-of-land-fenced in Hans Jákup=sa ‘Hans Jákup’s piece of land that is fenced in’.

The form *hansa* ‘his’ influenced *hennar* to *henna* ‘her’, and as speakers had *hansa*, *henna* and *hennara*, a masculine form *hansara* could easily be created:

- (13) *henna* : *hennara*  
*hansa* : X  
 X= *hansara*

## 4 The Current use of the *-sa* clitic

In this section I will focus on how *sa* is used in Faroese today, where I will give examples that I have heard and seen written as well.

### 4.1 The *sa* clitic added to pronouns

Petersen & Adams (2009: 249) provide an example with a pronoun + *-sa*: *teirra=sa børn* lit. their=sa children ‘their children’. This form is grammatically the same as *teirra børn* ‘their children’, where *teirra* ‘their’ is an indeclinable possessive pronoun. Adding *sa* to *teirra* does not contribute anything new to meaning of the construction; both *teirra børn* and *teirra=sa børn* have the same meaning. It should be noted that the use of *sa* with this indeclinable possessive pronoun is not uncommon in the dialect of Suðuroy. Other than *teirra=sa* I have included the examples in (14), where (14d) was uttered by a 16 year old boy in December, -14 (V. Absalonsen, personal communication).

- (14) a. [...] *teirra=sa børn*  
 their=sa children  
 ‘Their children’  
 (Petersen & Adams, 2009: 249)

- b. [...] *fyri tykkum øll=sa skyld*  
 for you-ACC all-ACC =sa sak-ACC  
 ‘For the sake of you all’  
 (Einar F. Sigurðsson, 2009: 8)
- c. [...] *og man[n] ikki “snakkar” hinum=sa høvuðssprog*  
 and one not talks other-DAT =sa main language-ACC  
 ‘... and you don’t talk the other person’s language ...’  
 (Einar F. Sigurðsson, 2009: 8)
- d. *So kann mann byggja, har sum annara=sa resursir eru*  
 so can one build there where other=s resources-NOM are  
 ‘Then one can build there where someone else’s resources  
 are’
- e. [...] *onnur=sa viðurskipti*  
 other=s business-NOM  
 ‘other people’s business’  
 (Einar F. Sigurðsson, 2013)

In (14b) the preposition *fyri* ‘for’ governs the accusative, and this is the case of the host, where there is agreement between *tykkum*-ACC and *øll*-ACC. The nominative form is *tey øll* ‘they all’ and the dative is *tykkum øllum* ‘them all’. In (14c) *hinum* ‘the other’ is in the dative. The verb *snakka* ‘to talk’ is borrowed from Danish and is synonymous with *tosa* ‘to talk’, a verb that governs the accusative in Faroese, as in *eg tosi føroyskt* lit.: I speak Faroese-ACC. I shall return to (14c) in section 5.1.

#### 4.2 The *sa* clitic added to Names of Institutions/Organizations

Thráinsson et al. (2004/2012) mentioned as an example of the spread of *-sa* in *hetta var í Hotell Hafnia=sa tíð* lit.: this was in hotel Hafnia=s time-DAT ‘This was during the time of Hotel Hafnia’. The example shows that the *sa* clitic can be attached to hosts other than kinship nouns or proper nouns of persons and other nouns with a similar function. In (15) I have included *Hotel Hafnia* and other examples that I have heard and noticed in spoken Faroese. Note that the second noun is *síðu* ‘side’ in four of the examples in (15) of which three are with the preposition *frá* ‘from’: [PP *frá* ‘from’ NOUN=s + *síðu*] ‘from NOUN’s side’. I mention the construction [PP *frá* NOUN=s *síðu*] again in 5.1, as it is very likely that we are dealing with influence from Danish here, where the Faroese construction builds on Danish [PP *fra* NOUNs *side*].

- (15) a. [...] *í HB=sa høgri síðu*  
           ... in HB=sa right side-DAT  
           ‘...on the right half of HB’s football field’  
           (Rás 2. Fótbóltsútvarpið á ólavssøku, 2012)
- b. *Hetta var í Hotell Hafnia=sa tíð*  
       this was in Hotel Hafnia=sa time-DAT  
       ‘This was during the time of Hotel Hafnia’  
       (Thráinsson et al. 2004/2012: 64, fn. 5)
- c. [...] *eg kenni ikki tølini, men eg havi hoyrt frá ALS=sa síðu...*  
       I know not numbers, but I have heard from ALS=sa side-DAT  
       ‘I do not know the numbers, but I have heard from the Unemployment Assurance...’
- d. [...] *so vilja vit frá Føroya Arbeidsgevara=sa síðu vera við til at figgja...*  
       ...so will we from Faroese Employer Association=sa side-DAT be with to to finance  
       ‘...then we want, the Faroese Employer’s Association to be willing to contribute and finance ...’  
       (N. Winther, 05/04/2013, KvF<sup>12</sup>)
- e. *So blívur tað til metingar frá TAKS=sa síðu*  
       then becomes it to estimations from TAKS=sa side-DAT  
       ‘Then it will only be estimations regarding the Taxation Office’  
       (Ey. Mørkøre, 15/02/2103, KvF)
- f. *Tað er SEV=sa ábyrgd at fáa sum mest burtúr*  
       it is SEV=sa responsibility-NOM to get as much out of ...  
       ‘It is the responsibility of SEV to get as much profit as possible’

The heading says ‘Names of Institutions/Organizations’ and all the nouns that host the clitic are in some sense institutions/organizations. In (15a) *HB* is an abbreviation of *Havnar Bóltfelag*, the football club of the capital, (Tórs)havn. The (b) sentence also refers to an institution of a kind, namely *Hotell Hafnia* in the centre of the capital. *ALS* in (15c) is an abbreviation of *Arbeidsloysistrygging*, that is the Unemployment Assurance, and *Føroya Arbeidsgevarafelag* ‘The Faroese Employer Association’ is also an institution, and so are the last two examples in (15), where

<sup>12</sup> KvF is an abbreviation for *Kringvarp Føroyar* = the Faroese Broadcasting Network.



*SEV* is an abbreviation of *Streymoy-Eysturoy-Vágar*. These three islands formed a company for providing electricity, and *SEV* is now the main provider of electric power to households on the Faroe Islands. In (15e) *TAKS* is an abbreviation of *Tollur-Avgjald-Kolvetni-Skattur* (Customs-Toll-Hydrocarbon-Tax); this is the Taxation Office on the Faroe Islands.

From being initially only possible with kinship nouns like *mammur=sa bilur* ‘mother’s car’, proper nouns of persons and nouns with a similar function as *Ólavur=sa bilur* ‘Ólavur’s car’ and the pet-names like *Snar=sa*, the *sa*-clitic has spread to nouns that represent institutions/organizations.

#### 4.3 The *-sa* clitic attached to Animate Common Nouns

So far we have seen that the clitic is attached to names of persons and pets, kinship nouns and names of institutions.

The clitic is also possible with animate, human nouns that are definite, as in:

- (16) a. *Hví gert tú tað so ikki fyri børnini=sa skyld?*  
 why do you that then not for children-ACC=sa sake-ACC  
 ‘Then why don’t you do it for the children’s sake?’  
 (Einar F. Sigurðsson, 2009: 8)
- b. [...] *og vissi vit koma for seint,*  
 ...and if we come too late  
*so er einki forstáilsi fyri tí frá lærarin=sa síðu*  
 then is no understanding from teacher=sa side-DAT  
 ‘...and if we are late, then there is no understanding from  
 the teacher’s side’.  
 (KvF, 28/10/2013)
- c. *Har er radarin. Tað sigur abbi er*  
 there is radar. It says grandfather is  
*sjómaðurin=sa besti vinur*  
 seaman-DEF-NOM=sa best friend-NOM  
 ‘There is the radar. Granddad says that it is the sailor’s best  
 friend’.  
 (KvF, 26/05/2014, boy, appr. 12 yrs.)

- d. *Tað eru nógv, sum siga, at tað er*  
 there are many who say that it is  
*næmingurin=sa egna ábyrgd*  
 student-DEF-NOM=sa own responsibility-NOM  
*tað haldi eg ikki ordiliga passar. Eg haldi, at tað*  
 that think I not really is true. I think that it  
*er næmingurin og og*  
 is students and and  
*lærarin=sa ábyrgd*  
 teacher=sa-NOM responsibility-NOM  
 ‘There are many who say that it is the responsibility of the stu-  
 dent. I don’t think that is really true. I think that it is the  
 student and the teacher’s responsibility.  
 (M. Jógvansson, age 18. Example pro-  
 vided by V. Absalonsen)
- e. *Eg havi ongantíð hoyrt tað lisið frá happarans søgu –*  
 I have never heard it read from bullier’s history –  
*happarin=sa síðu, men...*  
 bullier-DEF-DAT=sa side-DAT but  
 ‘I have never heard it from the bullier’s history, from the bul-  
 lier’s side, but’  
 (M. Jógvansson, age 18. Example pro-  
 vided by V. Absalonsen)

In (16a) *børnini* can formally be either the nominative or accusative case in the plural with the definite ending *-ini*. In (16c) the host *sjómaðurin* ‘sailor’ is in the nominative case in the singular, *-ur*, to which the definite ending *in* is added. In (16e) the informant corrects *happarans søgu* ‘the bullier’s story’ to *happarin=sa síðu* ‘from the side of the bullier’ which formally is a definite noun in the nominative.<sup>13</sup>

<sup>13</sup> I have one example where *sa* is added to an abstract noun. It was uttered by a 60-year old woman who works at the Teacher Seminar in Tórshavn (*Námsvísindadeildin*). The sentence was: *mann skal ikki hava teori fyri teoriina=sa skyld* ‘one shall not have the theory for the sake of the theory’. This is a copy of Danish *man skal ikke have teori for teoriens skyld*.

## 5 An Acceptance Study

Einar F. Sigurðsson (2009a) conducted, together with other linguists, fieldwork in 2008 on the Faroe Islands. The method he used was magnitude estimation, and he collected data concerning different possessive constructions in Faroese. Among these possessive constructions was the *sa* clitic. The results were based on acceptability judgments from 20 consultants from six villages/towns: *Fuglafjørður* (North-Eastern Faroese); *Miðvágur* (Western Faroese Dialect), *Klaksvík* (North-Faroese), *Sandur* and *Suðuroy* (Southern Faroese Dialect) and *Tórshavn* (Mid-Faroese Dialect). The youngest participant was 15 years old, and the oldest participant was 63 years old. According to the findings in Einar F. Sigurðsson (2009a), speakers willingly accept *sa* when the possessor is a proper name or a kinship noun, but not as much when the host nouns is a company/institution like *Hotell Hafnia*.

In the period between February 2015 and April 2015 four students at *Føroyamálsdeildin* (the Department of Faroese) at the University of the Faroe Islands took a course in Field Work. Part of the course was to collect data on dative, and another part was to collect data on the *sa* clitic. The questionnaires were distributed between four age groups: 18–20, 21–40; 41–60 and 61+, and there were men and women among the informants. In the age-group 18–20 we had 56 informants, and there were 50 informants in the other age-groups. They had four possibilities to choose between with regard to an answer: (1) the sentence is grammatical; (2) the sentence is grammatical, but I would not use it myself; (3) the sentence is doubtful and (4) the sentence is ungrammatical.

They tested the following three sentences:

- (17) a. *Tað er SEV=sa ábyrgd at veita støðugan streym*  
 it is SEV=sa responsibility-NOM to provide permanent electricity  
 ‘It is the responsibility of SEV to provide permanent electricity’  
 b. *Tað er í lagi frá lærarin=sa síðu, at vit fáa frí nú*  
 it is in order from teacher=sa side-DAT that we get free now  
 ‘As far as the teacher is concerned we can go now’  
 c. *Tað er í lagi frá læraran=sa síðu, at vit fáa frí nú*  
 it is in order from teacher=sa side-DAT that we get free now  
 ‘As far as the teacher is concerned we can go now’

The sentence in (17a) is inspired by (15f) *Tað er SEV=sa ábyrgd at fáa sum mest burturúr* ‘It is the responsibility of SEV to get as much profit

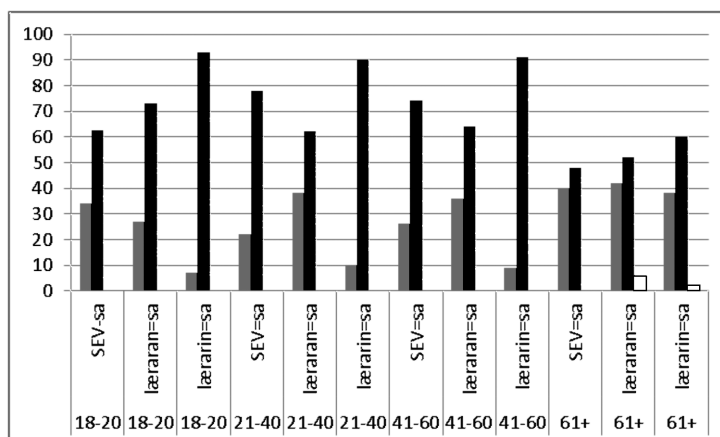


Figure 2. Result of the grammaticality judgment test. Gray is 'yes', black is 'no' and white is 'not answered'.

as possible', a sentence from colloquial Faroese. The one in (17b) builds on (16b)...*og vissi vit koma for seint, er einki forstáilsi fyri tí frá lærarin=sa síðu* '...and if we are late, there is not understanding from the teacher's side'. We used the sentences in (17) and not the actual sentence from spoken Faroese, that is, the sentences in (15f) and (16b) because especially the sentence *vissi vit koma for seint, er einki forstáilsi fyri tí frá lærarin=sa síðu* contains both *vissi* 'if' from Danish *hvis*, for 'too' and *forstáilsi* 'understanding'. As Faroe Islanders are very conscious of 'correct' language (Nyholm-Debess, Saxov & Thomsen, 2013), and many do not like to see Danish words in print, we had to modify the sentence when doing the judgment test. If we did not do so, we would not only get judgments for the *sa* construction, but also for the words, and this would mean that many would judge the sentences as bad Faroese simply because of the vocabulary.

The results show that the *sa* clitic in the tested sentences is not completely rejected by speakers of Faroese, and that the oldest speakers accept it most readily.

### 5.1 Discussion of Spread in Modern Faroese

In Thráinsson et al. (2004/2012: 64–65) it is said that the *sa* clitic is added to 'proper names of persons and other nouns with a similar function' (Thráinsson, 2004/2012: 64–65) as in *Jákup=sa* 'Jákup's', and *mammu=sa* 'mothers', and even a pet name like *Snar=sa*. An anonymous reviewer

suggests that the clitic can be attached to NPs that are “individual descriptions” of animates, and points out that *lærarin=sa* ‘the teacher’ in ...*og vissi vit koma for seint, so er einki forstáðsi fyri tí frá lærarin=sa síðu* ‘if we are too late, there is no understanding from the side of the teacher’ refers to the specific teacher of the class. Specific reference is additionally in *hví gert tú tað so ikki fyri børnini=sa skyld* ‘why don’t you do it for the sake of the children’, where the speaker refers to the children of the person she addresses. Institutions and organizations are often presented as groups of humans engaging in actions that are human-like, in the sense that they make pronouncements and take decisions. As such, institutions and organizations can be understood as individuals.

Some speakers allow *sa* where the head noun has a generic sense; an example was: *har er radarin. Tað sigur abbi er sjómaðurin=sa besti vinur* ‘there is the radar. Granddad says that it is the sailor’s best friend’. Here the reference is to sailors in general, and the same is in (16d/e), where the head nouns have a generic sense.

Before finishing this section, I would like to draw attention to the role of bilingual language processing and the use of *sa* in Faroese. All speakers of Faroese have Danish as their initial second language, L2, and this is a fact that cannot be neglected, when research is done on Faroese; see Petersen (2010). According to Kroll & Dijkstra (2002) the bilingual speaker has non-selective access to words in his/her L1 and L2. This means that if a speaker wants to use a word in his/her L1, say Faroese *høvuðsmál* ‘main language’ or *tosar* ‘talks’ then there is activation of the same words in his/her L2, so that the Danish words *hovedsprog* ‘main language’ and *snakke* ‘talk’ are activated together with the Faroese words. Activation of homophonous dimorphs<sup>14</sup> eases the transfer from Danish to Faroese.

In some of the examples above, the modified noun is *síðu* ‘side’ as in *lærarin=sa síðu* ‘from the teacher’s side’, and this is in all likelihood an instance of replication in Faroese of the Danish model *lærerens side*. Other examples are *ALS=sa síðu* lit.: ALS’s side; *Føroya Arbeidsgevara=sa síðu* lit.: Faroese Employer’s side; *TAKS=sa síðu* lit.: Taxation Office’s side. The construction [NOUN + s + SIDE] is very common in Danish, e.g. *Folketingets side* ‘Parliament’s side’. The use of *sa* is not only an internal development, but the use is supported by the Danish frame [NOUN + s + SIDE] that is replicated by Faroese speakers as [NOUN + *sa* + SÍÐA]. Danish influence is even clearer in (14c), repeated here as (18a):

<sup>14</sup> Homophonous diamorphs are words in L1 and L2 that sounds almost the same.

- (18) a. ...og mann ikki “*snakkar*” *hinum=sa høvuðssprog*  
 ...and one not talks other=sa-DAT main language-ACC
- b. ...og man ikke snakker *den andens hovedsprog* (Danish)  
 ...and one not talks the other-GEN main language
- c. ...og mann ikki *tosar høvuðsmálið hjá hinum* (Standard Faroese)  
 ...and one not talks main language-DEF-ACC with other-DAT

The Danish sentence is in (18b), and the standard Faroese sentence is in (18c). The strange thing about *hinum=sa høvuðssprog* in (18a), if it is considered in isolation, is the dative case on *hinum* ‘the other’. The verb *at snakka* ‘to talk’ governs the accusative, as in *hann snakkar fimm mál* lit.: he talks five languages-ACC. In (18a) the speaker has activated the Standard Faroese construction with *hjá*-possessive, and s/he has the Danish possessive construction, and s/he converges them into (18a).

In the judgment test, see section 5, we saw that Faroese people in general are uncomfortable with the *sa* clitic, and the same was evident in the statement from the Language Committee, which directly stated that *sa* was childish.

Barnsliga og óformliga hvørsfalsendingin -sa, sum í Jákupsa, mammaa, ommu, hóskar ikki í øllum stíli sum t.d. tá ið onkur segði “í Bresjnevs tíð” í staðin fyri “í Bresjnevs tíð”, sum er væl bæriligari bæði í skrift og talu.

(Orðafar, 4 June 1987)

The childish and informal genitive ending *sa* as in *Jákup=sa mamma=sa, ommu=sa* is not suitable in all registers, as when someone said ‘in Bresjnev=sa time = at the time of Brezhnev’ instead of ‘in Brezhnev’s time’, which is a form that is more dignified in both the written and spoken language.

This in turn makes it very difficult to gain data on the *sa* clitic in written records and to obtain judgments in a grammaticality judgment test. The examples that I have mentioned are mostly examples that one has to ‘catch on the spot’, so to speak. As *sa* is so stigmatized, it is quite certain that this has influenced the results of the judgment tests, as one must keep in mind that Faroe Islanders are very aware of language and discuss ‘correct’ language use all the time (Nyholm-Debes, Saxov & Thomsen, 2013)

## 6 Conclusion

The spread of *sa* is partly an internal change, but bilingual language processing does play a role in the spread. With regard to the origin of *sa*, I have put forward the hypothesis that it is a combination of the historical genitive plural ending *-a* and the genitive singular *-s*.

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