

The Dative-Ergative Connection

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The Dative-Ergative Connection

- Butt (2006): Paper on the Dative-Ergative Connection
- Argued that:
 - there was **no structural change in alignment** from Nom-Acc to Erg-Abs in Urdu/Hindi (and Indo-Aryan more general)
 - the modern Urdu/Hindi ergative *ne* is not derived from the Old Indo-Aryan instrumental, but from a form that gives rise to both datives and ergatives (e.g., Tessitori 1913, Montaut 2003).
 - The distribution of case in Indo-Aryan is primarily due to a semantic organization of case.
- This talk: reprise and account of rise of non-nominative subjects due to:
 - prominence
 - drawing in of original spatial markers for semantic distinctions on arguments across different verb classes.

The Dative-Ergative Connection

- Examples where the ergative and the dative/accusative have the same form can be found in Indo-Aryan.

- (1) a. va-ṇe ve-ne dek^h-yu
 Pron.3.sg=erg Pron.3.sg=acc see-perf-n.sg
 'He/she saw him/her.'
 (Phillips 2013) (Kherwada Wagdi)
- b. man=ne sahab=ne mar-a
 Pron.1.Sg=Acc Sahib.M.Sg=Erg hit-Perf.M.Sg
 'The Sahib hit me.'
 (Shirani 1987) (Haryani)
- c. ravi=ne bacce=ko amra=ko di-ya
 Ravi=Erg child.M.Obl=Acc/Dat Amra=Acc/Dat give-Perf.M.Sg
 'Ravi gave the child to Amra.'
(Urdu/Hindi)

- But sometimes they differ.

→ **How can we explain this?**

Diachrony of Indo-Aryan Case

- Old Indo-Aryan (OIA)
 - robust system of inflectional case marking
 - subjects were always nominative
 - objects could take various different case markers, (mostly) depending on their semantics
- Middle Indo-Aryan (MIA)
 - case marking was lost over the course of some centuries
 - eventually the various non-nominative case markers collapsed into an **oblique**
- New Indo-Aryan (NIA)
 - Many NIA languages evolved a whole new system of overt case marking.
 - The case markers originate mainly from originally spatial terms (Hewson and Bubenik 2006, Reinöhl 2106)
 - In the modern languages, many of the new case markers have the status of clitics.

→ **What explains the reinvention of the NIA case marking systems?**

Old Indo-Aryan Inflectional Case

- Nominative subject, accusative object.

(2) (aham) brāhmaṇam apaśyam.
 (I.Nom) brahman.Acc see.1Sg.Impf
 'I saw the brahman.' (Burrow 1965, 355)

Sanskrit

- Differential Object Marking depending on Semantics

(3) a. pibā soma-m
 drink.Imp soma-Acc
 'Drink soma. (all of the quantity)'
 (Ṛgveda VIII.36.1, from Jamison 1976)

b. pibā soma-sya
 drink.Imp soma-Gen
 'Drink (of) soma.'
 (Ṛgveda VIII.37.1, from Jamison 1976)

Vedic

Vedic

Middle Indo-Aryan Case Erosion

- Example from 880 CE
- No overt marking on either subject or object.
- Verb agreement is with object in transitive perfective clauses.

(4) #kiṃ **tamu** haṇ-ai ṇa vālu **ravi**# #kiṃ vālu **davaggi**
 ques darkness.nom.sg destroy-impf.3.sg neg young sun.nom.sg ques young fire.nom.sg
 ṇa ḍah-ai **vaṇu**# #kiṃ kari dal-ai ṇa vālu
 neg burn-impf.3.sg forest.nom.sg ques elephant.nom.sg shatter-impf.3.sg neg young
hari# #kiṃ vālu ṇa ḍāik-ai uragamaṇu#
 lion.nom.sg ques young neg bite-impf.3.sg snake.nom.sg
Does the young (rising) sun not destroy darkness? Does the young fire (spark) not burn down the forest? Does a young lion (cub) not shatter the elephant? Does the young snake not bite? (PC 2.21.6.9)

- Patterns like this can be found over the centuries and in some of the current NIA languages.

→ **Why innovate case?**

Argument Identification

- General idea in the literature: need to innovate case because of a combination of (e.g., see Malchukov 2017):
 - ① **Distinguishing strategy:** in order to distinguish subjects from objects, mark non-prototypical subjects (i.e., subjects which could be mistaken for objects).
 - ② **Indexing strategy:** Identify proto-typical subjects (agents) and mark this particular semantic role.
- This may be part of the explanation.
- But it cannot be the whole explanation
 - Have already seen examples where one and the same case marker plays multiple roles.
 - Also continue to have examples with no case marking.

(5) patt^har fīḡa tor-a
 stone.M.Nom glass.M.Sg.Nom break-Perf.M.Sg
 ‘The stone/rock broke the glass.’
 (Mohanani 1994, 75)

Hindi/Urdu

Structure of the Talk

- ① Introduction (Done)
- ② Innovation of Non-Nominative Subjects:
Experiencer Subjects in Icelandic and NIA
- ③ Innovation of (Differential) Object Marking: Marathi
- ④ Conclusions

Icelandic

- Icelandic is a Germanic Indo-European language and thus related to Indo-Aryan languages.
 - Germanic languages generally only allow nominative subjects.
 - Icelandic is an exception: the existence of dative subjects is proven beyond doubt (Andrews 1990, Zaenen et al. 1985)
- (6)
- a. Stelpunum batnaði.
girls.the.DAT recover.PST.3SG
'The girls recovered (from an illness).'
 - b. Stelpunum batnaði/bötnuðu veikirnar.
girls.the.DAT recover.PST.3SG/PL diseases.the.NOM
'The girls recovered from the diseases.'
- The diachronic record for Icelandic begins around 1150 CE.
 - Coincidence? — This is about when non-nominative subjects in Indo-Aryan begin to appear.

Icelandic Dative Subjects

- Dative subjects can be found in Icelandic from its earliest attestations.

(7) og þótti **honum** sem fóstura sínum mundi mein að verða
 and seemed him.Dat as foster-father self.Dat would harm to become
 'and it seemed to him as if his foster father would be harmed'
 (Ljósvetninga saga, ca. 13th century)
 (Barðdal and Eythórsson 2003, 442)

- However, dative subjects are increasing in percentage (Booth et al. 2017).

Icelandic Dative Subjects

- Two major factors:
 - ① Dative Substitution: **experiencer subjects** are regularized to all have **dative**
 - ② Lexicalization of middles
 - Accusatives as in (8a) are being substituted for by datives as in (8b).
- (8) a. Mig langar að fara.
 I.Acc long.Pres to go.Inf
 'I long to go.' (Smith 1996, 22)
- b. Mér langar að fara.
 I.Dat long.Pres to go.Inf
 'I long to go.' (Smith 1996, 22)
- Case marking is being regularized to express the **semantics** of **experiencer** (see also Nowenstein 2023 on language acquisition).

Icelandic Dative Subjects

- Lexicalization of middles example: *finnast* 'seem' (9b) has been lexicalized: originally the middle (-*st*) of *finna* 'find' (9a).
- The verb 'seem' takes a dative experiencer subject.

- (9) a. Gunnar fann seint hrossin um daginn
 Gunnar.Nom find.Past.3.Sg late horse.the.Acc during day.the.Acc
 'Gunnar found the horse late during the day.'
 (IcePaHC, 1400.GUNNAR.NAR-SAG,281)
- b. Finnst **hönum** þetta gott og dýrmætt
 find.Pres.Mid.3.Sg he.Dat this.Nom good.Nom and valuable.Nom
 öl.
 beer.Nom
 'He finds this to be good and valuable beer.'
 (IcePaHC, 1675.ARMANN.NAR-FIC,98.215)

Icelandic Dative Subjects

Beck and Butt (2024) posit a diachronic change by which

- ① 'find' could be used with either a location or a secondary predication

- (10)
 - a. *Gunnar found the beer in the pub.*
 - b. *Gunnar found the beer to be good.*

- ② In middle formation the subject is demoted (but still semantically accessible).

- (11) *The beer is found to be good (by Gunnar).*

- ③ This is reinterpreted to mean 'seem' and to take an experiencer.

- (12) *The beer seems to be good (to Gunnar).*

- ④ The experiencer object is **renalyzed** as an experiencer object due to the general preference for animates to be **prominent** in the clause (e.g., Gregorio et al. 2025).

Experiencer Subjects

Summary

- Dative subjects are found in the earliest attested records (1150 CE).
- Their frequency has been increasing.
- This is due to a regularization of using **dative subjects to mark experiencers**.

The situation in Indo-Aryan is similar.

Old Indo-Aryan

- In OIA experiencers were expressed via **genitives**.
- There is no evidence that these were subjects.

- (13) a. na **me** bhaya-m vidya-te rākṣas-ebhyaḥ
 neg I.gen.sg fear-nom.n.sg be-prs.3.sg demon-abl.pl
 'I have no fear of demons.' (Mahābhārata 12.78.25c)
- b. ma-yi ced asti **te** prīti-r
 I-loc.sg if be-prs.3.sg you.gen.sg affection-nom.sg
 'If you have love for me...' (Mahābhārata 1.161.14c)

Sanskrit

Sanskrit

- The situation in MIA is less clear.
- The early stages of NIA (from around 1100) are not as well documented/accessible.
- (Luckily people here and elsewhere are working to fill this gap.)
- Evidence from Marathi: diachronic change in stages similar to the Icelandic case seems to have taken place (Deo 2003, Butt and Deo 2013), see Beck and Butt (2024) for discussion.

Experiencers in Old Indo-Aryan

- Deo (2003) investigates the origin of modern Marathi dative subjects
- She finds 3 major sources:

① “Affected” subject arguments of transitive verbs such as ‘learn, know’.

(14) kanyā pāṭham sañ=jānā-ti
 girl.f.sg.nom lesson.m.sg.acc with=know-prs.3.sg
 ‘The girl knows the lesson.’

Sanskrit

(15) mulī-lā abhyās samaj-to
 girl-f.sg-dat lesson.m.sg.nom understand-prs.m.sg
 ‘The girl understands the lesson.’

Marathi

- ② Sanskrit intransitive verbs such as ‘shine, be, be seen, go, mature’ and ‘occur’.
- ③ Sanskrit change of state predicates that allow for an experiencer reading.
- The first group is the last to be regularized.

Experiencers OIA to Marathi

- Sanskrit intransitive verbs such as 'shine, be, be seen, go, mature' and 'occur'.
- Lexicalized as experiencer predicates: 'seem, like, please'
- OIA genitive object → Marathi dative subject

(16) vākya-m na me roca-te yat tva-yā uktam
utterance-nom.n.sg neg I.gen.sg please-prs.3.sg which you-inst.sg say-perf.n.sg
'The utterance which was spoken by you does not please me.'
(Mahābhārata 2.51.14a) Sanskrit

(17) ma-lā tuzh-a bolṇa ruc-at nāhī
I-dat your-n.sg. speech.n.sg.nom like-impf neg
'I do not like your speech.' Marathi

Experiencers OIA to Marathi

- Sanskrit change of state predicates that allow for an experiencer reading.
- OIA accusative object → Marathi dative subject

(18) haṁs-ānām vacanam yat=tu tad **mām** dahati
 swan-m.gen.pl word.n.nom.sg which that.n.nom.sg I.acc.sg burn.prs.3.sg
 pāṛthiva
 king.m.voc.sg
 'O King, those words of the swans torment me.'
 (Mahābhārata 3.53.3a)

Sanskrit

(19) **mulī-lā** āi-ca rāgāvṇa ḍāj-ta
 girl-dat mother-gen scolding-n.nom.sg trouble-prs.n.sg
 'The mother's scolding torments the girl.'
 Lit.: 'The mother's scolding is troubling to the girl.'

Marathi

Experiencers OIA to Marathi

- Of the three types of sources for dative subjects
 - ① “Affected” subject arguments of transitive verbs such as ‘learn, know’.
 - ② Sanskrit intransitive verbs such as ‘shine, be, be seen, go, mature’ and ‘occur’.
 - ③ Sanskrit change of state predicates that allow for an experiencer reading.
- One finds variation between dative/accusative for a while (cf. Joshi 1993).
- The first group is the last to be regularized (which makes sense as it is less “prototypically” an experiencer than the others).

Experiencers OIA to Marathi

Hypothesis:

Sentient experiencers are preferably realized as subjects due to their greater salience/prominence as compared to the inanimate stimulus.

- Trajectory of Change:
 - In all of the examples we have a sentient object that is experiencing a certain state.
 - What seems to have happened is that experiencers have come to be regularized to appear as dative subjects in Marathi over time.
- But even if this is right, why did it not already apply in OIA?
- Why was this reanalysis possible in NIA?

Participle Formation

- Another major change that took place between OIA and NIA is the rearrangement of the tense/aspect system.
- Well known:
 - OIA tense/aspect morphology was lost over time.
 - Replaced by (mainly) periphrastic system.
 - Builds on old participle forms: *-ta* participle for past.
- These participles had essentially already been drawn into the tense/aspect paradigm in Sanskrit (Bynon 2005).

- (20)
- a. aśrauṣam ... ghoṣam
 hear.1.sg.aor ... noise.acc
 'I heard a noise.' (Rāmāyana 2.57.16)
- b. ṣru-to mayā śabdo
 hear-ptcpl.nom.m I.inst.sg sound.nom.m.sg
 'I heard a sound.' (Rāmāyana 2.58.13)

Ergative “Alignment”

- The *-ta* participle is standardly analyzed as being the precursor/trigger from a shift of “accusative alignment” to “ergative alignment” (Dixon 1994).

Active	
Agent	Patient/Theme
SUBJ _{nom}	OBJ _{acc}

Participle	
Agent	Patient/Theme
(Oblique) _{inst}	SUBJ _{nom}

- The instrumental oblique/adjunct is seen as being reanalyzed as an ergative subject.

Reanalysis of Instrumental as Ergative	
Agent	Patient/Theme
SUBJ _{erg}	OBJ _{nom}

Ergative “Alignment”

- An object/patient oriented agreement pattern follows in what has been called ergative alignment.

(21) *ṣruto* *mayā śabdo*
 hear.PP.**Nom**.M I.Inst sound.**Nom**
 ‘I heard a sound.’ (Rāmāyana 2.58.13: Bynon 2005)

- However, there are some things wrong with this picture:
 - There is no historical continuity between the instrumental and the ergative (Beames 1872–79, Butt 2001).
 - Agreement patterns differ wildly across the NIA ergative languages.
 - The larger case system is not accounted for (e.g., development of dative/genitive experiencer subjects).

Development of New Case Inventory

- From around 1200 on, one finds new case markers being drawn into the system in New Indo-Aryan (NIA).
- The case markers are mostly clitics, some markers are inflectional (these tend to reflect the old material).

	Dative/Accusative	Ergative	Instrumental	Genitive
Urdu/Hindi	ko	ne	se	ka/ki/ke
Gujarati	ne	-e	-e/thi	no/ni/nu/na/nā
Marathi	la	ne/ni	ne/ni	ca/ci/ce
Nepali	lai	le	le	ko/ka/ki
Punjabi	nū	ne	kolō	da/di/de
Sindhi	k ^h e	-e/-an/-in	-e	jo/ji/je/ja/jyu
Bengali	ke	—	te	-(e)r
Oṛiya	ku	—	-e	-rṇ

Case Markers Across Indo-Aryan (Masica 1991, Ahmed Khan 2009, Deo p.c.)

New Case Inventory



- The genitive is the only one that inflects (put this aside for now).
- The various case markers all seem to be versions of some *n-*, *k-* and *l-* forms.
- Common Homophonies Crosslinguistically:
 - Dative/Accusative
 - Ergative/Instrumental
- Additionally in Indo-Aryan:
 - Ergative/Dative

Sample Look at Urdu/Hindi *ko* and *ne*

- Beames (1872–79:§56) reconstructs the Urdu *ko* to the locative of Sanskrit *kaksha* ‘armpit, side’ → Old Hindi *kākha*, accusative *kākham* → *kahū* → *kō* → *ko*.
- The most likely reconstruction of *ne* is due to Tessitori (1913, 1914).
 - Source: Apabhraṃśa form *kaṇṇahī*, related to the Sanskrit locative of ‘ear’ *karne*
 - Old Rajasthani: *kanhaiN* (or *kanhai*, *kanhi*, *kanhali*, *kaṇi*) → (*naī*, *nai*)
 - Mostly meant ‘aside, near’.

		> Ablative ‘from’	> Agentive
Skt. ‘ear’	> ‘near’		
		> Dative (and Accusative)	

Why Case?

- The origin of the modern case markers are spatial terms: how exactly does agent/patient marking result?
- Why draw new case markers into a system in the first place?
- **Hypothesis:**
 - Once the grammar allows for non-nominative subjects, use case to mark different semantics.
 - Main distinction: **agentive** (ergative) vs. **reduced agentivity** (dative/genitive)

History of New Ergative and Dat/Acc in Urdu/Hindi



- *ko* first entered Urdu/Hindi around 1200 CE
 - First uses are for dative goals/experiencers ('give to the Brahmins', 'teach to life', 'grief is at me')
 - Some first accusative/object uses with the verbs 'seek' (seek a husband) and 'rattle' (rattle the bones).
- *ne* first entered Urdu/Hindi around 1600 CE — probably via language contact
 - Found prior to that in Old Western Rajasthani as **both** dative/accusative and agentive/ablative.
- See Butt and Ahmed (2011) for details and references.

Non-Nominative Subjects via Participles

- Let us revisit what happened with participle formation:

(22) *Ram heard a noise.* (active, inflectional tense)

(23) *a by Ram heard noise* (participle)

- This sounds ungrammatical in English, but is fine in German

(24) Ein von/durch Ram gehörtes Geräusch.
a from/by Ram heard sound
'a sound heard by Ram'

Non-Nominative Subjects via Participles

- (25) Ein von/durch Ram gehörtes Geräusch.
a from/by Ram heard sound
'a sound heard by Ram'

Hypothesis:

- as this became a common way of expressing past tense
- had a clash between
 - strong crosslinguistic preference to have animate actors be prominent (subjects)
 - the systematic realization of sentient actors as adjuncts within a nominal
- so:
 - ① reanalyzed the adjunct within the nominal to be a subject
 - ② reanalyzed the participle as active

Non-Nominative Subjects via Participles

- (26) a. ahi-r indr-eṇa ha-ta-h
 serpent-nom.m.sg Indra-inst.sg kill-ptcpl-nom.m.sg
 'The serpent was been killed by Indra.'
 Original Participle: The by Indra killed serpent.'

Sanskrit

- Recall that the original OIA case marking system collapsed to leave just a nominative-oblique distinction in MIA.
- So the original participle would have been reanalyzed as:

- (27) serpent-**Nom** Indra-**Obl** kill-perf.m.sg
 'The by Indra killed serpent.'

- And from there to the sentient actor being realized preferentially as a subject

- (28) Indra-**Obl** serpent-**Nom** kill-perf.m.sg
 'Indra killed the serpent.'

Event-based linking

- Unlike many other proposals for relating argument structure to syntactic roles, standard LFG does not assume an event-based representation.
- An exception is Butt's (1995) proposals for linking based on Jackendoff's ideas (e.g., Jackendoff (1990)).
- A more recent proposal:
 - integrates Ramchand's (2008) tripartite organization of subevental structure
 - combines this with the use of Proto-Role information (Dowty 1991) as proposed by Zaenen (1993)
 - and works with the ideas in Kibort's (2014) version of LFG's Mapping Theory.
- Kibort posits four abstract argument positions as an independent tier of representation ('argument slots') at a-structure, eschewing thematic role labels.

Event Based Linking

- Ramchand (2008) decomposes an event into three major subevents, each of which causes/initiates the other
 - (i) a causing or initiating subevent (*init*); results in a
 - (ii) a process subevent (*proc*); results in a
 - (iii) a result state (*res*).
- In addition, *rhemes* (*rh*) are taken to be in a static relationship with one of the three subevents of a predicate, like a static spatial Figure/Ground relationship.
- Each of these four event slots licenses an argument participant (corresponding to Kibort's four).

Proposed General Template

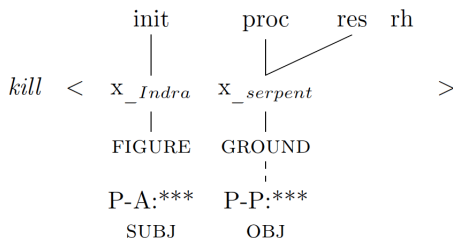
(29) General Linking Schema

		init	proc	res	rh	
<i>predicate</i>	<	x	x	x	x	>
		figure	ground			
<i>grammatical relations</i>		SUBJ	OBJ	OBJ _{theta}	OBL	

- Abstract argument slots are licensed by the subevents init, proc, res and rh.
- These are further associated with figure/ground relations (Talmy 1975).
- The entailments generated by figure/ground and, for example, being an initiator vs. an undergoer of a process are factored into the linking to grammatical relations, as per Zaenen's (1993) ideas.
- The argument with the most Proto-Agent properties is linked to the SUBJ.
- The argument with the most Proto-Patient properties is linked to the OBJ.

Example: Active Agentive Clause

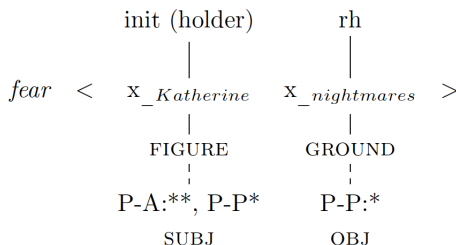
Indra killed the serpent.



- 'Indra' has three Proto-Agent (P-A) properties:
 - 1 initiator of an event
 - 2 the figure
 - 3 is sentient
- 'serpent' has three Proto-Patient (P-P) properties:
 - 1 casually affected (proc)
 - 2 undergoes a change of state (res)
 - 3 the ground

Example: An Experiencer Predicate

Katherine fears nightmares.

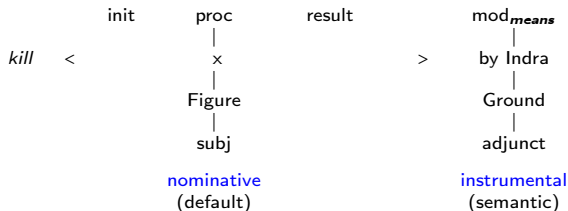


- 'Katherine' has two Proto-Agent properties and one Proto-Patient property.
 - ① holder of a state (P-P) – analysis based on Ramchand
 - ② the figure (P-A)
 - ③ is sentient (P-A)
- 'nightmares' has one Proto-Patient property:
 - ① the ground

Towards an Analysis

- (30) ahi-r indr-eṇa ha-ta-ḥ
 serpent-nom.m.sg Indra-inst.sg kill-ptcpl-nom.m.sg
 'The serpent has been killed by Indra.'
 Original Participle Reading: 'The by Indra killed serpent.'

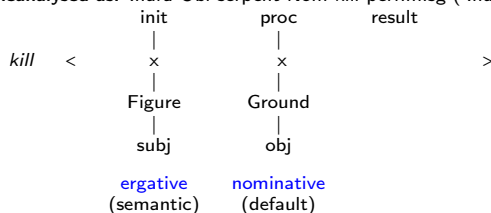
Sanskrit



Note: the x is a proc and a result (line not showing up in Figure).

Towards an Analysis

Reanalysed as: Indra-Obl serpent-Nom kill-perf.m.sg ('Indra has killed the serpent.')



Note: the x is a proc and a result (line not showing up in Figure).

- With agentive verbs like *kill*, the sentient instrument is not a good fit for a Ground.
- Its semantics make it a better fit as a Figure → pressure for reanalysis as a Figure.
- As a Figure it is interpreted as agentive and is associated with the init subevent and linked to subj (instead of the former adjunct status).

New Structure in Grammar: Oblique Subjects

- The reanalysis of the oblique actors as subjects opened up a new structural possibility in grammar.

(31) Indra-**Obl** serpent-**Nom** kill-perf.m.sg
 'Indra killed the serpent.'

- This opening could be pursued in (at least) two different ways:
 - ① Regularize the grammar again to allow for only one type of subject marking (generally nominative).
 - ② Use this opening and allow for Differential Subject Marking (DSM).

New Structure in Grammar: Oblique Subjects

- Throughout the history of Indo-Aryan, case has been used to make semantic distinctions.
- This is true for actors/instruments of actions as well.
 - Andersen (1986) shows that in Aśokan inscriptions (3rd century BCE) the genitive is rarer than the instrumental and can only apply when the agent is animate.
 - Jamison (2000) shows that in the Niya documents (3rd century CE) there is nominative vs. instrumental variation in transitives.
 - However, when both actor and patient are human, the instrumental is “essentially obligatory” on actors.
- So easy to expand the oblique marking on subjects to include other contrasts, e.g., agentive vs. reduced agentivity/experiencer semantics.

New Structure in Grammar: Oblique Subjects

Projected Developments

- ① Introduction of agentive oblique subjects in NIA via reanalysis of OIA *ta*-participle.
- ② Use of non-nominative subject possibility to reanalyze experiencer objects as experiencer subjects (cf. Marathi data).
- ③ Reinforce the existing contrast of agentive vs. experiencer subjects by introducing new ergative marking

Interesting: new ergatives often historically related to former dative/accusatives.

Innovation of Dative/Accusative in Marathi

Final Case Study: Marathi (joint work with Christin Beck and Ashwini Deo)

- Unbroken diachronic record for Marathi 1278 CE on.
- Marathi innovated a dative/accusative case at least **twice**.
- This is unexpected.
- Each time, the new case marker entered the system through **secondary object** marking.
- Current Differential Object Marking (DOM) is with *lā*.

- (32) a. *siṃhā=ne hattī mār-lā*
 lionm=erg elephant.m.nom kill-perf.3.m.sg
 'The lion killed an elephant.'
- b. *siṃhā=ne hattī=lā mār-le*
 lion.m=erg elephant.m=acc kill-perf.3.n.sg
 'The lion killed the elephant.'

Innovation of Dative/Accusative in Marathi



- Old Marathi
 - mainly =*tem* in DOM contexts
(probably from Prakrit *tahim* 'there', Master 1964, §106).
 - but sometimes also =*si*
(probably from Sanskrit *aśra* 'side, edge', (Bloch 1970, §198))
- Middle Marathi
 - mainly =*si* in DOM contexts
 - but also sometimes =*lā*
(probably from the gerund form of Sanskrit *lag* 'touch, be stuck to' > *lagim* 'for the sake of' > *lai*, *lai/le*, *la*, Master 1964, Bloch 1970, Montaut 2018)
- Modern Marathi: =*lā*

Innovation of Dative/Accusative in Marathi

- In each of the developments, the original dative/accusative is replaced by a form used primarily on goals.
- Old Marathi:

(33) taisā **hṛdayā=teṃ** bhed-itu kauravāṃ=ciyā
 Thus, heart.OBL=Acc pierce-IMPF.M.SG Kaurava.OBL=GEN.OBL
 'Thus, (he) pierces the heart of the Kauravas.' ((Dny. 1.872)

(34) navagāvi=cā brāhmaṇu **devate=si**
 Navagav.OBL=GEN.M.SG brahmin.M.SG.NOM goddess.OBL=DAT
 ā-lā
 come.PERF.M.SG
 'The brahmin of Navagava came to the goddess.' (LC 1.560.2)

Innovation of Dative/Accusative in Marathi



- In each of the developments, the original dative/accusative is replaced by a form used primarily on goals.
- Middle Marathi:

(35) lem̥kīm **bāpā=sa** mār-ilem̥
 son.M.SG.ERG father.M.SG.OBL=ACC strike-PERF.N.SG
 'The son struck the father.' (Das 3.5.19)

(36) kityeka loka **tayā=lā** shodhī-ta
 several people.M.PL.NOM it.M.SG.OBL=FOR search.PRES.PART
 phiratī
 wander-IMPF.3.PL
 'Many people go around looking for him (a noble man).' (Das 12.10.29)

Case Innovation from Spatial Terms

Proposal

- New case markers are drawn into the system from original uses on spatial adjuncts, secondary objects.
- They begin to be used on “core” arguments (subject/object) via verb classes in which the semantics of the argument is (potentially) ambiguous.
- For example: **verbs of communication**
- Here the ‘him’ could be analyzed as having goal semantics (‘to him’) or as being an accusative undergoer.

(37) maga **tyā=sī** mhaṇītaḥem
 Then he.OBL=DAT/ACC say-PERF.N.SG
 ‘Then she said to him...’ (Pan 2.7.13 (1378 CE))

Case Innovation from Spatial Terms

- We have seen that most of the current case markers come from spatial terms that could have a range of meanings.
- This is also true for the ergative *ne* of today's Marathi and Urdu/Hindi.
- It could have an ablative/instrumental meaning ('from, by')
- But also a spatial meaning 'near, at', which lead to a dative/accusative use.

Conclusion

Case Innovation is driven mostly by the expression of semantic distinctions and is facilitated by structural developments.

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