Case in Indo-Aryan: A Historical Perspective

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Object of Inquiry

- ▶ Languages can (and do) innovate new case markers.

- ▶ These tend to be drawn from originally spatial terms.

- ▶ **Question:** How does an originally spatial term end up as a case marker for core event participant relations like:

    - ▶ Agents (typically Ergative/Instrumental)
    - ▶ Experiencers (typically Dative/Genitive)
    - ▶ Recipients (typically Dative)
    - ▶ Themes/Patients (typically Accusative)

Diachronic Case Project(s)

- ▶ Focus on **Indo-Aryan** (with some newer work on Germanic)
- ▶ Lexical Semantic Approach to Case Markers
- ▶ Combined with Event Structural Analyses
- ▶ Many Contributors/Collaborators over the years:
  - ▶ Tafseer Ahmed Khan, Ashwini Deo, Scott Grimm, Tikaram Poudel, Christin Beck (neé Schätzle), Karin Schunk, Sebastian Sulger, Anila Varghese.
  - ▶ Many of the examples are owed to Ashwini Deo.
  - ▶ Special thanks to Gillian Ramchand for on-going discussions and the sharing of her insights.

Indo-Aryan

- ▶ Longest diachronic record available (yet understudied)
- ▶ Old Indo-Aryan (OIA):
    - ▶ Inflectional case system
    - ▶ 7 cases
- ▶ Middle Indo-Aryan (MIA):
    - ▶ case distinctions collapsed (over several hundred years)
    - ▶ vestiges of former case system: nominative/oblique distinction
- ▶ As of around 1200 CE, new case markers developed.
- ▶ Most of these appear to have come from a small handful of spatial terms (former nouns).

    See Beames (1872–79), Kellogg (1893), Trumpp (1872), Montaut (2006, 2009), Hewson and Bubenik (2006), Reinöhl (2106), a.o.

Indo-Aryan Chronology and Sample Sources (from Deo)

TIMELINE	STAGE	SAMPLE SOURCE
OIA		
200 BCE-400 CE	Epic Sanskrit	Mahābhārata (Mbh.);
		$\sim 967{,}000$ words
MIA		
300 BCE-500 CE	Mahārāṣṭrī	Vasudevahiṃḍi (VH 609CE)
500 CE-1100 CE	Apabhraṃśa	Paumacariu (PC $\sim$ 880CE);
		$\sim 135{,}000$ words
Old NIA		
1000–1350 CE	Old Marathi	Dnyāneśvarī (Dny 1287CE);
		$\sim 103{,}000$ words
		Līḷācaritra (LC 1278CE);
		$\sim 57{,}000$ words
	Old Gujarati	Saḍāvaśyakabālāvabodhavṛtti (SB)

Case in OIA

Inflectional case system, numbering due to Pāṇini

Number	Declension	Western Name
1	*devas*	nominative
2	*devam*	accusative
3	*devena*	instrumental
4	*devāya*	dative
5	*devāt*	ablative
6	*deve*	locative
7	*devasya*	genitive

Table: Declension of Sanskrit *deva-* 'god'

Case in OIA

- ▶ The standard case marking pattern is nominative–accusative.

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

- ▶ Some verbs lexically specify non-accusative objects
  (e.g., instrumental object with 'sacrifice').

- ▶ From Paṇini's grammar of Sanskrit:

  (2)   **Rule 2,3,3:** tṛtīyā ca hoś chandasi

        *'Case 3 (instrumental) is also used for the <u>karman</u>
        (patient) of <u>hu</u> 'sacrifice' in the Chandas (Vedic
        Verse).'*

Case in OIA

- ▶ Case Marking is additionally sensitive to semantic factors.
- ▶ Differential Object Marking (DOM) tends to express semantic contrasts.

    (3) pibā   somam
         drink.Imp   soma.**Acc**
         'Drink soma.'   (Ṛgveda VIII.36.1; Jamison 1976)

    (4) pibā   somasya
         drink.Imp   soma.**Gen**
         'Drink (of) soma.'   (Ṛgveda VIII.37.1; Jamison 1976)

Case in OIA

- ▶ Pāṇini's grammar of Sanskrit mentions 23 possibilities of case alternations (Katre 1987, Böhtlingk 1839–40).

    - ▶ Some of these alternations have to do with formal morphophonological reasons.
    - ▶ Others are determined by lexical semantics/specifications.

- ▶ Some express DCM (Differential Case Marking), cf. the partitive in (4), but also alternations as in (5):

    (5)   Rule 2.3.12: The Dative and Accusative are used for verbs of movement, but the dative cannot be used if motion is abstract.

    That is if a person named Ram goes to a village, the village can be marked either Accusative or Dative. But if only one's thoughts "go" towards a village, the Dative cannot be used.

The Effect of Participles on Case

- ▶ Participles were being drawn into the verbal paradigm in OIA (Bynon 2005).

- ▶ The *-ta* adjectival participle was used in alternation with the aorist for the narration of events in the recent past or for past, culminated events (Kiparsky 1998, Condoravdi and Deo 2014).

  - ▶ Aorist: Usual Nom-Acc pattern
  - ▶ *-ta* participle: Agent in Instrumental

  (6)   aśrauṣam   ... ghoṣam
         hear.1Sg.Aor   noise.Acc
         'I heard a noise.' (Rāmāyana 2.57.16; Bynon 2005)

  (7)   ṣruto   mayā śabdo
         hear.PP.Nom.M I.Inst sound.Nom
         'I heard a sound.' (Rāmāyana 2.58.13: Bynon 2005)

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
$\mid$	$\mid$
SUBJ$_{nom}$	OBJ$_{acc}$

Participle	
Agent	Patient/Theme
$\mid$	$\mid$
(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
$\mid$	$\mid$
SUBJ$_{erg}$	OBJ$_{nom}$

Ergative "Alignment"

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

  (8)   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 experiencer subjects).

A (Side) Note on Case and Agreement

- ▶ The NIA case systems all function quite similarly.
  - ▶ There is surface variation
    (which specific case markers, how many).
  - ▶ But the overall case systems are organized along a similar blue print.
- ▶ The NIA agrement systems, on the other hand, vary immensely (Subbarao 2001, Deo and Sharma 2006).

I have not seen a comprehensive, consistent and explanatory syntactic analysis of the space of agreement possibilities in New Indo-Aryan languages and how they co-vary with case and person/number marking. (pace Rajesh Bhatt, Patil-Grosz)

A (Side) Note on Case and Agreement

Some Examples

- ▶ In Hindi/Urdu there is an ergative and the verb never agrees with an overtly case-marked noun.

- ▶ In Nepali, there is an ergative and the verb agrees with the subject regardless of case marking.

- ▶ Bengali has no ergative, has only retained person agreement and the verb agrees with the subject regardless of case.

- ▶ In Gujarati the verb does not agree with case marked subjects and agrees with the object regardless of case marking.

- ▶ In some dialects of Western Indo-Aryan (including versions of Gujarati), the main verb (old participle) agrees with the object and the auxiliaries agree with the subject.

A (Side) Note on Case and Agreement

- ▶ Languages differ on which features of agreement they retain and which subset of the verbal complex expresses them.
  - ▶ There are differences between main verbs vs. auxiliaries.
  - ▶ But also differences among auxiliaries (past version of 'be' vs. present version of 'be' vs. future)
- ▶ Full set of features: gender, number, person.

Back to Case: Non-nominative experiencers in OIA

- ▶ A class of OIA intransitive verbs may optionally appear with genitive experiencers.
- ▶ E.g. *ruc* means either 'shine' (non-psych) or 'please' (psych).
- ▶ The difference is signaled via case marking.

(9) sumukh-o   bhava-taḥ   **pautr-o**   **roca-te**
     beautiful.faced-NOM.SG you-GEN.SG grandson-NOM.SG shine-PRES.3.SG
     Your beautiful-faced grandson shines (Mbh. 5.102.6c)

(10) vākya-ṃ   na **me** **roca-te**   yat tva-yā
     utterance-NOM.N.SG NEG I.GEN.SG please-PRES.3.SG which you-INS.SG
     uktaṃ
     say-PERF.N.SG
     The utterance which was spoken by you does not please me.
     (Mbh. 2.51.14a)

Interim Summary — OIA

OIA's case system was complex:

- ▶ Active transitive clauses are generally Nom-Acc.
- ▶ Subjects are generally nominative.
- ▶ But also:
  - ▶ Case determined by morphophonological constraints and lexical specifciations.
  - ▶ Case alternations for semantic reasons (e.g., genitive/accusative for partitivity)
  - ▶ Case used to mark certain thematic/semantic roles (e.g., experiencers, agents of participles).

Middle Indo-Aryan

- ▶ The case system underwent heavy syncretism in MIA.
- ▶ In some situations, no distinction could be found between subject and object (≈nominative/accusative), e.g. (11).
- ▶ Agreement is always with the nominative (or former nominative) argument.

	Singular	Plural
Nominative/Accusative	*-u, a, aṁ*	*-a, aĩ*
Instrumental	*-eṁ, iṁ, he, hi*	*-e(h)ĩ, ehi, ahĩ*
Ablative	*-hu, ahu, aho*	*-hũ, ahũ*
Genitive/Dative	*-ho, aho, ha, su, ssu*	*-na, hã*
Locative	*-i, hi, hiṁ*	*-hĩ*

Syncretized case paradigm in MIA, (Masica 1991, 231)

Loss of nominative–accusative contrast (880 CE)

(11) #kiṃ **tamu**   haṇ-ai   ṇa vālu
      QUES darkness.NOM.SG destroy-IMPF.3.SG NEG young
      ravi#   #kiṃ vālu **davaggi**   ṇa
      sun.NOM.SG QUES young fire.NOM.SG NEG
      ḍah-ai   **vaṇu**#   #kiṃ **kari**
      burn-IMPF.3.SG forest.NOM.SG QUES elephant.NOM.SG
      dal-ai   ṇa vālu **hari**#   #kiṃ vālu
      shatter-IMPF.3.SG NEG young lion.NOM.SG QUES young
      ṇa ḍaīk-ai   uragamaṇu#
      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)

Early Ergative Pattern with Agent Marking (609 CE)

(12) **tiy-e** vi avaloi-o di-ṭṭho ya
she-INST.SG also look-PERF.M.SG notice-PERF.M.SG and

ṇā-e so puriso
she-INST.SG that.NOM.SG man.NOM.SG

cakkhuramaṇo
eye-beautiful.NOM.SG

'She (the maidservant) also *looked*, and she *noticed* that man,
attractive to the eye.'(VH:K:9.8)

Late Ergative Pattern without Agent Marking (Old Hindi)

(13) masi   kāgad   chū-yo   nahī kalam
      ink.Nom paper.M.Nom touch-Perf.M.Sg not **pen.F.Sg**
      gahī   nahi hāth jāro   juga māhātma
      take.Perf.F.Sg not hand four.Pl age.Pl glory.Nom
      jehi   **kabir**   jan-ā-yo   nāth
      who.Sg.Acc **Kabir.Obl** know-Caus-Perf.M.Sg lord.Nom
      'Kabir touched not ink nor paper, he took not pen in hand; He
      made known the lord to whom is glory in the four ages.'
      (Old Hindi; Kabir, Sakhi 183; Beames 1872–79, 269)

Interim Summary: MIA

- ▶ MIA saw massive syncretism of case forms.
- ▶ "Ergative alignment" is evidenced via agreement, even in the absence of overt agent marking.
- ▶ Additionally, MIA made use of Differential Case Marking (DCM).
- ▶ Aśokan inscriptions: in *-ta* participial clauses (Andersen 1986).
    - ▶ genitive only for animate agents
    - ▶ instrumental otherwise
- ▶ Even though massive case syncretism, seem to have a functioning (albeit reduced) case system.

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	Ergative	Instrumental	Genitive
Urdu/Hindi	ko	ne	se	ka/ki/ke
Gujarati	ne	-e	-e/thi	no/ni/nu/na/nã
Marathi	la	ne/ni	ne/ni	ca/ci/ce
Nepali	lai	le	le	ko/ka/ki
Punjabi	nũ	ne	kolõ	da/di/de
Sindhi	kʰe	-e/-an/-in	-e	jo/ji/je/ja/jyu
Bengali	ke	—	te	-(e)r
Oṛiya	ku	—	-e	-rɔ

Case Markers Across Indo-Aryan (Masica 1991, Ahmed Khan 2009)

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* → *kõ* → *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: *kanhaïN* (or *kanhaï, kanhi, kanhali, kaṇi*) →
    (*naī, nai*)
  - ► Mostly meant 'aside, near'.

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

Basic Questions

If the above is all correct, then:

► 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?

Next to no proposals for the first question.

Some high profile proposals for the second one.

Markedness and Dependent Case

- An attractive notion is *markedness* (see Malchukov and de Swart (2009), de Hoop (2009) for surveys).
- New case markers are predicted to arise first in situations where it is difficult to distinguish agents (A) and other subjects (S) from patients/objects (O), i.e., in *marked* situations.

  A   O

  S

  - Typical As: animate, agentive (transitive), topical
  - Typical Os: inanimate, indefinite

- *Dependent Case* (Baker, Marantz)
  - Similar focus on just a subset of core arguments.
  - Posits systematic asymmetries between external and internal arguments.

Overmarking

However:

► No good explanation for "over-marking", i.e., when both subject and object are marked overtly with innovated case markers.

► The subject is already marked, so why mark the object?

(14)

nadya=ne	**yasin=ko/*yasin**	mar-a
Nadya.F.Sg=Erg	Yassin.M.Sg=Acc/Yassin.M.Sg.Nom	hit-Perf.M.Sg

'Nadya hit Yassin.'   Urdu/Hindi

Undermarking

- ▶ On the other hand, one also has instances of undermarking.
- ▶ Recall the lion/elephant example where one could not distinguish subject from object (both participants animate and nominative).
- ▶ In the example below, subject and object also need to be distinguished, but the example is questionable (both participants inanimate).

(15)

    ??**pattʰɑr=ne** ʃiʃa   toṛ-a
    stone.M=Erg glass.M.Sg.Nom break-Perf.M.Sg
    'The stone/rock broke the glass.'   Urdu/Hindi
    (based on Mohanan 1994, 75)

Overmarking without Distinguishing

- ▶ In some Indo-Aryan languages, the same case marker is used for ergative and dative/accusative.
- ▶ Why mark both and yet not distinguish?

(16)   mɑn=ne   sɑhɑb=ne   mar-a
       Pron.1.Sg=Acc/Dat Sahib.M.Sg=Erg hit-Perf.M.Sg
       'The Sahib hit me.' (Shirani 1987)   Haryani

(17)   va-ṇe   ve-ne   dekʰ-y-u
       Pron.3Sg-Erg Pron.3Sg-Acc see-Perf-N
       'He/she saw him/her.' (Phillips 2013)   Kherwada Wagdi

Note: in Kherwarda Wagdi, *ne* and *ṇe* are variants of one another.

Symmetric DOM (Overmarking)

- ▶ DOM is expected to be mainly *asymmetric*, i.e., contrasting an unmarked object with a marked one.
- ▶ But one finds symmetric types of DOM.

More Direct (ko) vs. Indirect (se)

(18) a.

nadya   **yasin=ko**   mıl-i
Nadya.F.Sg.Nom Yassin.M.Sg=Acc meet-Perf.F.Sg
'Nadya met Yassin.'   Urdu/Hindi

  b.

nadya   **yasin=se**   mıl-i
Nadya.F.Sg.Nom Yassin.M.Sg=Inst meet-Perf.F.Sg
'Nadya met Yassin.'   Urdu/Hindi

Symmetric DOM (Overmarking)

Type of Path

(19) a.

　　us=le　　　　　　dilli=**dek^hi** kat^hmandu=samma baaṭo　　　banaa-yo
　　Pron.3.Sg=Erg Delhi=Abl Kathmandu=to　　street.Nom make-Past
　　'He built a street from Delhi to Kathmandu.'　　　　　Nepali
　　Ahmed Khan (2009), **static path**

　　b.

　　u　　　　　　　dilli=**baaṭa** kat^hmandu=samma kud-yo
　　Pron.3.Sg.Nom Delhi=Abl　Kathmandu=to　　ran-Past
　　'He ran from Delhi to Kathmandu.'　　　　　　　Nepali
　　Ahmed Khan (2009), **dynamic path**

Symmetric DOM (Overmarking)

Attainment of Endpoint (boundedness)

(20) a.

ek   vilayat **mẽ** poãce
one city   in reached
'reached a city' (Dehalvi, 1804)   Old Urdu

b.

ıs   mɑnzıl   **ko**   kɑb   poãco-ge
this destination Dat/Acc when reach.2-Fut.Pl
'When will (you) reach this destination?' (Dehalvi 1804) Old Urdu

(Recall the Sanskrit Dative/Accusative alternation for physical
vs. non-physical movement.)

Differential Subject Marking (DSM)

- ▶ DSM is similarly complex.
- ▶ One finds asymmetric DSM, but also with intransitives where there is no need to distinguish one argument from the other.

  (21) a.
    ram   k^{h}ãs-a
    Ram.M.Sg.Nom cough-Perf.M.Sg
    'Ram coughed.'   Urdu
        b.
    ram=ne   k^{h}ãs-a
    Ram.M.Sg=Erg cough-Perf.M.Sg
    'Ram coughed **(purposefully)**.' (Tuite et al. 1985, 264)   Urdu

- ▶ The ergative is generally associated with the initiation of an action (agency).

DSM and Modality

(22) a.

   nadya=ko zu   ja-na   hε
   Nadya.F.Sg=Dat zoo.M.Sg.Loc go-Inf.M.Sg be.Pres.3.Sg
   'Nadya has/wants to go to the zoo.'   Urdu

  b.

   nadya=ne zu   ja-na   hε
   Nadya.F.Sg=Erg zoo.M.Sg.Loc go-Inf.M.Sg be.Pres.3.Sg
   'Nadya wants to go to the zoo.'   Urdu

(23) a.

   ami toma=ke cai
   I.Nom you=Acc wants
   'I want you.' (Klaiman 1980, 279)   Bengali

  b.

   amar toma=ke cai
   I.Gen you=Acc wants
   'I need you.' (Klaiman 1980, 279)   Bengali

Information Structure

- ▶ Dalrymple and Nikolaeva (2011) implicate information structural concerns in the rise of object marking.

- ▶ Focus particularly on DOM.

- ▶ Suggest that Urdu/Hindi dative/accusative *ko* arose as a secondary topic marker.

- ▶ Crosslinguistic development of secondary topic markers into specificity/definiteness markers.

(20)   nadya   **kɪtab/kɪtab=ko**   xɑrid-e-g-i
        Nadya.F.Sg.Nom book.F.Sg.Nom/book.F.Sg=Acc buy-3.Sg-Fut-F.Sg
        'Nadya will buy a/the book.'   Urdu/Hindi

- ▶ Does not explain the full range of DOM found in Indo-Aryan.

- ▶ Also no hard and fast historical evidence (so far).

Information Structure

- ▶ Still, Dalrymple and Nikolaeva (2011) are right that information structure is implicated in case marking patterns across South Asia.
- ▶ Hyslop (2010): One use of the ergative is to mark focus in Kurtöp (Tibeto-Burman)
- ▶ Need to take this into account in an analysis of case.

Taking Stock

- ▶ Indo-Aryan contains DCM systematically.
- ▶ The patterns are not as simple as expected under a markedness/indexing view.
- ▶ There is no good explanation why new case markers are drawn primarily from spatial terms.
- ▶ See Reinöhl (2015) for a proposal on how various different types of spatial terms became spatial postpostions in Indo-Aryan in the first place.

But how does a spatial postposition become a core case marker?

Case as a Multidimensional Phenomenon

The following dimensions of meaning/expression crop up over and over again in crosslinguistic generalizations:

- ▶ Participant Relations
    - ▶ Thematic Relations (agent, patient, goal)
    - ▶ A, O, S
- ▶ Information Structure (Given vs. not)
- ▶ Quantizability/Scalarity (event structure)
- ▶ Figure/Ground

Most approaches to case focus on a subset, with most attention devoted to the identifcation of participant relations.

But not:
how the participants relate to the **structure** of a given **event**.

Proposal for Case Innovation

- ▶ Spatial terms express Figure/Ground relations (Talmy 1975)
- ▶ Figure/Ground are generally in a static relationship to one another
    - ▶ adpositions (*The cat on the sofa*)
    - ▶ copula type of predications (*be, seem, contain*, e.g., *The girl is on the sofa.*)
- ▶ The static Figure/Ground relationships can be reinterpreted as relationships between a Figure/participant and a Ground/(sub)event → **case marking develops**.

Figure/Ground (Talmy 1975)

Figure: The FIGURE object is a moving or conceptually movable point whose path or site is conceived as a variable the particular value of which is the salient issue.

Ground: The GROUND object is a reference-point, having a stationary setting within a reference-frame, with respect to which the FIGURE's path or site receives characterization.

▶ Figures have characteristics of Proto-Agents (Dowty 1991)

Proposal for Case Innovation

These static Figure/Ground relationships can be reinterpreted as relationships between event participants.
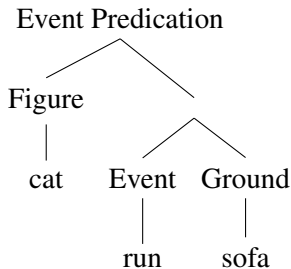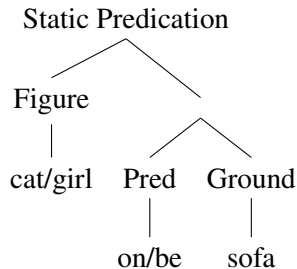
The cat is on the sofa. vs. *The cat runs on the sofa.*

Figure/Ground

- ▶ The structure and semantics of adpositions have given rise to interesting modern formulations of Talmy's original Figure/Ground proposal, e.g., Svenonius (2010).

- ▶ The Figure/Ground configuration is also taken as a basic in Ramchand's (2008) proposals for the representation of event structure in terms of subevents and participants.

  - ▶ init (initiator)
  - ▶ process (undergoer of process)
  - ▶ result (changed/resulting entity)

The Key to Case: (Lexical) Semantics

- ▶ Spatial terms are fundamentally concerned with relating a entity (Figure) to a given space (Ground).
- ▶ Case is fundamentally concerned with the relationship participants have to a given event.
- ▶ There is parallelism in this relation that offers natural opportunities for language change.

Static Property Predication

$$PredP_{stat}$$

FIGURE/HOLDER

$$Pred_{stat} \quad XP$$

GROUND/PROPERTY
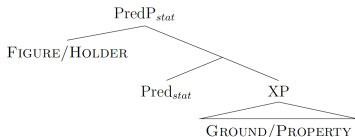
Dynamic Property Predication ($\pm$ continuous)

$$PredP_{dyn}$$

UNDERGOER

$$Pred_{dyn} \quad XP$$

PATH
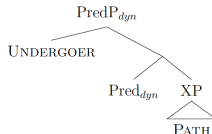
(From Ramchand 2017)

The Ergative

- ▶ Recall the most likely reconstruction for the ergative *ne*.

$$> \text{Ablative 'from'} \qquad\qquad > \text{Agentive}$$
$$\text{Skt. 'ear'} \quad > \text{'near'}$$
$$> \text{Dative (and Accusative)}$$

- ▶ Relevant examples:

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

  (22)   mɛ̃=ne awaz   sunn-i
          I=Erg   sound.F.Nom hear-Perf.F.Sg
          'I heard a sound.'   Urdu/Hindi

The Ergative

```
                    Static Predication
                   /                \
              Figure               /    \
                |               Pred    Ground
          a heard sound          |         |
                               from/by     me
```
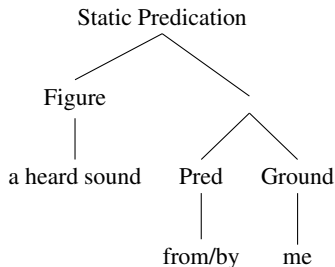
- ► The original Sanskrit instrumental is lost/reduced.
- ► A new marker is brought into the language to mark ablatives/source: *ne* (from *kanhaiN*).
- ► It is interpreted as a spatial marker, expressing a static Figure/Ground predication.

The Ergative

- ▶ The stative predication is unnatural in several ways.
  - ▶ The actual event is expressed as a property of the Figure.
  - ▶ The sentient/animate participant is a Ground, but animates are preferred as Figures.
- ▶ So an eventive reconfiguration takes place.
- ▶ And the formerly spatial marker becomes a core case marker.
- ▶ But it keeps its agentive (=source of action) semantics.

Event Predication

Figure

$I_{ne=\text{ERG}}$ Event   Ground

hear   sound
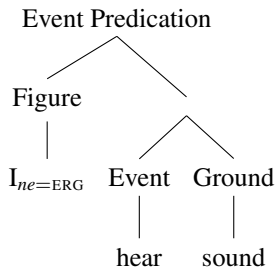
The Dative/Accusative

- ▶ *ko* first entered NIA around 1200 CE.
- ▶ It means something like *at/to*, derived from the Sanskrit for 'side'.
- ▶ 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).

- ▶ *ko* in Urdu/Hindi today marks
    1. Indirect Objects: goals
    2. Subject: experiencer/goal
    3. Object: animacy & specificity (roughly)

The Dative/Accusative

- ► As an originally spatial term, *ko* marked goals/locations and marked Ground arguments.

Static Predication

Figure

grief   Pred   Ground

at   me
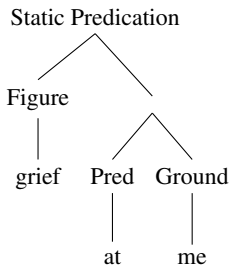
- ► For sentient goals/locations, this again resulted in a semantic mismatch ⟶ reanalysis of the sentient goal/location argument as a Figure.

Experiencer Subjects

- ▶ Because the originally locative argument was reanalyzed as a Figure, *ko* was drawn into the core case marking inventory.

- ▶ In Urdu it now marks experiencer subjects.

Static Predication

Figure

$I_{ko=\text{EXP}}$ Pred   Ground

is   grief
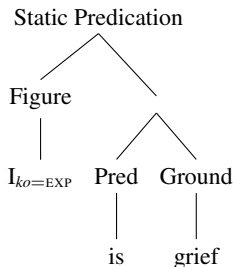
- ▶ See also Schätzle (2018) on the history of dative subjects in Icelandic.

The Dative/Accusative

- ▶ Differential Object Marking (animacy and specificity) is more difficult to account for.
- ▶ One would again begin with a Figure/Ground relationship.
- ▶ The predication is eventive, but the Ground is a location/goal.

Event Predication

Figure

woman   Pred   Ground

seek   husband$_{ko}$
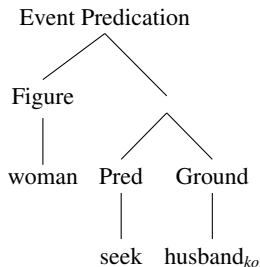
The Dative/Accusative

- ▶ The original Ground as a goal/location can be seen as a natural result or culmination for verbs like 'seek' or 'teach'.
- ▶ It is thus reanalyzed as instantiating the result subevent of those predicates.
- ▶ Over time it becomes associated with specificity $\longrightarrow$ Differential Object Marking

Event Predication

init

woman   Pred   result

seek   husband$_{ko}$
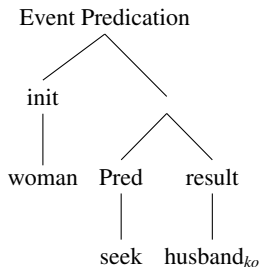
Case Polysemy

What accounts for polysemies such as Ergative/Dative or Ergative/Instrumental/Genitive?

► Clue lies in the original semantics of the spatial terms/adpositions.

(24) a. Amra opened the door with the key. (Means/Instrumental)
     b. Ravi sat with the teddy bear. (Locational)

► Need to delve into the semantics of adpositions (e.g., Kracht 2002, Zwarts 1997).

► Ahmed Khan (2009) has some interesting proposals that allow for underspecification and hence also polysemy.

► The different versions of the same adposition are drawn into the case system differently – so the same adposition could end up as an ergative but also as a dative.

Conclusion

- ▶ Several dimensions play a role in the deployment of case marking.

  - ▶ Figure/Ground
  - ▶ Event Semantics/Participant Relations

- ▶ Major difference with resepct to Dependent Case, where case assignment fundamentally depends on the configuration of two DPs with respect to one another.

- ▶ Here, case is understood as fundamentally relating participants to event structure (following Ramchand's overall system and insights).

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