Case & Agreement

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Outline

Linking forms to meaning I

Mohanan (1982)

Marking grammatical function: Malayalam [Dravidian]

a. kuʈʈi kaɾaññu.
   child cried
   'The child cried.'
b. puucca uraŋŋi.
   cat   slept
   'The cat slept.'
c. kuʈʈi aana-ye ṉuʟʟi
   child elephant pinched
   'The child pinched the elephant.'

Linking forms to meaning II

Marking function

c. kuʈʈi aana-ye ṉuḷḷi
    child elephant pinched
    'The child pinched the elephant.'

d. kuʈʈi-ye aana   ikkiḷiyaaki
    child   elephant tickled
    'The elephant tickled the child.'

e. eli-ye puucca ṭiṉṉu.
    rat cat   ate
    'The cat ate the rat.'

f. kuʈʈi amma-kkə aana-ye wittu
    child mother   elephant sold
    'The child sold the elephant to Mother.'

Linking forms to meaning III

Marking function

f.   kuʈʈi amma-kkə aana-ye wittu
       child mother   elephant sold
       'The child sold the elephant to Mother.'

g.   kuʈʈi-kkə puucca-ye aana   koʈuʈʈu
       child   cat   elephant gave
       'The elephant gave the cat to the child.'

h.   amma pakṣi-ye puucca-kkə koʈuʈʈu
       mother bird   cat   gave
       'Mother gave the bird to the cat.'

Malayalam Case-marking

Morphological marking of grammatical function

Function	Case-ending	Case name	Example
SUBJ	$\emptyset$	Nominative	kuʈʈi
OBJ	-ye	Accusative	kuʈʈi-ye
OBJ2	-kkə	Dative	kuʈʈi-kkə

Knowing a noun in Malayalam means knowing at least these three forms.

Latin Case-marking

Morphological marking of grammatical function

Nominative	Brutus	Brutus venit
Accusative	Brutum	Brutum video
Genitive	Bruti	cane Bruti
Dative	Bruto	Servos puella Bruto donat
Ablative	Brutis	Brutis puella amatur
Vocative	Brute	Et tu, Brute !

Knowing a noun in Latin means knowing not only these forms, but also another set of plural forms (6 x 2 forms).

* Et tu, Brutus! [staggering offstage]
Amor Dei magnus est!

Which noun determines the form of the adjective?

Latin adjectives

Latin adjectives agree with the nouns they modify in case, number, and gender.

	Singular			Plural		
	Masc.	Fem.	Neuter	Masc.	Fem.	Neuter
Nom.	bonus	bona	bonum	boni	bonae	bona
Voc.	bone					
Acc.	bonum	bonam	bonum	bonos	bonas	bona
Gen.	boni	bonae	boni	bonorum	bonarum	bonorum
Dat.	bono	bonae	bono	bonis	bonis	bonis
Abl.	bono	bonã	bono	bonis	bonis	bonis

Functional consequences

1. Morphology is used to express grammatical functions
2. Word order functions less for signaling grammatical function, more for signaling discourse properties (given/new, topic)
3. Knowing how to construct a well-formed clause means knowing how to produce appropriate cases for all grammatical functions that need to be expressed.

Functional shift in GF expression

Constituent structure	
PS rule	$\text{S} \rightarrow \text{V}\ \underset{\text{SUBJ}}{\text{NP}}\ (\underset{\text{OBJ}}{\text{NP}})$
Lex entry	devour $\begin{bmatrix} \langle\text{AGENT, PATIENT}\rangle \\ \quad\mid\qquad\quad\mid \\ \quad\text{SUBJ}\quad\ \ \text{OBJ} \end{bmatrix}$
Morphological	
PS rule	$\text{S} \rightarrow (\text{NP})\ \text{V}\ (\text{NP})\ (\text{NP})$
Lex entry	devour $\begin{bmatrix} \langle\quad\text{AGENT}\quad,\quad\text{PATIENT}\ \rangle \\ \quad\mid\qquad\qquad\quad\mid \\ \quad\text{SUBJ}\qquad\quad\text{OBJ} \\ \text{CASE=NOM}\ \ \text{CASE=ACC} \end{bmatrix}$

Grammatical cases

1 Subjects

Semantic roles

a.	*Alan* was frightened by the storm.	Experiencer
b.	*The stone* rolled down the hill.	Theme
c.	*The obelisk* occupied the top of the hill.	Theme
d.	*The fog* extends from London to Oxford.	Theme

2 Objects

Semantic roles

e.	Alan drained *the skull* of blood.	Source
f.	Alan hit the fence with the stick.	Goal
g.	The Greeks fought/met (with) the Cypriots.	Agent?
h.	The obelisk occupied *the top of the hill*.	Location

Semantic cases

Malayalam, Mohanan (1982)

a. jooŋ-*inte* kuṭṭi aana-ye ṇuḷḷi.
   John-GEN child elephant pinched
   'John's child pinched the elephant.

b. kuṭṭi skuuḷ-*il* pooyi
   child school went
   'The child went to school.'

c. amma kuṭṭi-ye waṭi-*yaal* aṭiccu
   mother child stick beat
   'Mother beat the child with a stick.'

Malayalam cases

Morphological marking of grammatical function

Type	Function	Case-ending	Case name
Grammatical	SUBJ	∅	Nominative
	OBJ	-ye	Accusative
	OBJ2	-kkə	Dative
Semantic	possessor	-inte ∼ -(u)ţe	Genitive
	instrument	-(y)aal	Instrumental
	location	-il	Locative

Function of a grammatical case marking system

who does what to whom

INTRANSITIVE		SUBJECT[S]
TRANSITIVE	AGENT[A]	PATIENT[P]

Marking the participant roles in a transitive clause

Function of a grammatical case marking system

who does what to whom

INTRANSITIVE		SUBJECT[S]
TRANSITIVE	AGENT[A]	PATIENT[P]

Nominative/Accusative

Function of a grammatical case marking system

who does what to whom

   INTRANSITIVE   SUBJECT[S]
   TRANSITIVE   AGENT[A]   PATIENT[P]
   Ergative/Absolutive

Function of a grammatical case marking system

who does what to whom

INTRANSITIVE	AGENT[A]	PATIENT[P]
TRANSITIVE	AGENT[A]	PATIENT[P]

Active/Stative (split intransitive, nominative/absolute)

English

Case in pronouns only

a. He   walks
    NOM-3sgmasc walk
    He walks.
b. I   walk
    NOM-1sg walk
    I walk.
c. He   kicks me
    NOM-3sgmasc kick   ACC-1sg
    He kicks me.
d. I   kick him.
    NOM-1sg kick ACC-3sgmasc
    I kick him.

Pseudo-English

If English pronouns had ergative/absolutive case

a. He   walks
   NOM-3sgmasc walk
   He walks.
b. I   walk
   NOM-1sg walk
   I walk.
c. Him   kicks I
   ACC-3sgmasc kick   NOM-1sg
   He kicks me.
d. Me   kick he.
   ACC-1sg kick NOM-3sgmasc
   I kick him.

Basque

a. gizon-a   etorri da
    man-ABS arrive aux
    'The man has arrived.'
a. gizon-ak   mutil-a   ikusi du
    man-ERG boy-ABS see   aux
    'The man saw the boy.'

Two patterns for grammatical case
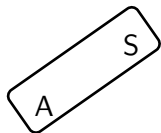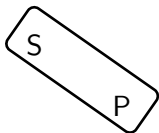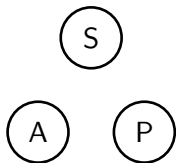
Why is this impossible?

Intransitive

(S)

[A   P]

Transitive

Is this impossible?

Active/stative

van Valin (1990): a variety of parameters govern intransitive verb splits.
There are also fluid S systems (in which a single verb shows both cases)

1. Change of state
2. Control/volitionality
3. Stage-level versus individual level (feel cold vs be tall)

Pseudo-English II

If English pronouns were active/stative

  a.   She   walks
         NOM-3sgfem walk
         He walks.

  b.   Her   is pregnant
         ACC-3sg is pregnant
         She is pregnant

  c.   She   kicks her
         NOM-3sgfem kick   ACC-3sg
         She kicks her.

Choctaw

Dahlstrom (1983), Broadwell (1987)

Basic transitives and intransitives

a. **Chi**-   ahpali -**li**   -h
2sgSeriesII kiss   **1stsgSeriesI** Tense
"I kissed you.'

b. Balili -**li**   -h
run   **1stsgSeriesI** Tense
'I ran.'

c. **Chi**-   kayyah
2sgSeriesII pregant
'You are pregnant.

Summary

1. Four logically possible patterns of ASP marking. Two are basically functionally impossible.

2. Of the remaining two possibilities:

ASP systems

Nominative accusative	Indo-European, overwhelming majority of case marking systems
Ergative absolutive	Australian, Basque

3. The active stative pattern explores a different space of possibilities, because S is split into two categories. The S-splitting does not always work the same way, and it is never as simple as AGENT/PATIENT.

Broadwell, George Aaron. 1987.
Multiple theta-role assignment.
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