

The prodigal nominative: an Andic story.

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1 Introduction

- Andic languages: Andi, Akhvakh, Bagvalal, Botlikh, Chamalal, Godoberi, Karata, and Tindi
- data from (Creissels 2009), (Pasquereau 2010), (Pasquereau 2011), and from available dictionaries: (Magomedova 1999), (Magomedova 2003), (Magomedova 2004), (Magomedova and Abdulaeva 2007), (Magomedova and Khalidova 2001), (Saidova 2006)



Figure 1: Andic languages in Dagestan

(1) Claim

The grammars of Andic languages have a constraint against nominative-less case frames (*-NOM)

*Part of this work was done in collaboration with Denis Creissels, *Université Lumière Lyon II*.

- case frames with nominative case are expected ('regular')

- case frames without a nominative case are unexpected ('exceptional')

– <ERG>

- (2) imo-l bil'e x̄ã-da idja Karata
father₀-ERG too_much snore-IPF COP
Father is snoring a lot.

– <ERG, GEN>

- (3) hu-š^w-e daru-ĥi-Ļi ĥalbiĥil-āri Akhvakh
DEM-M₀-ERG medicine-N₀-GEN try-PF
He tried the medicine.

– <ERG, LOC, LOC>

- (4) ho-š^u-l di-č'o baĥilo-Ļi pūš-ā Karata
DEM-M₀-ERG 1SG₀-TPL[LOC] face₀-TPL[LOC] pulverise-CAUS.PF
He punched me in the face very hard.

Q1: If there is a constraint against nominative-less case frames, how can they arise?

Q2: Once they have arisen, what is the effect of the constraint?

Q3: How does that constraint interact with the semantics of case?

2 Background of Andic morphosyntax

- the nominative (a.k.a. absolutive) case is the unmarked case, it is also used as the citation form of nouns
- verbs agree in gender and number (a.k.a. class) with the nominative argument only
- the other cases are marked by suffixes (they attach directly to the unmarked stem or to an 'augmented' stem called *oblique stem*)
- spatial case endings consist of 2 formatives: a topological marker (TPL) and a directionality marker (DIR) (as with English *onto*: *on* 'TPL' + *to* 'DIR')
- ergative case alignment

(5) a. b-okoše ād-o atobuši-ī-g-e b-eq'-īri Akhvakh
 H⁺-most person-PL bus-N₀-TPL-LOC H⁺-come-PF.H⁺

Most people came by bus.

b. wašo-de istaka b-iq'^w-aj-ē godi
 boy₀-ERG glass N-break-CAUS-ADV.N COP.N

The boy broke the glass.

- constituent order plays no role in the expression of argument structure: valency patterns are defined in terms of case frames

3 Origin of <ERG, LOC> and <ERG, ALL>

- these case frames are found with the verbs of damage to the body *bite*, *sting*, *pinch*, and the 'peer verbs' *look*, *listen*.

- <ERG, LOC>

(6) di-g-e l'iz^wali-de č'in-āri Akhvakh
 1SG₀-TPL-LOC wasp₀-ERG sting-PF

A wasp stung me.

(7) o-š^w-i č'un-o di-č'-i Tindi
 DEM-M₀-ERG pinch-PF 1SG₀-TPL-LOC/ALL

He pinched me.

- <ERG, ALL>

(8) wašo-de di-g-a eq'-ari Akhvakh
 boy₀-ERG 1SG₀-TPL-ALL look-PF

The boy looked at me.

(9) Hypothesis:
 <ERG, NOM, LOC/ALL> → <ERG, LOC/ALL>

- the NOM argument can be lost in a number of ways, I focus on incorporation with the V: `X_{ERG} [applies/holds Y_{NOM}] on Z_{LOC/ALL}'

- incorporation in Tindi:

- Y_{NOM} = eq'^wa 'stinger' in eq'^wa k^wēl'a 'sting', lit. 'hit the stinger'
- Y_{NOM} = saldi 'teeth' in saldi bič'i^wa 'bite', lit. 'hold the teeth'

- in the next 2 sections, we will see

- evidence of incorporation, and
- evidence of the constraint against nominativeless case frames in the re-emergence of a nominative-marked argument

4 listen across Andic languages

- *listen* is used in 3 case frames across Andic languages

– <ERG, NOM, ALL> in Godoberi *hāt'uk'ja rīki*, $Y_{NOM} = hāt'uk'ja$ `ear'

(10) wašu-di imu-q̄-i hāt'uk'ja r-iḱ-i r-uk̄-ida Godoberi
son₀-ERG father₀-TPL-LOC/ALL ear N⁺-hold-INF N⁺-must-IPF

The son must listen to his father.

– <ERG, ALL> in Bagvalal *aštīla*, Chamalal *woḷuk'la*, Tindi *aniḱ'ij'a*

(11) di-q̄-a aniḱ'j-ā hik'ji o-š^w-i Tindi
1SG₀-TPL-LOC/ALL listen-IPF NEG DEM-M₀-ERG

He does not listen to me.

– <NOM, ALL> in Akhvakh *hādaḱurula*, Karata *ādukaḱa*

(12) waša imo-g-a hādaḱ-ari Akhvakh
boy father₀-TPL-ALL listen-PF

The boy listened to his father.

(13) waša imo-ḱa-r āduk-e Karata
boy father₀-TPL-ALL listen-PF

The boy listened to his father.

(14) Etymology of `listen' in Akhvakh
hāde b-iḱurula > hādaḱurula
ear hold listen

- reconstruction of the evolution of the case frame associated to *listen*

– Initial stage: <ERG, NOM, ALL> Godoberi
– Nominativeless stage: <ERG, ALL> Bagvalal, Chamalal, Tindi
– Regularized stage: <NOM, ALL> Akhvakh, Karata

- pressure to conform to the constraint against nominativeless frames

5 bite across Andic languages

- *bite* is used in 3 case frames across Andic languages

– <ERG, NOM, LOC> in Tindi *saldi biḱ'ij'a*, $Y_{NOM} = saldi$ `teeth'

(15) ḱ^wāj-i di-č'-i sadi b-iḱ'-o. Tindi
dog-ERG 1SG₀-TPL-LOC tooth.PL N-hold-PF

The dog bit me.

(*Sh. Magomedov, p.c.*)

– <ERG, LOC> in Akhvakh *q'eleč'urula*, Chamalal *q'āna*, Karata *q^waraḱa*

(16) ḱ^waj-ol q^war-e di-č'o. Karata
dog-ERG bite-PF 1SG₀-TPL[LOC]

The dog bit me.

(17) ḱ^we-de di-g-e q' eleč'-ari. Akhvakh
dog-ERG 1SG₀-TPL-LOC bite-PF

The dog bit me.

(18) ḱ^waj-d q'ān-nida o-ḱu-č'. Chamalal
dog-ERG bite-PF DEM-M₀-TPL[LOC]

The dog bit him.

– <ERG, NOM> in Bagvalal *saḱīla*, Godoberi *q'ami*

(19) ḱamo-r saḱī di-b lela. Bagvalal
donkey₀-ERG bite.PF₁ 1SG₀[GEN]-N hand

The donkey bit my hand.

(20) ḱ^waji-di q'am-i ho-w. Godoberi
dog-ERG bite-PF₁ DEM-M

The dog bit him.

- Bagvalal *sālila* 'bite' <ERG, NOM> is cognate with 'tooth' in:
 - Bagvalal & Chamalal *salʷ*
 - Karata *sale*
 - Tindi *salu*
 - Andi *sol*

(21) Plausible etymology of 'bite' in Bagvalal
salʷ + V > *sālila*

- Godoberi *q̄'ami* <ERG, NOM>, Chamalal *q̄'āna* <ERG, LOC> can be reconstructed to **q̄'am*
- case frame difference is not due to two different etymologies, change must have occurred in the case frame of at least one of them
- reconstruction of the evolution of the case frame associated to *bite*
 - Initial stage: <ERG, NOM, LOC> Tindi
 - Nominativeless stage: <ERG, LOC> Akhvakh, Chamalal, Karata
 - Regularized stage: <ERG, NOM> Bagvalal, Godoberi
- pressure to conform to the constraint against nominativeless frames

6 Semantically motivated change of case

6.1 Faithfulness to inherent cases

- Two ways to satisfy nominative constraint: is the choice random?
- No: which case-marked argument remains *unchanged* depends on its semantic role
- ERG and LOC/ALL are cases associated with specific semantic roles (i.e. they are 'inherent cases' Woolford (2006))
 - ERG is associated with the Agent semantic role

- LOC/ALL is associated with the Target (or Goal) semantic role

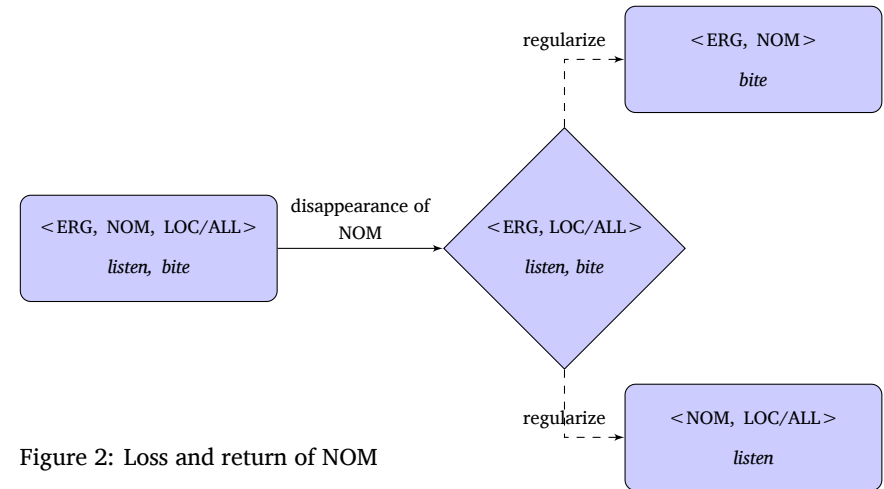


Figure 2: Loss and return of NOM

- at the nominativeless stage, *listen* is expressed in < $X_{ERG}, Y_{LOC/ALL}$ >
 - in the case frame associated to *listen*, Y is the target of X's attention
 - $Y_{target} \rightarrow Y_{LOC/ALL}$ (inherent case)
 - the case on $Y_{LOC/ALL}$ is 'protected', and the one on X_{ERG} is more likely to change
- at the nominativeless stage, *bite* is expressed in < $X_{ERG}, Y_{LOC/ALL}$ >
 - in the case frame associated to *bite*, X is the agent
 - $X_{agent} \rightarrow X_{ERG}$ (inherent case)
 - the case on X_{ERG} is 'protected', and the one on $Y_{LOC/ALL}$ is more likely to change
- because 'real agents' are linked to the semantics of ERG, and because targets are linked to the semantics of LOC/ALL, they are 'protected' from the effect of the nominative constraint
- the constraint against nominativeless case frames is 'blindly' active
- we see the effect of the nominative constraint on arguments whose semantic role is not inherently linked to the case they happen to bear

6.2 On the semantic import of NOM

- ERG and LOC/ALL, as inherent cases, are clearly linked to specific semantic values
- in $\langle X_{ERG}, Y \rangle$, NOM is linked to the notion of affectedness
 - learning argument structure depends on affectedness (Gropen et al. 1991)
 - role of affectedness in the dative alternation in English (Krifka 2013)

(22) Affectedness

X affects Y iff X causes Y to change.

- affectedness is gradable

$Y_1 >_{affected} Y_2$ iff Y_1 has undergone more change (from its initial state) than Y_2 has

(23) In the case frame $\langle X_{ERG}, Y \rangle$,
 where $Y = \text{NOM}$
 or
 $Y = \text{LOC/ALL}$
 the referent of $Y_{NOM} >_{affected}$ the referent of $Y_{LOC/ALL}$.

- evidence from reflexes of $*q'am$

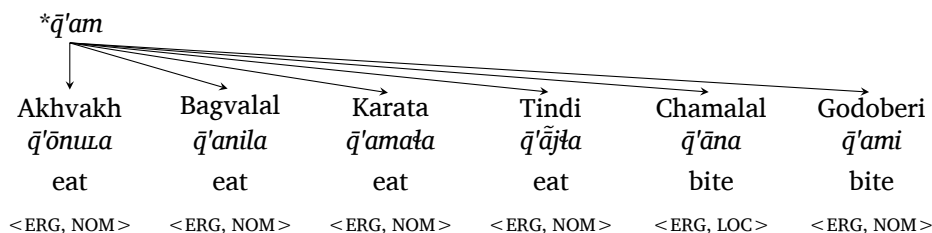


Figure 3: Reflexes of $*q'am$

(24) Generalization:

reflex of $*q'am = \text{'eat'} \rightarrow \langle \text{ERG}, \text{NOM} \rangle$

- evidence from case alternations

– Akhvakh $q'eleč'uru.a$ `bite'

* $\langle \text{ERG}, \text{LOC} \rangle$

(25) $wašo-de$ $šeče-g-e$ $q'eleč'-ari$.

boy₀-ERG apple-TPL-LOC bite-PF

The boy bit into the apple (clung to it).

(I. Abdulaeva, p.c.)

* $\langle \text{ERG}, \text{NOM} \rangle$

(26) $wašo-de$ $šeče$ $q'eleč'-ari$.

boy₀-ERG apple bite-PF

The boy bit off a chunk of apple.

– Karata $č'imata$ `pinch'

* $\langle \text{ERG}, \text{LOC} \rangle$

(27) $ho-šu-l$ $di-č'o$ $č'im-e$

DEM-M₀-ERG 1SG₀-TPL[LOC] pinch-PF

He pinched me.

* $\langle \text{ERG}, \text{NOM} \rangle$

(28) $ho-šu-l$ $bušīdi$ $č'im-e$

DEM-M₀-ERG berries pinch-PF

He crushed berries (into jam)

(R. Khalidova, p.c.)

- alternations in the case frame of *bite* and *pinch* show us 2 things:

- case change to NOM is first driven by really affected Y arguments while less affected Y arguments are last to shift (this may be the reason why the verbs meaning `eat' appear with $\langle \text{ERG}, \text{NOM} \rangle$, but there is still some variation with those meaning `bite')

- in the <ERG, NOM> case frame, ERG is not the only case with semantic import

(29) Conclusion:
To the extent that we need affectedness to explain these two patterns, it is plausible that it is also at play in the regularization of case frames.

7 Summary

- A1: the coalescence of nominative argument and V yields (accidental) 'exceptional' valency frames
- A2: 'exceptional' valency frames undergo regularization by changing one case to NOM
- A3: which argument/case, X_{ERG} or $Y_{LOC/ALL}$, remains *unchanged* depends on the semantic role of X, Y & with V that keep X_{ERG} , Y's shift to NOM happens first in uses of V in which Y is most affected (e.g. 'pinch')

Abbreviations

H^+ = human plural, N^+ = non-human plural, $_0$ = oblique stem, PL = plural, SG = singular, NOM = nominative, ERG = ergative, TPL = topological formative, LOC = locative, ALL = allative, ABL = ablative, COP = copula, IPF = imperfective, PF = perfective, N = neuter, CAUS = causative, ADV = adverb, DEM = demonstrative, GEN = genitive, INF = infinitive, NEG = negation

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