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Differential A Marking

Diachronic developments and restrictions from a typological perspective

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Definitions

Differential Agent Marking (DAM)

Variation in case marking of the more agent-like argument of a bivalent or trivalent predicate

Valency

Purely semantic definition of arguments, advantages:

- Cross-linguistic comparison possible
- No preference of specific morphosyntactic processes, since
  - this is arbitrary
  - these processes don't exist or don't behave in the same way in all languages

Definitions

Macro-level semantic roles

(Bickel 2010, Witzlack-Makarevich 2011)

- S: the only argument of a 1-arg predicate
- A_{tr}: the more agent-like argument of a 2-arg predicate
- P: the more patient-like argument of a 2-arg predicate
- A_{ditr}: the more agent-like argument of a 3-arg predicate
- G: the more patient-like argument of a 3-arg predicate (mnemonic for 'Goal')
- T: neither more agent-like, nor more patient-like argument of a three-argument predicate (mnemonic for 'Theme')

Types of DAM

Conditions

- Referential properties of the A argument: e.g.

  lexical classes (e.g. pronouns vs. nouns), person, number, animacy, definiteness (rare), agentivity, focus

- Valency classes
- Clause properties:

  TAM categories, polarity, clause types (main vs. other), scenario (nature of co-arguments)

Definiteness

Adyghe (NW Caucasian; Russia; Kumakhov et al. 1996: 97)

DEF: A(ERG)
INDEF: A(unmarked)

a. *ps'as'e-**m*** *mə-r* *Ø-ə-ʃ'e-ne-p*
girl-**ERG** it/that.one-ABS 3P-3SG.A-do-FUT-NEG
'The girl will not do it.'

b. *ps'as'e* *mə-r* *Ø-ə-ʃ'e-ne-p*
girl it/that.one-ABS 3.P-3SG.A-do-FUT-NEG
'A girl will not do it.'

Valency classes (case frames)

Khwarshi (Nakh-Dagestanian; Russia; Khalilova 2009): selection:

a. A(ERG), P(ABS): default class

hed	*n-uq-i*	*ise*	*žu*	*bada.*
then	IV-close-PST.W	that.OBL.ERG	that.ABS	sack(IV)

'Then he closed that sack.'

b. A(LAT), P(ABS): esp. experiencer verbs

tuq-un	*c'odoraw-il*	*ʕadalaw-is*	*ze-qo*	*iss-u*	*xabar.*
hear-PST.UW	clever-LAT	fool-GEN1	bear-CONT	tell-PST.PTCP	talk

'Clever heard Fool talking to the bear.'

c. A(ABS), P(SUPERESSIVE):

kad	*hʕamʕayʕe-λ'o*	*buž-i.*
girl[ABS]	friend-SUPER	believe-PST.W

'The girl believed (her) friend.'

TAM

Georgian (Gurevich 2006)

- Present: A(NOM)
- Aorist: A(ERG)
- Perfect: A(DAT)

a. *k'ac-**i*** *dzayl-s* *xat'avs*
man-**NOM** dog-DAT paint.**PRS**.3SG.A.3P
'The man paints / is painting the dog.' (Present)

b. *k'ac-**ma*** *dzayl-i* *daxat'a*
man-**ERG** dog-NOM paint.**AOR**.3SG.A.3P
'The man painted the dog.' (Aorist)

c. *k'ac-**s*** *dzayl-i* *turme* *dauxat'avs*
man-**DAT** dog-NOM apparently paint.**PERF**.3SG.A.3P
'The man has apparently painted the dog.' (Perfect)

Interaction patterns: 4 variables

Sherpa: variables

→ Determining the domains in which the variables condition the splits

<table>
<tr><td>Pred. class</td><td colspan="3">default</td><td>non-default</td></tr>
<tr><td>Aspect</td><td colspan="2">IPFV</td><td>PFV
A(ERG)</td><td></td></tr>
<tr><td>Person</td><td colspan="2">non-1st</td><td>1st
A(ABS)</td><td></td></tr>
<tr><td>Information structure</td><td>non-focus
A(ABS)</td><td>focus
A(ERG)</td><td></td><td></td></tr>
</table>

→ still a simplified picture (cf. “non-default valency classes”)

Origins of DAM

- Subordinate (e.g. nominalized) clauses
- Biclausal constructions
- Detransitivized/intransitive constructions
- Extension of the use of case markers of other clausal dependents (arguments or adjuncts)
- Divergent morphological nature (e.g. suppletive pronouns)
- Indexicals, information structure markers > case markers

Subordinate constructions

Arguments often marked in the same way as in **possessive constructions**

- different sorts of subordinate clauses (often involving nominalized verb forms)
- argument marking (simplified; Koptjevskaja-Tamm 1993, Malchukov 2004):

a. A(ARG), P(ARG):
My horse winning the race came as no surprise.

b. A(POSS), P(ARG):
My horse's winning the race came as no surprise.

c. A(POSS), P(POSS):
My horse's winning of the race came as no surprise.

d. A(OBL), P(POSS):
The winning of the race by my horse came as no surprise.

Subordinate constructions

Different degrees of clausal integration:

more diversity in subordinate clauses than in main clauses:

Turkish (Kornfilt 2008: 84)

a. specific: A(GEN)

Köy-ü	***bir***	***haydut-un***	*bas-tığ-ın-ı*	*duy-du-m.*
village-ACC	INDEF	robber-GEN	raid-NMLZ-3-ACC	hear-PST-1SG

'I heard that a (certain) robber raided the village.'

b. non-specific, generic: A(NOM)

Köy-ü	***haydut***	*bas-tığ-ın-ı*	*duy-du-m.*
village-ACC	robber[NOM]	raid-NMLZ-3-ACC	hear-PST-1SG

'I heard that robbers raided the village.'

Subordinate constructions

Case frames of subordinate constructions in main clauses:

2 diachronic scenarios:

- **Insubordination**: main clause use of formally subordinate clauses (Evans 2007); i.e. no traces of a former main clause left
- **Clause fusion**: (former) main clause only contributes the verb, which develops to an AUX and forms a complex predicate with the lexical subordinate verb (e.g. Heine 1993, Bybee et al. 1994, Harris & Campbell 1995, Gildea 1998)

Subordinate clauses

Nominalized constructions used for certain TAM categories;
e.g. Suyá (Jêan; Brazil; de Castro Alves 2010):

Stage I:	[A-*te*	P	V.NMLZ]$_{subord}$	V	(main clauses:	A-Ø)
Stage II:	A-*te*	P	V.NMLZ	(AUX)	(other main clauses:	A-Ø)

Stage I: DAM conditioned by clause type:

- main clause: A-Ø
- subord. clause: A-*te*

Stage II: DAM additionally conditioned by tense and polarity (and lexical class)

- most (main) clauses: A-Ø
- FUT, NEG (pronouns only): A-*te*

i-rɛ	*hwĩsɨ*	*ren*	*mã*
1-ERG	fruit	pick.NMLZ	FUT

'I will pick fruit.' (Gildea & de Castro Alves 2010)

Biclausal constructions

2 clauses contribute arguments

Stage I: [1-arg clause] + [1-arg clause]

Stage II [2-arg clause (often with periphrastic verb form)]

Examples: (various) Nakh-Dagestanian languages (cf. Forker 2012): biabsolutive constructions: A(ABS), P(ABS)

Biabsolutive construction: each original clause contributes 1 argument

Stage I	[S(ABS)	[P(ABS)	V.LEX-CVB]	AUX]
Stage II	[A(ABS)	P(ABS)	V.LEX-CVB	AUX]

- used in imperfective contexts
- periphrastic verb form: converb (lexical part) + auxiliary
- rest of the paradigm: A in the ERG (or other cases)

Biclausal constructions

Example

Archi (Nakh-Dagestanian, Russia; Kibrik 1979: 67-69, cf. also Forker 2012)

a.	*buwa-**mu***	*x:^{w}alli*	*b-ar-ši*	*b-i*
	mother(II)-ERG	bread(III)[ABS]	III-make-CVB	III-be
	➔ ergative construction			
b.	*buwa*	*x:^{w}alli*	*b-ar-ši*	*d-i*
	mother(II)[ABS]	bread(III)[ABS]	III-make-CVB	II-be
	➔ biabsolutive construction			

both: 'Mother is baking the bread.'

P-oriented constructions

Passive/Resultative > default

Stage I

Default (active):	A(S-marking)	P(P-marking)
P-oriented:	A(OBL-marking)	P(S-marking)

Stage II:

Default	A(e.g. ERG)	P(S-marking)

P-oriented constructions

Indo-Aryan: 1) Resultative > Perfective paradigm
2) Decay of the case system

OIA	Resultative: **INS**	Rest: **NOM**	
MIA	Perfective: **INS**	Imperfective: **NOM**	**Resultative > Perfective**
Early NIA	Perfective: **OBL**	Imperfective: **NOM**	**Case decay** (incl. INS > OBL)
Later NIA	Perfective: **(OBL+)ERG**	Imperfective: **NOM**	**New ERG** (lg-specific)

Sanskrit (Old IA; Verbeke 2013: 76)

devadatt-ena *kaṭa-ḥ* *kṛ-ta-ḥ*
Devadatta-INS mat-NOM.SG make-PTCP.RES-M.NOM.SG
'The mat is made by Devadatta.'

Hindi (New IA): ERG < ABL < LOC < 'Ohr' (Butt & Ahmed 2010: 563)

Rām-ne *ravī-ko* *pīṭ-ā.*
Ram-ERG Ravi-ACC beat.PTCP.PFV-M.SG
'Ram beat Ravi.' (Mohanan 1994: 70)

Suppletive pronouns

Torwali (Indo-Aryan; Pakistan; Lunsford 2001)

Nouns: Decay of the case system in the SG
Pronouns: Case system preserved:

	NOM	ERG	ACC	GEN	OBL
1SG	***a***	***mæ***	***mæ***	***mi***	***me***
2SG	*tu*	*tæ*	*thæ*	*čhi*	*the*
1PL	*mo*	*moe*	*mo*	*mun*	*mo*
2PL	*tho*	*thoe*	*tho*	*thun*	*tho*

Interaction of the variables:

Lexical class, number	***Aspect, tense***	
	PFV, FUT	IPFV, NFUT
PRO, N.PL	**ERG**	**NOM**
N.SG	**NOM**	

Extensions of other case markers

Extension of the marking of instruments/sources/locations for unusual As:

- semantically unusual: inanimate As
- pragmatically unusual: focal, unexpected degree of agentivity etc.

Example: Goonyandi (Bunuban; Australia; McGregor 1990, 2010):

- ergative = instrumental
- animacy: ergative almost always employed on inanimate As, more rarely on pronominal As
- agentivity: no ergative marking signals low agentivity

Indexicals, information structure

- Precondition: Indexicals or focus markers occur particularly frequently on A arguments and are subsequently reanalyzed as A markers
- Example: Kuuk Thaayorre (Paman; Australia; Gaby 2006: 159)

  Stage I: FOC marker

  =*thurr* 'FOC'

  Stage II: FOC marker restricted to As (but not on all As)

  =*thurr* 'FOC', 'ERG' (optional, i.e. for focal As)

  Stage III: All As are marked with this marker (ERG)

  =*thurr* 'FOC' vs. -*thurr* 'ERG' (obligatory for all As)

➔ more diversity through reanalysis of morphemes other than case markers

Origins and developments

- Referential properties of the A argument
  - extensions of other case markers
  - P-oriented constructions
  - different developments of suppletive pronoun forms and non-suppletive noun forms
  - indexicals, pragmatic markers
- Valency classes (cf. also “strict” vs. “loose” ergative coding, Harris 1985)
  - extensions of other case markers
  - detransitivized/intransitive constructions
  - subordinate/nominalized constructions

Origins and developments

- TAM splits:
  - P-oriented constructions
  - subordinate/nominalized constructions
  - biclausal constructions
- Polarity:
  - subordinate/nominalized clauses
- main vs. subordinate clauses:
  - subordinate/nominalized constructions
- Scenario: frozen pragmatically conditioned DAM

Conclusions

- The emergence of DAM cannot be accounted for in terms of universal alignment preferences (cf. also Bickel & Witzlack-Makarevich 2008, Bickel et al. in press). Rather, there are genealogical and areal tendencies (and also idiosyncratic outcomes)
- New DAM patterns evolve through the reanalysis and extension of constructions that previously had different properties
- DAM is thus often just an epiphenomenon, a by-product of language change in other areas of grammar
- While direct functional explanations for typological regularities are useful and needed, indirect or historical explanations can often account for certain patterns more adequately
- DAM patterns don't emerge in random ways, there are recurrent developments
- High diversity in synchronic patterns