

Accusative case and the verbal domain in Hindi-Urdu

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1 Background

- (1) Two main approaches to case assignment: Agree-based case assignment and dependent case assignment. Both rely heavily on transitivity for acc assignment.
- (2) Dependent cases depend on the presence of another argument in the same local domain. acc is assigned to the lower argument in a TP, i.e. in a basic transitive clause.
- (3) The role of transitivity in Agree-based case assignment may be less obvious at first but is clearly seen with Burzio's generalisation which ties the presence of acc to the presence of external arguments (EAs), in particular, agents.
- (4) One way of deriving Burzio's Generalisation is to say that the functional head (typically Voice or ν) which introduces the EA and assigns it the agent theta-role is the same head which assigns acc.
- (5) There are two reasons to believe that the same head may not be responsible for both tasks in HU.
 - a. In some dialects, acc may be preserved in passive sentences (6).
 - b. In regular transitive clauses, the object can be nom despite the presence of an EA/agent (7).
- (6) *Omar=ko pakRa*
Omar=acc

2 Distribution of accusative case

2.1 Transitive clauses

(10) acc is marked with *-ko* in HU and is identical to the dat marker. It is found on DOs with both erg and nom subjects (11).

- (11) a. *Sana=ne seb(=ko) khaya.*
 Sana=erg apple(=acc) eat.pfv.m.sg
 'Sana ate an/the apple.'
- b. *Sana seb(=ko) kha-rahi he.*
 Sana.nom apple(=acc) eat-prog.f.sg be.3.sg
 'Sana is eating an/the apple.'

(12) acc alternates with nom due to differential-object-marking. DOM in HU is conditioned by specificity/deniteness (Butt, 1993; Butt and King, 2004; Mohanan, 1994).

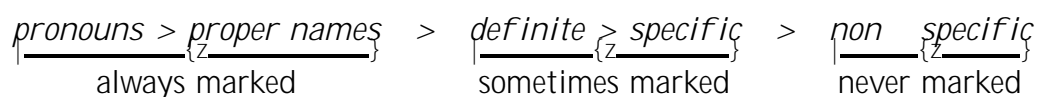


Figure 1: Deniteness scale and DOM in HU

(13) It has been shown that marked and bare objects are not in the same position in HU.

(14) Control into adjuncts: Marked objects can control the PRO subject of the adjunct (15a). Bare objects cannot (15b).

- (15) a. *Mina=ne_i bazaar=mein eik sailaani=ko_j [PRO_{i/j} nachthe*
 Mina=erg market=l oc one tourist=acc [PRO dance.ipfv.obl
hue] dekha
 be.pfv.obl] see.pfv.m.sg
 'In the market, Mina saw a tourist dancing / Mina saw a tourist while she was dancing.'
- b. *Mina=ne_i bazaar=mein eik sailaani_j [PRO_{i/??j} nachthe*
 Mina=erg market=l oc one tourist.nom [PRO dance.ipfv.obl
hue] dekha
 be.pfv.obl] see.pfv.m.sg
 'In the market, Mina saw a tourist while she was dancing / ??Mina saw a tourist dancing.'

(Bhatt, 2007:17)

2.3 Unaccusatives

2.4 Passives

- (37) Lack of acc on the promoted object is another reason for associating acc with the presence of the EA/agent.
- (38) Preserving dialects of HU are a well-known exception to this generalisation.
- (39) a. *Sana=ne Omar*(=ko) pakRa.* (active)
 Sana=erg Omar*(=acc) catch.pfv.m.sg
 `Sana caught Omar.'
- b. ***Omar** (Sana=se) pakRa gya.* (bare PN)
 Omar.nom (Sana=ins) catch.pfv.m.sg pass.m.sg
 `Omar was caught (by Sana).'
- c. ***Omar=ko** (*Sana=se) pakRa gya.* (marked PN)
 Omar=acc (*Sana=ins) catch.pfv.m.sg pass.m.sg
 `Omar was caught (*by Sana).'
- (40) a. *Sana=ne bistar(=ko) toR diya.* (active)
 Sana=erg bed(=acc) break give.pfv.m.sg
 `Sana broke the bed.'
- b. ***Bistar** (Sana=se) toRa gya.* (bare inanimate)
 Bed.nom (Sana=ins) break.pfv.m.sg pass.m.sg
 `The bed was broken (by Sana).'
- c. ***Bistar=ko** (*Sana=se) toRa gya.* (marked inanimate)
 Bed=acc (*Sana=ins) break.pfv.m.sg pass.m.sg
 `The bed was broken (*by Sana).'
- (41) When the demoted subject is included, the object can no longer have acc (39c, 40c, cf. 39b, 40b). This is exactly the opposite of what is expected if acc depends on the presence of the agent.
- (42) Bhatt (2007) shows that not all the passive examples given above involve promotion of the object, i.e. licensing by T, by testing their grammaticality in non-nite clauses. Marked passive subjects are possible in in-nitives (43). Unmarked passive subjects are only possible with DPs that are optionally marked in active clauses (44, cf. 39a, 40a).¹

¹The subject can also be gen. This may be similar to the ACC-ing vs POSS-ing alternation in English gerunds.

- (43) a. [*Rina=ko bazaar=mein dekha jaana sharam=ki baat*
 [Rina=acc market=loc see.pfv.m.sg pass.inf] shame=gen.f.sg talk
he.
 be.pres.3.sg

‘For Rina to be seen in the market is a matter of shame.’

- b. [*PeR=ko is tarah=se kaata jaana sharam=ki*
 [Tree=acc this.obl way=ins cut.pfv.m.sg pass.inf] mistake
baat he.
 be.pst.f.sg

‘For the tree to be cut down like this is a matter of shame.’

(Bhatt, 2007:9)

- (44) a. * [*Rina bazaar=mein dekha jaana sharam=ki baat*
 [Rina.nom market=loc see.pfv.m.sg pass.inf] shame=gen.f.sg talk
he.
 be.pres.3.sg

∉ ‘For Rina to be seen in the market is a matter of shame.’

- b. [*PeR is tarah=se (*Sana=se) kaata jaana*
 [Tree.nom this.obl way=ins (*Sana=ins) cut.pfv.m.sg pass.inf]
sharam=ki baat he.
 mistake be.pst.f.sg

‘For the tree to be cut down like this (*by Sana) is a matter of shame.’

(Bhatt, 2007:9)

- (45) We can speculate that there are two processes at work:

- a. One involves true passivisation: acc is not assigned, the object is promoted and licensed by T, and receives nom. It is possible to optionally include the demoted subject.
- b. The other is not true passivisation: acc is assigned, the object is not promoted nor licensed by T. The demoted subject cannot be included. However, passive morphology is still seen.

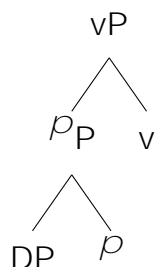
3 Complex verbs

3.1 Morphologically complex verbs: Indir258(tr)cbs

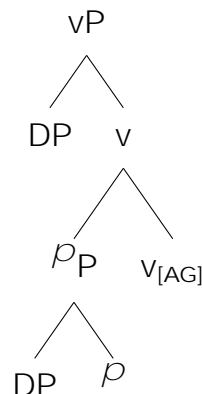
- (47) Indirect causatives are formed using the *-v(aa)* suffix (Bhatt and Embick, 2017).
- a. NULL class: *kat-v-aa* (cause to cut), *pit-v-aa* (cause to beat), *khul-v-aa* (cause to open) ...
 - b. -AA class: *pak-v-aa* (cause to cook), *bach-v-aa* (cause to save), *hil-v-aa* (cause to rock) ...
- (48) Indirect causatives can only be used in transitive contexts. An instrumental agent can be optionally included.
- (49) a. *Sana* (Omar=*se*)
Sana.nom (Omar

(56) From these tests, Bhatt and Embick (2017) conclude that passives grammatically encode agentivity while unaccusatives do not.

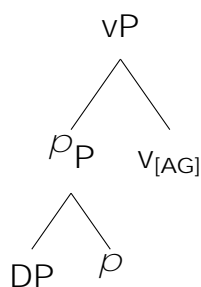
(57) a. Structure of unaccusative verbs:



b. Structure of transitive verbs:

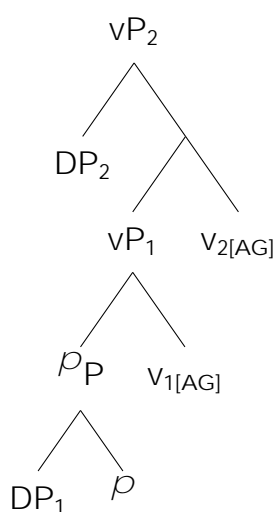


(58) Structure of passive verbs:



(59) So passives have the same $v_{[AG]}$ as transitive verbs which encodes agentivity but do not project an EA in specifier position. Unaccusatives have neither agentivity nor an EA.

(60) Structure of indirect causatives:

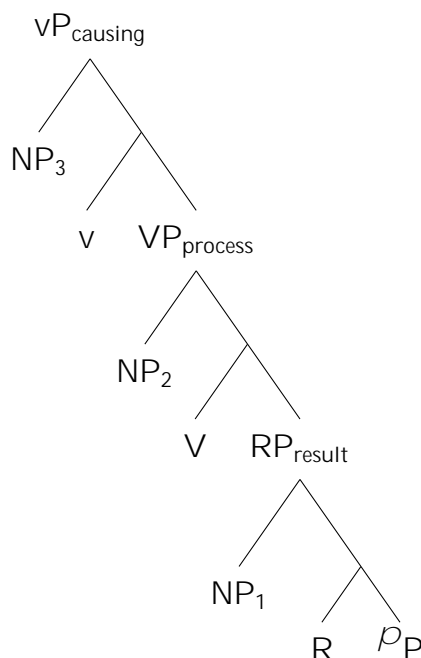


(61) The embedded passive structure is responsible for the ins agent in indirect causatives.

- (62) How are ins agents introduced in passive structures?
- (63) Prediction: Indirect causatives should only be possible where passives are.
- (64) This holds for some exceptional verbs (e.g. *chah* 'want') which cannot undergo passivisation and also cannot form indirect causatives.
- (65) Bhatt and Embick (2017) claim that unergatives are problematic for their analysis because they can be passivised (66b) but cannot form indirect causatives without being transitivised (66c).
- (66) a. *Patang uR-rahi he.*
Kite.nom y-prog.f.sg be.pres.3.sg
'The kite is ying.'
- b. *Patang uRi gai.*
Kite.nom y.pfv.f.sg pass.f.sg
'The kite was own (by someone).'
- c. *Sana=ne*
Sana=erg

(80) What role do these functional heads play in case assignment?

(81) Butt and Ramchand's (2001) structure for complex events:

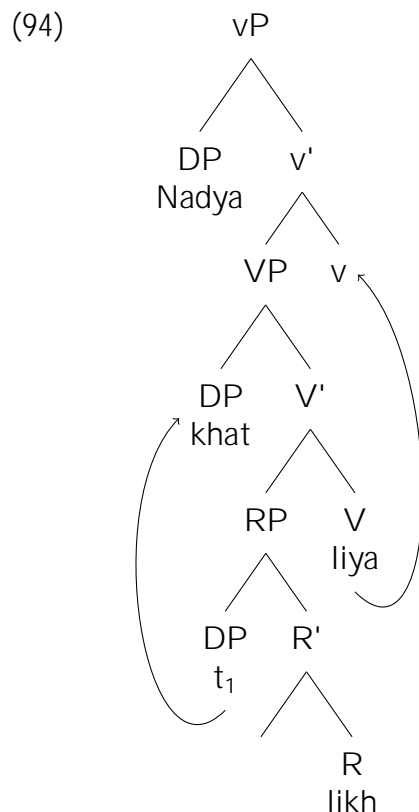


- a. vP introduces the causation event and licenses different types of external arguments, i.e. NP₃, the subject of 'cause.' v is spelled out as a tensed causative verb.
 - b. VP specifies the nature of the process and licenses the entity undergoing process, i.e. NP₂, the subject of 'process.' V is spelled out as a non-finite verb.
 - c. RP specifies the result state of the event and licenses the entity that holds the result state, i.e. NP₁, the subject of 'result.' R is spelled out as a bare stem.
- (82) Butt and Ramchand (2001) go on to illustrate the structure for two types of V-V predicates: 'let-type' and 'result-type' predicates.
- (83) Let-type predicates: Main verb is in non-finite form and carries oblique marking,² followed by a LV (84).
- (84) a. *Anjum=ne Sadaf=ko khat likhne diya.*
 Anjum=erg Sadaf=acc letter.nom write.inf.obl give.pfv.m.sg
 diya

- (93) *Nadya=ne khat likh liya.*
 Nadya=erg letter.nom write take.pfv.m.sg

'Nadya wrote the letter.'

(Butt and Ramchand, 2001:3)



- (95) It is unclear why V moves to *v*. Butt and Ramchand do not give a syntactic explanation for why this might be so.

- (96) Prediction: It should be possible for all three heads to be realised overtly. This is correct as seen in (97), where *likh* is R, *lene* is V and *diya* is *v*.

- (97) *Nadya=ne Saddam=ko khat likh lene diya.*
 Nadya=erg Saddam=acc letter.nom write take.inf.obl give.pfv.m.sg

'Nadya let Saddam write the letter.'

(Butt and Ramchand, 2001:23)

- (98) The order of these heads is fixed, as shown by the ungrammaticality of (99), where *likhne* is V, *de* is R, and *diya* is *v*.

- (99) **Nadya=ne Saddam=ko khat likhne de diya.*
 Nadya=erg Saddam=acc letter.nom write.inf.obl give give.pfv.m.sg

∅ 'Nadya let Saddam write the letter.'

(Butt and Ramchand, 2001:23)

- (100) Not all combinations and orders of LVs are possible. Which combinations and permutations are licit?

- (101) If LVs found in let-type predicates in v and LVs found in result-type predicates are in V , then:
- There should be only one of each type of LV.
 - LVs found in result-type predicates should not follow LVs found in let-type predicates.
- (102) Progressive marking can't attach directly to *le* 'take' (result-type LV = V) but it can to *de* 'give' (let-type LV = v). Is this a lexical idiosyncrasy or a positional generalisation?
- (103) a. * *Sana kitaabein likh le-rahi thi.*
 Sana.nom books.nom write take-prog.f.sg be.pst.f.sg
 ∅ 'Sana was writing (the) books.'
- b. *Sana Omar=ko kitaabein likne de-rahi thi.*
 Sana.nom Omar=dat books.nom write.inf.obl give-prog.f.sg
 be.pst.f.sg
 'Sana was letting Omar write (the) books.'

3.2.2 Implications for case assignment

- (104) LV may affect subject case (erg) but not object case (acc) (Butt, 2010; Butt and Ramchand, 2001; Davison, 2001; Mahajan, 2012). This suggests:
- Assignment of subject and object cases are independent (Davison, 2001).
 - Subject case, specifically erg, is associated with the same v which certain LVs can occupy. For example, Mahajan (2012) claims that erg is a lexical case assigned by certain LVs.
 - Object case, specifically acc, is associated with a v lower than the one associated with LVs.

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