

Neither dative nor instrumental as default in Urdu: Dative/instrumental marked non-MR arguments as PSA

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Dative case has been established as being a default case due to its occurrence in oblique arguments which represent a number of different thematic roles across languages (Van Valin, 2018). This paper argues that an instrumental case also performs a distinct kind of idiosyncratic behavior in occurring on human effector argument NPs in representations of accidentally happening events in Urdu. It further postulates that, like dative marked oblique argument NPs, the instrumental marked argument NPs also occur as the Privileged Syntactic Argument (PSA) in Urdu, other than ergative or nominative marked nominals. The paper posits that neither ergative nor dative are default case markers in Urdu, as dative marks the non-macro-role (non-MR) experiencers and instrumental marks non-MR effectors.

The assignment of dative case to the argument NP representing an experiencer is supported by the view that the nominative or ergative case is blocked from occurring on the PSA due to a lack of evidence for agentivity. This explanation is supported from data from different languages in which agentivity evidence is completely blocked. This analysis can be extended to the occurrence of instrumental oblique arguments as PSA in monoclausal constructions of Urdu.

In Urdu, in terms of an effector's potentiality continuum, the agents with high potentiality instantiated by ergative marked NPs are highly ranked, whereas, the instrumental marked nominals are ranked the lowest. Moreover, the human referents of dative-marked nominals outrank the instrumental arguments but are subsumed under the ergative marked arguments. The continuum can be formed as in (1):

- (1) Ergative nominal > dative nominal > instrumental nominal
Prototypical agentivity > induced potentiality > reduced potentiality

The paper offers an RRG analysis to explain the behavior of human effectors with reference to varying potentiality levels in the causality domain. The highest level can be aptly termed as 'prototypical agentivity' and is expressed through ergative-marked nominals. Contrary to this, the occurrence of instrumental nominals expresses the lowest potentiality level, which is assigned to human effectors who are allocated a 'reduced potentiality status'. Finally, in obligation constructions with a dative nominal, the potential to carry out an action is neither optimal nor marginal, rather it is somewhere in between these. Hence it is treated in the proposed analysis as having an induced potentiality status.

The occurrence of dative and instrumental markers and their alternations is also discussed with respect to constructions with psych predicates, consumption predicates and transfer predicates. These domains are explored to show that causality is an apt domain to study the variation in the agentivity or potentiality levels of human effectors, which manifest in causative constructions as causers or causees.

After establishing that instrumental causers in Urdu/Hindi act as PSAs, evidence is presented to show that the instrumental acts in a manner similar to applicatives, in that it adds a non-macro-role oblique argument to the core.

References

Van Valin, R. D. Jr. (2018). Dative case and oblique subjects. In J. BarSdal, N. Pat-El & S. M. Carey (Eds.), *Non-Canonically Case-Marked Subjects, The Reykjavik- Eyjajjallajokull papers* (pp. 117-131). John Benjamins Publishing Company.