

Non-Canonical Object marking in Nepali and Manipuri

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Presentation Plan

- Why Non Canonical “Objects” exist?
- Non-Canonical “Objects” in Nepali
- Non-Canonical “Objects” in Manipuri
- Comparing Non Canonical “Object” marking of Nepali with Manipuri (and Urdu/Hindi).

Non Canonical Objects (NCO)

- The presence of non-canonical markers for the “object” or second argument of the verb is noted for many languages.
- Finnish (Kratzer 2002), Hungarian (Blume 1998), Russian, Lithuanian (Nichols 1975) and Latin (Michaelis 1993) have the second argument marked by non-canonical markers.

NCO and Transitivity

- Certain predicates are more likely to be transitive than others depending on the semantic factors. (Hopper and Thompson 1980, Tsunoda 1981, 1985, Blume 1998 and Testelec 1998)
- *Action, telic, punctual, volitional, affirmative, realis, A high in potency, O totally affected, O highly individuated* are related to high transitivity. (Hopper and Thompson 1980)

Non Core Transitive Verbs (NCTV)

- NCTVs have a simple event structure associated with two participants, a structure participant and a pure constant participant. (Levin 1999)
- She identified following as NCTVs:
praise, touch, avoid, own, imagine, study, ignore, greet, select, supervise, fight, meet, visit, follow

Non Core Transitive Verbs (contd.)

- Following Grimshaw (1993), Levin suggested that it is difficult to identify semantic role of these objects because their stems lack an event structure template characterization.
- Languages vary as to which and how many semantic sub-classes of the NCTVs come under **oblique linking rules**. (Levin 1999)

Nepali Case System

Ergative	le
Instrument	le
Accusative	laai
Dative	laai
Ablative	baaTa, dek ^h i
Comitative	sanga/sita
Locative	maa

Canonical Subject and Object

- In Nepali, a canonical Subject is in either unmarked nominative case or is marked by ergative marker ‘le’.
- A canonical object is either in unmarked nominative case or is marked by the accusative marker ‘lai’.
- *Raam=le* *ghar* *banaa-yo*
Ram=ERG house make-PST.3S
‘Ram built a house.’ <Nepali>

Classes of NCO in Nepali

	Subj Marking	2nd Arg Marking	Examples
I	canonical, dative	ablative	fear
II	canonical, dative	locative, canonical	trust, suspect
III	canonical	locative, canonical	attack, govern
IV	canonical, dative	comitative	love, hate
V	canonical	comitative	fight, marry
VI	canonical	comitative	consult, beg

Nepali Ablatives

- *us=le* *ghar=dek^{hi}* *iskul=samma*
3.OBL=Erg home=Abl school=Loc-to
baaTo *banaa-yo*
street make.Perf.3SG
'He built a street from home to school.' <Nepali>
(Point)
- *u* *ghar=baaTa* *iskul=samma* *kud-yo*
3SG home=Abl school=Loc-to ran-Perf.3SG
'He ran from Delhi to Kathmandu.' <Nepali>
(Path)

Ablative Marked Arguments

- *u* *sarpa=dek^{hi}* *DarauuN-cha*
3SG snake=Abl fear-NonPast.3SG
'He fears snake.' <Nepali>
- The source/stimulus is marked by the ablative marker.
- As the stimulus does not act on the experiencer, the static source marker *dek^{hi}* is preferred upon the ablative path marker *baaTa* that marks agentive usages like causee.

Comitative Marked Arguments

- *raam=le* *siita=sanga* *bihaa* *gar-yo*
Ram=Erg Sita=Com marriage do-Perf.3SG.M
'Ram married Sita.' <Nepali>
- *raam=le* *siita=sanga* *prem* *gar-yo*
Ram=Erg Sita=Com love do-Perf.3SG.M
'Ram loved Sita.' <Nepali>
- *raam=le* *siita=sanga* *samparka* *gar-yo*
Ram=Erg Sita=Com consult do.Perf.3SG.M
'Ram consulted Sita.' <Nepali>

Comitative Marked Arguments

(contd)

- The comitative marked argument is not only used with reciprocal verbs like ‘marry’, ‘fight’ etc.
- It is also used with other verbs like ‘consult’, ‘complain’, ‘love’, ‘hate’ etc.
- The semantic feature responsible for comitative marking is attached/involved.

Locative marked Arguments

- | | | | |
|--------------------|---------------------|----------------|------------|
| <i>raam=laai</i> | <i>sitaa=maa</i> | <i>visvaas</i> | <i>cha</i> |
| Ram=Dat | Sita= Loc-on | trust | COP.NPST |
| ‘Ram has on Sita.’ | | <Nepali> | |

- | | | | |
|-------------------------------|---------------------|-----------------|--------------|
| <i>sena=le</i> | <i>Sahar=maa</i> | <i>aakraman</i> | <i>gar-e</i> |
| Army=Erg | city= Loc-on | attack | do.Perf.3PL |
| ‘The army attacked the city.’ | | | <Nepali> |

Impinged Argument

- Beavers (2006) discussed four-way affectedness:
totally affected, affected, impinged and unspecified.
 - John hits the table. (affected object)
 - John hits at the table. (impinged object)
 - John touched the table. (impinged object)
- The locative marked “object” of these verbs is impinged or logically impinged.

Animacy and Transitivity (contd.)

- The verbs of class-III e.g. ‘attack’ too have alternation based on animacy too. The animate object is marked with canonical object marker.
- *mai=le* *us=laai* *aakraman* *gar-eN*
1Sg.Obl=Erg 3Sg.Obl=**Loc-on** attack do.Perf.1Sg
‘I attacked him.’ <Nepali>
- The inanimate “object” is marked with locative marker.
- *sena=le* *Sahar=maa* *aakraman* *gar-e*
Army=Erg city=**Loc-on** attack do.Perf.3PL
‘The army attacked the city.’ <Nepali>

Result

- In Nepali, case marking on the object of the same verb can change with the change in
 - agentivity of the subject
 - animacy of the object
- Nepali is different from Urdu/Hindi in this regard which uses either canonical or non-canonical marking for a certain verb.

Manipuri Case System

Ergative naa

Instrument naa

Dative taa

Locative taa

Ablative tagi

Comitative gaa

Genitive ki

Locative Marked Object

- The locative/dative marker *daa* marks the object of contact verbs like *theng-* ‘touch’, *phu-* ‘beat’.
- As the object is treated as a location, it is marked by the locative marker.

- *tomba-naa* *tebal-daa* *thengi-i*
Tomba-Erg table-Loc touch-Real
‘Tomba touched the table.’ <Manipuri>

Result

- The semantic feature responsible for the locative marked “object” in Manipuri (i.e. location) is different from the semantic feature for locative marked “object” in Nepali (i.e. impinged.)
- Different languages (Nepali, Urdu/Hindi and Manipuri) use different linking rules for locative marked (oblique) “objects.”

Conclusion

- The “objects” of less transitive verbs (lacking prototypical subject and/or object) is marked with non-canonical oblique markers.
- The selection of the appropriate oblique marker for “object” (can) depend on semantic factors e.g.
 - stimulus/source
 - impinged
 - attached/involved
 - animacy
 - agentivity (of the subject)

Conclusion (contd.)

- Different languages have different criteria for selection of a non-canonical (oblique) marker for particular verb/construction.

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