

Double oblique case and agreement across two dialects of Wakhi

The notion of “dependent case”, fundamental to linking theories of syntax (Ostler 1979; Marantz 1991; Bittner and Hale 1996; Kiparsky 1997; Wunderlich 1997 *inter alia*), is now enjoying a resurgence of interest in Chomskyan approaches (Baker 2016; Preminger 2014 *inter alia*). In this talk, I work out a dependent case treatment of the rare double oblique pattern found only in a small handful of Iranian languages (Payne 1980). In these languages, non-past tense clauses display a typical NOM-ACC alignment pattern but in past tense clauses, both the subject and object display oblique case. Historically (and synchronically, I argue), such clauses are alignment mermaids: ergative from the waist up and accusative from the waist down (cf. Haig 2008:230).

The only generative accounts for the double oblique pattern are that of Gündoğdu (2011) and Baker and Atlamaz (2014) (henceforth B&A) for Muş Kurdish. I examine this pattern in more empirical detail across two dialects of Wakhi, an Iranian language spoken around Afghanistan’s Wakhan corridor (Bashir 1986, 2009; Grünberg and Steblin-Kamensky 1988; Pakhalina 1975). The primary explananda common to both dialects are: (i) Objects are always marked with OBLIQUE case; (ii) Verbal agreement is always with a NOMINATIVE argument; (iii) Past tense verb forms can never bear agreement; (iv) When agreement on the verb is impermissible, the subject’s agreement features are expressed by 2P clitics; (v) Oblique case subjects are in complementary distribution with second-position clitics. The basic patterns are shown schematically in (1) and (2), where G represents the Gojali dialect of NE Pakistan and P represents the Upper Pamiri dialect of Tajikistan. Key dialect differences in the past tense are shown in (3-6).

B&A, expanding on Marantz (1991), recognize five mechanisms for case assignment: lexically governed case, dependent case, agreement-assigned case, unmarked case and default case in addition to a central distinction between weak and strong phases and variation in the location of the case assigning head (F). For Wakhi, at least, the phase distinction is redundant with the variable location of F and the appeal to “elsewhere case” can be dispensed with entirely.

In the framework of Baker (2016), the close link between nominative case and agreement in *transitive* clauses suggests treating nominative as agreement-assigned case. Past *intransitives* in Wakhi, however, also take subjects in the nominative case but systematically lack agreement. As in other Pamiri languages, subject agreement alternates between verbal suffixes in non-past clauses and 2P clitics in past tense clauses. I take these 2P clitics to instantiate the Aux required to turn past participles into predicates. Nominative case is thus either assigned by T (instantiated by verbal agreement) or via Aux (instantiated by 2P clitics). The following disjunctive hierarchy accounts for the pattern attested by Gojali Wakhi: T-ASSIGNED-NOM » DEPENDENT » AUX-ASSIGNED-NOM. Because dependent case pre-empts Aux-assigned case in this dialect, we find the double oblique pattern in past transitive clauses. In the Upper Pamiri dialect, T and Aux assigned case have been consolidated yielding a simpler hierarchy: T/AUX-ASSIGNED-NOM » DEPENDENT. This results in the NOM-ACC pattern in past transitive clauses, as shown in (4a). Oblique case on 1sg and 2sg subjects in this dialect is solely determined by past tense and has been completely untethered from transitivity considerations, cf. (4-6), a unique development within Iranian languages which I attribute to a plausible reanalysis of oblique pronouns as the full forms of 2P pronominal clitics. Finally, I explore differences in secondary case marking in both dialects, shown in (7) and (8). While Upper Pamiri Wakhi follows treats *-i* as a simple accusative marker, the use of Gojali *-e* is far more nebulous, being used on non-past transitive objects but on *either* argument of a past transitive clause. The distribution of oblique pronominals thus deviates from the distribution of oblique phrasal case marking in ways to be discussed.

- (1) *Intransitive clauses*
NON-PAST
 G/P: **Subject.NOM** V-SBJ.AGR
PAST
 G/P: **Subject.NOM=SBJ.CL** V.PST
 P: **Subject.OBL(=SBJ.CL)** V.PST
- (2) *Transitive clauses*
NON-PAST
 G/P: **Subject.NOM** **Object.OBL** V-SBJ.AGR
PAST
 G/P: **Subject.OBL** **Object.OBL** V.PST
 P: **Subject.NOM=SBJ.CL** **Object.OBL** V.PST
- (3) GOJALI WAKHI
 a. *wuz=m jo diçt
 1S.NOM=1SG 3S.OBL hit.PST
 b. maz jo diçt
 1S.OBL 3S.OBL hit.PST
 ‘I hit him.’
- (4) UPPER PAMIRI WAKHI (optionality)
 a. uz=m jaw-i diçt-i
 1S.NOM=1S 3S-ACC hit.PST-PST
 b. maz jaw-i diçt-i
 1S.OBL 3S-ACC hit.PST-PST
 ‘I hit him.’
- (5) UPPER PAMIRI WAKHI (optionality)
 a. uz=m gøzd-i
 1S.NOM=1S stand.PST-PST
 b. maz gøzd-i
 1S.OBL stand.PST-PST
 ‘I stood.’
- (6) UPPER PAMIRI WAKHI (no optionality)
 a. uz giz-im
 1S.NOM stand.PRES-1S
 b. *maz giz-im
 1S.OBL stand.PRES-1S
 ‘I stand.’
- (7) GOJALI SECONDARY CASE MARKING
 a. **Subject.NOM(*-e)** **Object.OBL(-e)** V.SBJ.AGR
 b. **Subject.OBL(-e)** **Object.OBL(-e)** V.PST
- (8) UPPER PAMIRI SECONDARY CASE MARKING
 a. **Subject.NOM(*-i)** **Object.OBL(-i)** V.SBJ.AGR
 b. **Subject.OBL(*-i)** **Object.OBL(-i)** V.PST

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