

Case Copying and Case Percolation in Polymorphemic Reciprocals in Dravidian: Some Unique Phenomena (Revised draft)

Reciprocals in Kannada, Tamil and Telugu (Dravidian) have a bipartite (polymorphemic) structure and the occurrence of the verbal reciprocal (VREC) is obligatory in Telugu while it is optional in Kannada and Tamil when a nominal reciprocal occurs in a *subcategorized position*. The verbal reciprocal however does not occur (i) in the non-nominative subject construction and (ii) with a non-subject antecedent (indirect object, for example) in Dravidian, except in Malayalam. This paper aims to present a detailed description of *Case Copying* and *Case Percolation* (to be discussed below) found in Dravidian reciprocals. *Case Copying* is a phenomenon in which the case marker of the *antecedent* is *copied* on one of the parts of a bipartite reciprocal (apart from Dravidian, the mechanism is also found in, for instance, Icelandic, Greek, Tsakhur). In Dravidian the case is copied on to the second part of the polymorphemic reciprocal while the first part carries *structural Case* assigned by the predicate as in sentence (1) (Subbarao in press).

It seems to be a unique feature of the Dravidian reciprocal that the constituents of the polymorphemic reciprocal can be *swapped: optionally* with a *non-subject antecedent* (sentences (2) and (3)). Swapping is prohibited with a nominative case-marked *subject antecedent* (sentence (4)), except in case of cognitive predicates. In case of *cognitive predicates* with subject as antecedent *swapping* of the constituents of the reciprocal is *obligatory* (sentences (5) & (6)).

We shall demonstrate that such prohibition on swapping with subject as antecedent and the obligatory swapping with cognitive predicates is due to a restriction in Dravidian that a nominative case-marked reciprocal cannot occur as the first part of the polymorphemic anaphor. We label such restriction as the '*Nominative First*' restriction and show that such restriction is due to Case-theoretic reasons (sentences (5) & (6)).

We shall also show that when a reciprocal occurs in a gerundival construction with a *nominative verb* with PRO as its subject and the matrix predicate is non-nominative (dative, for example), the inherent dative case marker of the antecedent *transmits* its inherent Case to the second part of the polymorphemic reciprocal via PRO (sentence (7)). Hence, we glossed PRO in (7) as 'dat' (dative case-marked). Such occurrence of the dative case marker on PRO is unexpected as the predicate *virucukoni.paḍaḍam* 'showing displeasure' is a predicate which takes a nominative subject and *not* a dative subject. Thus, the expected case marker on the second part of the reciprocal is *nominative*. However, the second part of the reciprocal *okallu* 'one' is *dative case marked* in (7). To account for the unexpected occurrence of the dative case marker *ki* we propose that the dative case marker of the matrix subject '*percolates*' to PRO and hence, the second part of the reciprocal gets its *dative case copy* from the subject. We label it as '*Case Percolation*', another unique phenomenon found only in Dravidian.

To account for the distribution of these case markers which are the result of *Case Percolation* and then, *Case Copying* in (7) we suggest two approaches. Under the first approach, the two uninterpretable case markers need to be valued and they require multiple case checking. We show that *Multiple Agree* (Hiraiwa 2001) can explain such case marking adequately. Thus, though the case marker that is percolated is a Case Copy of the antecedent which is inherently case-marked and, thus, is coindexed, it is an uninterpretable feature and hence, needs to be valued with a matching probe. Since the gerundival clause is *tenseless* and no matching probe is available in the gerundival clause for 'valuation', it needs to move to the matrix clause for a matching probe for Agree to take place in the matrix clause.

An alternative approach is to hypothesize that the phenomenon of Case Copying and Case Percolation in Dravidian is purely a *PF artifact* and it is similar to 'meaningless case agreement

of PRO' in Icelandic or tense agreement which 'operates with a non-syntactic feature' in some languages (Sigurdsson 2011:8). This approach gains support from the fact that the case marker that is copied on to the second part of the reciprocal - either in a simplex sentence or in a gerundival clause in Dravidian - is neither a structural case marker nor is it an inherent case marker. We find that the Sigurdssonian approach has more support from language-specific data. Data from only Telugu (Dravidian) is provided here. The properties of the Telugu data are also found in Kannada and Tamil (Dravidian).

Telugu (Dravidian)

With a Dative Subject as antecedent: Unmarked – No swapping

1. mamata._iki_i tana.mīda-tana.ki_i kōpam vaccindi
 Mamata.dat self.on-self.dat anger came
 'Mamata got angry at/with herself.'

With a Non-Subject (Indirect Object) antecedent: Unmarked – No swapping

2. abbāyilu_i ammāyili.ki_j [oka||a.ni-oka||a.ki]_j paricayam cēsēru
 boys girls.dat one.acc-one.dat introduction did
 'The boys_i introduced the girls_j to [each other]_j (= the girls).'

With a Non-Subject (Indirect Object) antecedent: Marked – Swapping permitted

3. abbāyilu_i ammāyili.ki_j [oka||a.ki-oka||a.ni]_j paricayam cēsēru
 boys girls.dat one.dat-one.acc introduction did
 'The boys introduced the girls to [each other]_j (= the girls).'

With a Subject antecedent in the nominative case: No Swapping – grammatical; Swapping – ungrammatical (swapped reciprocal starred in (4))

4. abbāyilu_i [oka||a.ni-oka||u]_i / *[oka||u-oka||a.ni]_i poguḍukonnāru
 boys.nom onl.acc-one.nom one.nom-one.acc praised
 'The boys praised each other.'

Obligatory Swapping with cognitive predicates: NOM-DAT Unmarked order in the Reciprocal-not permitted. (No Swapping in (5))

5. [*vā||a.ki]_i [oka||u-oka||a.ki]_i telusu
 they.dat one.nom-one.dat known
 'They know each other.'

Obligatory Swapping with cognitive predicates: DAT-NOM Marked order in the Reciprocal-permitted. (Swapping obligatory in (6))

6. [vā||a.ki]_i [oka||a.ki-oka||u]_i telusu
 they.dat one.dat-one.nom known
 'They know each other.'

Dative Case Percolation with PRO as embedded subject with an embedded nominative (non-dative) verb and dative verb in the matrix clause

7. vā||a.ki_i [PRO oka||a.mīda-oka||a.ki]_i virucu.koni- paḍaḍam] alavāṭu
 they.dat dat one.on-one.dat- break- falling habit
 'They have the habit of showing (their) displeasure with/at each other.'

Abbreviations: acc-accusative; dat-dative; nom-nominative; pst-past

References

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 Sigurdsson, H. 2011. On I-language and Externalization. Paper presented at the conference on *The Past and Future of Universal Grammar (UG: The Minimalist Workshop)* in December 2011.
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