

Research Article



Diverse Applications of the Case Markers: Urdu Ko and Punjabi Nun



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Abstract

All the Indo-Aryan languages including Urdu and Punjabi use case markers to express the multiple semantic usages of the languages. The present study investigates the variant semantic functions of Urdu ko and Punjabi nun. It aims at the description as well as the analysis of the study samples that show the differing application of Urdu ko and Punjabi nun. Qualitative methodology is used to state the spatial as well as non-spatial usages of the case markers. The results show that the case marker ko and nun mark the accusative as well as dative. These are also used to show a few other temporal and spatial applications..

Key Words

Case Markers, Urdu ko, Punjabi nun, Pakistan, India, Aryan Languages

Introduction

Urdu and Punjabi that are spoken mainly in Pakistan and India are known as Indio Aryan languages. These languages use a system of case markers for diverse purposes ([Allen, W.S. 1951](#)). The system that marks the relationship between dependent nouns and their independent heads is known as a case marker. e.g. the case system can mark the subject and object of a verb and different languages possess different case markers ([Blake, 2001](#)). The morphological inflections were used to show different case forms in the Ancient Indo-Aryan languages. For example, there exist eight case forms of Sanskrit that are named in the Latin grammatical terms as Nominative, Dative, Accusative, Ablative, Genitive, Instrumental, Vocative and Locative. These are described through inflections. All the case inflections vanished. In Middle Indo-Aryan (600 BC-1000 AD). A new method was invented to mark cases in New Indo-Aryan languages (1000 AD-present). Clitics are used as case markers in these languages ([Blake 2001](#)).

[Beames \(1872\)](#), states that Urdu-Hindi “ko” is basically the developed form of the Sanskrit word kaaksha that means ‘armpit and side’. Kaaksha is the locative form of kaaksha that means ‘in the armpit’, ‘at the side’. In Old Hindi, kaaksha is derived from kaaksha. Kaakham is basically its accusative form. After consecutive variations, it became ko. Beames describes the early uses of ‘ko’ to mark the recipient goal of ditransitive verbs like give and as an object marker of verbs like seek. In the Indo-Aryan languages there exists a correlation between the dative, accusative

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and old Sanskrit locatives case markers. At least four Indo-Aryan languages i.e. Sindhi (khe), Bengali (ke, Siraike (Kon),) and Oriya (ku) accusative and dative case markers have been originated from Sanskrit locative kaakham.

The Indo-Aryan languages also use words mainly started with l or n as dative and accusative case markers i.e. Punjabi (nuN), Gujrati (ne/neN), Marathi (laa), Napali (laai), and Assamese (ko/no) [Butt \(2005\)](#). These are mainly originated from the Sanskrit locatives 'laage' that means 'stick' ([Beames 1872](#)). [Butt \(2005\)](#) dealing with Aditi Lahiri has also proposed that ergative "ne" could be interrelated to janniye that means 'for the sake of and because of'. Some of the case markers (other than accusative and dative cases) also have origins in the locatives. For example, Urdu, Punjabi, and Hindi ergative "ne" is originated from the locative mentioned above. The sindhi ablative "khaan" is an oblique form of the dative "khe" that is mainly derived from the Sanskrit locative "kaakshe" as discussed above. The punjabi ablative "kolon" can be presumed to be derived from the Punjabi word "kol" which means "near." The present study aims at finding the different semantic functions of Urdu "ko" and Punjabi "nun."

Literature Review

Urdu and Punjabi case markers are widely discussed by many researchers i.e. Black (2001), [Grimm \(2005\)](#), [Bashir \(1999\)](#) and [Butt \(2005\)](#). [Durrani \(2016\)](#) analyzed that a split pattern in the Urdu language is caused by ergative case markers. He mainly focused on proving Urdu as a split ergative language while many other researchers focused on relating the non-nominative case markers in the Urdu language. [Butt \(2005\)](#) found in her study that Indo-Aryan languages have postpositions while the other European languages consist of the preposition as case markers. Ahmed (2006) analyzed the Urdu marker ko as a spatial as well as the metaphorical markers. He argued that ko as an accusative marker exist only for animated objects. On the other hand [Iqbal, M and Mangrio \(2016\)](#) analyzed that the Punjabi nun and Urdu ko show different semantics in the active and passive constructions. They negated the idea that ko as accusative markers is only used for animated things and proved that its applications are also extended to the inanimate objects.

Aims of the Study

1. To describe the postpositions (ko and nun) in Urdu and Punjabi.
2. To describe the major semantic functions of the Urdu "ko" and the Punjabi "Nun."
3. To analyze the semantically variant functions of the Urdu "ko" and the Punjabi "nun."

Data collection and analysis

Qualitative methodology is used to collect the required data. The sentences are selected from the "Khawateen digests" 2017. The random sampling technique is used in order to ensure the reliability of the results. The content is thoroughly read in order to find the contextual use of the case marker "ko" in the Urdu sentences. The use of the Punjabi marker "nun" is also described in the same manner. The data is analyzed through the qualitative approach by using the contextual study technique.

Results and Discussions

Urdu "ko" and the Punjabi "nun" are extensively deliberated in the literature. Most of the linguists have explained the accusatives well as the dative usages of "ko" and "nun." Alternation

of the accusative and nominative case with the dative subjects and objects are the major issues discussed by the linguists (Ahmed, 2006). “Ko” and “nun” have many other usages that are the subject of the present study. Following are the selected sentences that describe the variant uses of Urdu “ko” and Punjabi “nun.”

1. Hania= ne Sana= ko rulayya. (in Urdu) (Accusative Cause)
 Hania Sana=nun ruvaya. (in Punjabi)
 Hania.F.Sg = Erg Sana.F.Sg =Acc rulayya (ruvaya).Perf.M.Sg = Cause
 “Hania caused Sana to weep”.
2. Asghar= ne Malaika=ko daikha. (in Urdu) (Accusative Object)
 Asghar Malaika=nun waikhya. (in Punjabi)
 Asghar.M.Sg=Erg Malaika.F.Sg=Acc daikha (waikhya).Perf.M.S
 “Asghar saw Malaika”.
3. Dakiay =ne Ahmad=ko khat dia. (in Urdu) (Dative Object)
 Dakiay Ahmad=nun khat dita. (in Punjabi)
 Dakiay.F.Sg=Erg Ahmad.F.Sg=Dat khat.M.Sg dia (dita).Perf.M.Sg
 ‘The postman gave the letter to Ahmad.’
4. Parveen= ko kitab mili. (in Urdu) (Dative Subject)
 Parveen=nun katab labi. (in Punjabi)
 Parveen.F.Sng=Dat kitab.F.Sg mili (labi).Per.F.Sg
 “Parveen got the book.”
5. Jin=ko chashm-e-biina mili hai. (in Urdu) (Dative Subject)
 Jinaa= nun chashm-e-bina lubhi ay. (in Punjabi)
 Jin (jinna)=Dat chashm-e-bina.F.Sg mili (lubi).perf.F.Sg
6. Saud=ko dufter jaanaa paraa. (in Urdu) (Dative Subject)
 Saud=nun dufter jana pia. (in Punjabi)
 Saud.M.Sg=Dat dufter.M.Sg jana.Infi.V
 ‘Saud have to go to the office.’
7. Nabila sair=ko gayi. (in Urdu) (Adverbial use)
 Nabila sair=nun gayi. (in Punjabi)
 Nabila.F.Sg sair.F.Sg= gai.Perf.F.Sg
 ‘Nabila went for a walk.’
8. Mina cake bnanay= ko hai. (in Urdu) (‘ko’ marked clause)
 Mina cake bnan nun tyar baithi ay. (in Punjabi)
 Mina.F.Sg cake.M.Sg bnanay.inf.obl hai.pres.Sg
 ‘Mina is about to bake a cake.’
9. Samaan shehar=ko pohunch gaya. (in Urdu) (Spatial Adverb)
 Samaan shair=nun uper gia. (in Punjabi)
 samaan.M.Sg shehar.M.Sg=ko.S.Adv pohunch (uper).V gaya.Perf.M.Sg
 ‘The luggage reached city.’
10. Huma Karachi=ko gayi. (Urdu sentence) (Spatial Adverb)
 Huma Karachi=nun gayi. (Punjabi sentence)
 Huma.F.Sg Krachi.M.Sg=ko,nun.S.M gayi.Perf.F.Sg
 ‘Huma went to Karachi.’
11. Manan din=ko aayaa. (in Urdu) (Temporal Adverb)

Manan din=nun aaya. (in Punjabi)
Manan.M.Sg din.M.Sg=ko (nun).T.A aaya.Perf.M.Sg
'Manan came in the daytime.'

Data Analysis

The previous section dealt with the description of the variant usages of the Urdu 'ko' and Punjabi 'nun.' All the above mentioned differing practices of 'ko' and 'nun' seem semantically unrelated but the present study finds a unified description of all the uses. The present section deals with the analysis of the 'ko' and 'nun' inflections as the temporal, spatial, experiential, argumentative, causative, dative and instrumental markers.

Spatial usage of ko and nun

Urdu 'ko' and Punjabi 'nun' are used to mark the spatial adjuncts as shown in the example (9) and (10). These are used to provide the semantics of 'at the point and towards the location.' So ko and nun in this usage give the sense of endpoints that are 'shehar' and 'Karachi' in the examples (9) and (10).

Similarly, ko and nun have many other prolonged usages besides the core spatial one. [Mohanan \(1994\)](#), argued that "accusative, dative, and locative ko has the same semantic configuration but different semantic fields". extended) The usages of the ko and nun to mark the endpoints in the mental, temporal, and eventual domains are discussed in the subsequent sections.

Temporal Application of ko and nun

Urdu ko and Punjabi nun are also used to mark a temporal use. These are used to point a specific part of the day, week and year. The semantic features of ko and nun are considered points in time in the temporal semantic field rather than the 'endpoints' (Ahmad,2016). The example (11) shows the temporal usage of the Urdu ko and Punjabi nun where the words din ko and din nun show the point in time. The alternate bound morphemes 'ain and e' are also used as the temporal markers in the Punjabi language. i.e. Ahmad dinain aya and Alia daihari ai. On the other hand, the postposition 'mein' is also used as a temporal marker in the Urdu language.i.e. Alia din mein ai.

Causal Domain

The endpoint semantics is stretched to the causal sphere when the 'ko' and 'nun' mark an argument that takes anything either concrete or abstract (Sakseina, 1982)

Dative Subject

The main endpoint semantics of 'ko' and 'nun' is protracted to the participant of an argumentative structure that is a recipient of an action. In (3) 'ko' and 'nun' are used as indirect objective markers because these inflections mark an indirect recipient of an action. In the example (3) 'Ahmad' is the recipient of the action of receiving a letter. On the other hand, the recipient can be the intended goal of the object as in (12)

12. Zulaikha =ne Fatima =ko paigam likha. (in Urdu)
Zulaikha Fatima=nu paigam likhaya. (in Punjabi)
Zulaikha.F.Sg=Erg Fatima.F.Sg=Dat paigam.F.Sg likha (likhaya).Perf.M.Sg

‘Zulaikha wrote a message to Fatima.’

In these examples, ‘ko’ and ‘nun’ marked a recipient. [Grimm \(2005\)](#), argues that ko and nun possess the features of canonical recipients. The recipients are sentient and volitional. Dative recipient does not include only Indirect Objects but they also involve physical as well as nominal objects. In (4) the dative subject received a physical object that is a ‘book’ and in (5) the dative subject received an abstract object that is ‘chashm-e-bina’.

Affected Agents

The Urdu causatives can be observed through the recipient semantics of Urdu ko and Punjabi nun. The concept of affected agents is given by [Saksena \(1982\)](#). She argued that affected agents include subjects of ingestive and intransitive transitive verbs. The verb ‘parhnaa’ that means to ‘learn/read’ have an affected agent as shown in (13).

13. Bisma=ne mazmoon parha.
 Bisma.F.Sg=Erg mazmoon.M.Sg parha.Perf.M.Sg
 ‘Bisma read the essay’.

In the above-mentioned sentence, Bisma is subject that is affected by the action parha. The affected subject is marked by the inflection ‘ko’ in (14) that is regarded as the causative of the above sentence.

14. Hamza=ne ustaad=se Bisma=ko mazmoon parhaya. (In Urdu)
 Hamza ustaad kolon Bisma=nun mazmoon parhwaya. (In Punjabi)
 Hamza.F.Sg=Erg ustaad.M.Sg=Inst Bisma.F.Sg=Dat mazmoon.M.Sg
 parhaya.caus.Perf.M.Sg
 ‘Hamza caused the teacher to teach the essay to Bisma.’

Extension to Mental Domain

Urdu ko and Punjabi nun are also used to mark mental phenomenon’s and states i.e. experiences and volition. The present section analyzed the experiential as well as the volitional aspect of Urdu ko and Punjabi nun.

Experience

Dative agent constructions are used with the ‘psych verbs’ to relate experiences. The following example shows the experience in the form of the received object.

15. Hani= ko derd hua. (in Urdu)
 Hani= nun peir hoi. (in Punjabi)
 Hani.F.Sg=Dat ko (nun)=E.M derd (peir).N.Sg hua (hoi).Perf.Sg

In the (15) ‘ko’ and ‘nun’ are used as experiential markers as they express the experience of having pain by the dative subject Hani.

Landau (2005) argued that the reception semantic could be enlarged to provide the idea mental experiences.

Volition

Volition refers to the power of a subject to make choices or decisions. The present section deals with the volitionality of the recipient through the use of ‘ko’ and ‘nun’. [Butt and King \(1991\)](#) described a change of dative and ergative case markers in Lahori Urdu as.

16. Nida=ne park jaanaa hai.
Nida.F.Sg=Erg park.M.Sg go.Inf.M.Sg be.Pres.3.Sg
'Nida wants to visit the park.'
17. Nida=ko park jaanaa hai.
Nida.F.Sg=Dat park.M.Sg go.Inf.M.Sg be.Pres.3.Sg
'Nida has to visit the park.'

In the above-mentioned sentences only (17) is considered correct traditionally but now the alternate ergative case is being used by the most of the users. [Butt and King \(1991\)](#) and [Mohanan \(1994\)](#) states that now the ergative case possesses the volitionality. 6.5. Argumentative Usage of ko and nun

Purpose

The Urdu ko and Punjabi nun are also used to show the different purposes of the action as (18) Shows the purpose of ayaadat.

18. Larki mareez= ki ayaadat=ko gaae.
Kori bamar =di ayaadat= nun gaae.

This usage is relevant to the above mentioned locative usage discussed in (6.1). The only difference lies in the purpose that is marked by the ko and nun.

Immediate Future

One of the most interesting usages of the Urdu ko and Punjabi nun is that they are also used as the immediate future markers in both the languages. This is expressed in (8).

19. Mina cake bnanay= ko hai. (in Urdu) ('ko' marked clause)
Mina cake bnan nun tyar baithi ay. (in Punjabi)
Mina.F.Sg cake.M.Sg bnanay.inf.obl hai.pres.Sg
'Mina is about to bake a cake.'

The above-mentioned sentences show that ko and nun have the semantics of an upcoming and of the very near event. In other words, ko and nun predict the immediate future happening of baking a cake by the subject Mina.

Unexplained Usages

This section describes the vague purposes that are performed by the Urdu ko and Punjabi nun.

Modal Cahiiye

There is another function performed by the ko and nun that is to describe the need for the subject.

20. Afifa=ko phone cahiiye.
'Afifa= nun phone chai da a.'
Afifa.F.Sg=Dat phone.F.Sg cahiiye.perc
Afifa needs a phone.

The word Cahiiye is derived from the word cahna that means 'need'. In (19) the word cahiiye is taken as a modal and it predicts the need for the subject in this construction.

Accusative ko and Punjabi nun

Urdu ko and Punjabi nun also perform the function of accusative case marker. Accusative ko and nun are linked with a sensitivity to animacy as well as specific interpretations. It is explained in (2). Here the ko and nun marked a direct object Malaika.

21. Asghar= ne Malaika=ko daikha. (in Urdu)
Asghar Malaika=nun waikhya. (in Punjabi)
Asghar.M.Sg=Erg Malaika.F.Sg=Acc daikha (waikhya).Perf.M.S
“Asghar saw Malaika.”
22. Asghar= ne jahaz daikha. (in Urdu)
Asghar jahaz waikhya. (in Punjabi)
Asghar.M.Sg=Erg jahaz.M.Sg=Acc daikha (waikhya).Perf.M.S
“Asghar saw an aeroplane.”

In (20), the object jahaz meaning ‘an Aeroplan’ is neither an animate nor a specific thing. [Allen \(1951\)](#), [McGregor \(1972\)](#), Butt (1993), Masica (1991), [Singh \(1994\)](#) and [Mohanani \(1994\)](#) among others have debated this subject in detail. It is not instantly apparent that this usage of ko could be linked to a spatial use. However, [Mohanani \(1994\)](#) stated that the accusative case is used for reasonable objects towards which an event is directed. That is, it can be seen as the endpoint marker of a goal. Boundedness is another way of analyzing the accusative. The function of ko and nun can also be analyzed through the technique of boundedness. The nominative objects get unified with the verbs. Mass nouns are not used for bounding the objects. On the other hand, accusative ko and nun are used to bound the objects and events.

Postpositions alternating with ko and nun

In the previous section, ko and nun are discussed as accusative markers that are used to mark the direct objects. There exist some other case markers that can be replaced by Urdu ko and Punjabi nun.

Instrumental usage

The ablative case marker ‘se’ in some cases is replaced by the ‘ko’. For example, the given sentence is selected from an old version of Urdu dictionary (Online Urdu Dictionary, Beta version).

23. Hunta beiti=ko milna chahti hai.
The current usage of the (21) is shown in (22)
24. Hunta beiti =se milna chahti hai.
‘Hunta wants to see the daughter.’

The change in the semantics of the verb milna is the main reason for the alteration of the case marker. The verb literally means ‘touch’ as mentioned in (22) while the sentence (21) using ko gives the meaning of a ‘visit.’

Conclusion

The study analyzed the variant semantic applications of the inflectional morphemes ko and nun as Urdu and Punjabi case markers. These apparently diverse usages can be linked to a core locative meaning. Different semantic fields have led to the extension in the application of ‘ko and nun’ as case markers. The study found the three key usages of ko and nun those are as follows.

- Temporal usage.
- Non-sentient purpose, spatial as well as immediate future endpoint usages.
- Sentient recipients as in the dative and its prolonged usages.

It can be theorized that ko and nun have crossed the threshold of the language as the endpoint markers but with the passage of time, their application is being extended to the different semantic fields. Further analysis can be done through the diachronic study of the data to confirm or negate the presented hypothesis.

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