Indo-Aryan Ergativity in Typological and Diachronic Perspective

edited by
Eystein Dahl and Krzysztof Stroński

John Benjamins Publishing Company
This volume presents a state-of-the-art survey of synchronic and diachronic dimensions of Ergativity in the Indo-Aryan language family. It contains an introduction drawing on the most important recent typological and theoretical contributions to this field, plus seven papers about the origin, development and distribution of ergative alignment in ancient and modern Indo-Aryan languages written by well-established expert authors. The articles provide detailed explorations of language-specific synchronic systems or patterns of change, and large-scale studies of the distribution of ergative morphosyntax across the Indo-Aryan languages. The papers have a typological-functional approach and are based on thorough fieldwork experience and/or philological investigation. As the Indo-Aryan language family has played a paramount role in recent theories of Ergativity and of alignment typology and change, this volume is highly relevant to experts working on these languages and to scholars interested in grammatical relations and it will figure in all future debates in these fields.
Typological Studies in Language (TSL)
ISSN 0167-7373

A companion series to the journal Studies in Language. Volumes in this series are functionally and typologically oriented, covering specific topics in language by collecting together data from a wide variety of languages and language typologies.

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Volume 112
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Amsterdam / Philadelphia
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The restoration of the ergative case marking of ‘A’ in perfective clauses in New Indo-Aryan

The case of the Braj language*

Andrea Drocco
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The development of the ergative construction in the New Indo-Aryan period is still not totally clear. In particular we don't know the process of grammaticalization of the new analytical ergative marker, the postposition ne, found, among others, in Hindi and Pañjābi. This study tries to demonstrate that if it is true that the "macro-history" of this form suggests that the discriminatory function of case marking is clearly important in the beginning of its process of diffusion and stabilization, it is also true that there is no single interpretation as regards its high initial variability. In fact, starting from data taken from prose texts written in the old Hindi literary variety known as Braj-bhāṣā, the full set of conditions on case alternations for A in the perfective aspect is really complex.

* This article grew out of the 6th chapter in my book L'ergatività in hindi. Studio diacronico del processo di diffusione della posposizione ne (2008); Alessandria: Edizioni dell'Orso. My thanks first and foremost to Giuliano Bernini with whom I discussed the issue of ergativity in South Asian languages; he made very helpful comments on earlier drafts and presentations. Thanks also to the audiences in Bergen (on the occasion of the workshop 'Reconstructing Alignment Systems', 14–15 May 2009), Bilbao (on the occasion of the workshop 'EHU International Workshop on Ergative Languages', 4–6 November 2009), Paris (on the occasion of the workshop 'Ergative Markers', 9 November 2009) and Pavia (on the occasion of the workshop 'Sistemi di allineamento in lingue indoeuropee e non indoeuropee dal Vicino Oriente all'India', 20–21 May 2011), where I have presented earlier versions of this work. All errors and inadequacies are my responsibility.
1. Introduction

Even if the origins of the ergative constructions in the Indo-Iranian group of Indo-European linguistic family are presently not totally clear, thanks to the works of various scholars we possess many studies concerning this particular topic of research with respect to OIA (e.g. Hock 1992; Klaiman 1978; Hock 1986; Bynon 2005) and MIA (e.g. Bubenik 1996, 1998; Jamison 2000; Peterson 1998). Unfortunately the same is not true for the development of the same construction in the NIA period, especially after the 16th century (a recent exception is Strański 2011). In this study, that represent a part of an ongoing investigation about the preservation – in some NIA languages – of the ergative-absolutive system of OIA and MIA (cf. Drocco 2008, 2010), I will describe some aspects of this alignment system on the basis of the analysis of a particular old NIA literary variety: the Braj language – also known as Braj-bhāṣā – of the 17th and 18th century. In particular this study attempts to provide some interpretation of the high 'optionality' of ne as a restored case-marker for A in the perfective clauses of the texts examined, suggesting that its variability in this function is not unsystematic, but, on the contrary, determined by a combination of different principles. I will examine some of these principles, trying to give some indication about the typology of the system of ergative marking in medieval Braj-bhāṣā. The dynamics of this system is largely, if not totally, ignored by textbooks and language studies concerning the language and in general old Hindi literary varieties.

The paper is organized in two parts. In the first one, after having provided an initial overview of the origin of ergativity in IA (§ 2) and its development in NIA (§ 3), I will give some information about the history of the postposition ne in Hindi as new ergative case-marker (§ 4). In particular I will try to give some indication about the period in which its use became fixed, the hypothesis concerning its origin and the period approximately when this postposition started to be used as the restored ergative case-marker in old Hindi literary varieties, like Braj-bhāṣā. In the second part (§ 5), after having furnished some information about Braj-bhāṣā (§ 5.1) and its ergative-absolutive system attested approximately around the beginning of 17th century (§ 5.2), I will focus my attention on those two centuries where in this language the ergative case marking of A in perfective aspect is realized with

more than one marker (§ 5.3) and where, in the same literary variety, the use of the postposition ne as the restored ergative marking of A is frequently not still fixed (§ 5.4). The last sections contain a summary of the content (§ 6) and conclusions of this article (§ 7).

2. The emergence of the ergative-absolutive system in Indo-Aryan

It is well known that the split alignment system found in many present-day IA and Iranian languages is due to the proliferation, starting from OIA and Old Iranian period, of the perfective clause developed out of the earlier predicative use of a non-finite verbal form, the Indo-Iranian past participle in -at (see, among others, Klaiman 1987; Haig 2008). Focusing the attention to the IA group of languages, this is the result of the fact that one of the salient differences between ancient OIA and MIA syntax was the predilection of the early OIA period for the use of the finite active forms for the expression of perfectivity. These forms are characterised by a nominative-marked A, accusative-marked O and finite verb in the active voice (Bloch 1934: 205–222; Burrow 1955; Bubenik 1996: 170; Peterson 1998: 202–208; Bynon 2005: 6–15); see Examples 1, 2, 3.

Examples 1 ÷ 3: Early OIA

1. \textit{prā bhūḥ} (1) \textbf{preverb} \textit{rte:} \textit{acc, dual} \textit{asrāk} \textit{savītā [...]}

\textit{strecch out} (AOR (sigrnic)(\textit{vṣṣ}). \textit{3sg.\textit{parasmapada}} \textit{Savīt:nom.sg} ‘Savīt has stretched out his arms [...]’ (\textit{Rg}Veda IV, 53, 3)

2. \textit{agnīm [...] dādhire} \textbf{agrem} \textit{om} \textit{perfect} \textit{vīdhā:3pl.ātmanepada} \textit{purō jānāḥ} before \textit{people:nom.pl} ‘The people have put Agni at the first place (lit.: before) [...]’ (\textit{Rg}Veda III, 2, 5)

1. The following abbreviations are used in this article: \textit{abl:} ablative; \textit{acc:} accusative; \textit{aor:} aorist; \textit{aux:} auxiliary; \textit{caus:} causative; \textit{cp:} conjunctive participle; \textit{dat:} dative; \textit{dir:} direct; \textit{emph:} emphatic; \textit{erg:} ergative; \textit{f:} feminine; \textit{hon:} honorific; \textit{ia:} Indo-Aryan; \textit{impl:} imperative; \textit{instr:} instrumental; \textit{loc:} locative; m: masculine; \textit{mia:} Middle Indo-Aryan; \textit{nial:} New Indo-Aryan; \textit{nom:} nominative; \textit{nt:} neuter; \textit{obl:} oblique; \textit{oia:} Old Indo-Aryan; \textit{part:} participle; \textit{ptcl:} particle; \textit{past:} past; \textit{past.part:} past participle; \textit{perf:} perfective; \textit{pres:} present; \textit{sg:} singular; \textit{voc:} vocative.

2. See also Chapter 1 by Dahl & Strański in this volume for a detailed summary and additional references.

3. In all examples, for the transliteration of devanāgarī script, I use the International Alphabet of Sanskrit Transliteration (I.A.T.S.) based on a standard established by the International Congress of Orientalists at Geneva in 1894.
On the contrary, starting from early MIA, the old verbal system underwent a process of decomposition and thus gradually lost the finite active verb forms for the expression of performativity (Pischel 1965; Bloch 1906:93). Perhaps, as a consequence, there was a strong tendency for the use of a construction with the predicative *ta*-participles for the realization of the perfective aspect (Bloch 1934:224; Chatterji 1960:94; Bynon 2005:6-15). During this stage of IA, and in this type of construction, A is expressed either by the instrumental or by the genitive, and O, sharing always the same form of S, was in concord with the verb (Andersen 1986a; Bubeník 1996:170): see Examples 4 and 5 where A is marked by the instrumental.

From the rock edicts of the King Ashoka Maurya:

(4) **āyāṁ dhāma-lipi** Devānāṃpriyena

3.nom rescript on morality:nom Devānāṃpriya:instr.m.sg

Priyadasīna r[a]jñā l[e]khpitā [...] Priyadasī:instr.m.sg king:instr.m.sg write:caus:part:nom

"These rescripts on morality have been caused to be written by king Devānāṃpriya Priyadarśin [...]"

(Girnār, rock edict XIV; adapted from Hultzsch 1924:25-26; passive interpretation by Hultzsch)

From the Theravāda Buddhist Canon (pāli):

(5) **Udenena** upāsakena [...] Udena:instr.m.sg layman:instr.m.sg

vihāro arāpito hoti monastery:nom.m.sg build:caus:part:nom:nom.m.sg be:aux:pres.3sg

"The layman Udena has had a monastery built [...]"

(Mahāvagga III: 5, 1; adapted from Peterson 1998:93)

However in early MIA, as well as in Classical and Epic Sanskrit (cf. Bloch 1906; Burrow 1955:354), we still find this construction alongside clauses realized by the inherited finite active forms which operate along a nominative-accusative pattern (Peterson 1998:92-96): A and S are treated exactly in the same way, in the nominative, and O is coded differently from both, in the accusative, whereas the verb forms agree in person and number with A and S as in Examples 6 and 7.
3. The development of the ergative-absolutive system in New-Indo-Aryan

The situation described above is valid up to the end of MIA. What about the (possible) process which lead to the present-day ergative-absolutive system of contemporary NIA languages, in particular of modern Hindi? As regards the first period of NIA, and focusing the attention only on the case marking of A in perfective clauses, the general mechanisms which lead to case syncretism in nominal inflection case, for the majority of singular nouns, the attrition of the distinction between S and A in the perfective aspect. For example in Old Rajasthani, an important Western old NIA literary variety, the investigations by Khokhlova (1992, 1995, 2001, the paper in this volume) have ascertained that S and A in perfective clauses are distinguished only with masculine singular nouns ending in -o and with all plural masculine nouns: see Tables 1 and 2.

Table 1. Case distinctions on nouns in Old Rajasthani (~ beginning of the 17th century): SINGULAR

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>M</th>
<th>F</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A in perfective clauses</td>
<td>*ai</td>
<td>*ai</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Direct (A in non-perfective clauses &amp; S)</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>---</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(adopted from Khokhlova 2001:167)

On the other hand, in the pronominal system S and A in the perfective aspect nearly always show different forms in the singular (Khokhlova 2001:163), while in the plural they have a strong tendency to share the same form for S and A, especially when they code first and second person pronouns (Tessitori 1916:52–53), as illustrated in Table 3.

Table 3. Case distinctions on pronouns in Old Rajasthani (~ beginning of the 17th century)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>SG</th>
<th>PL</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>A in perfective clauses</td>
<td>mhain</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>A in non-perfective clauses &amp; S</td>
<td>hain</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>A in perfective clauses</td>
<td>tain</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>A in non-perfective clauses &amp; S</td>
<td>than</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>A in perfective clauses</td>
<td>ana/ina (obi. 1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>A in non-perfective clauses &amp; S</td>
<td>o/y (M), a (F)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>A in perfective clauses</td>
<td>uga (obi. 1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>A in non-perfective clauses &amp; S</td>
<td>u (M), vi (F)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(adopted from Smith 1975; cf. also Tessitori 1916:52–54)

As already said, this situation is valid for the first period of NIA, that is for the period before the end of the 16th century, and perhaps in different periods for the majority of early NIA languages. In the following centuries some of these languages abandoned the majority, if not all, the characteristics of the
original ergative-absolutive system (e.g. Oriya, Bhojpuri and the dialectal varieties under the label of 'Eastern Hindi'), testifying thus the eliminative forces in the history of the IA ergative construction. On the contrary, some others (e.g. Marathi, Kasmiri, Sindhi, Gujarati) display the conservative tendencies of this particular alignment system, especially through the restoration of the ergative case marking of A (cf. Stump 1983; Klaiman 1987; Deo & Sharma 2006; Strömski 2011; Verbeke 2013; see also the paper by Verbeke & De Clercq in this volume). This is the case of (Western) Hindi where the distinction between S and A in perfective clauses is well established, but realized with a restored ergative case-marker – the aforementioned postposition ne – used thus for an old function, the ergative case marking of A in the perfective aspect: see Examples 11 and 12. The same is true for Pañjábi (cf. Example 13 vs. Example 14), except for first and second person pronouns (Bhatia 1993: 170–171, 229, 245; Bhardwaj 1995: 90–91, 106–107; Butt 2003: 3), whereas the other modern IA languages realize the same marking of A with another postposition and/or by other means (cf. Klaiman 1987: 67–75).

Hindi

(11) larkā gayā.
boy:M.Dir.SG go:PERF:M.SG 'The boy went.'
(adapted from Klaiman 1987:68)

(12) larke ne roji khāi.
boy:M.OBL.SG eat:PERF 'The boy ate (the) bread.'
(adapted from Klaiman 1987:68)

Pañjábi

(13) Rām ālā.
Rām.M come:PERF:M.SG 'Rām came.'
(adapted from Bhatia 2000:646)

(14) Rām ne jān nāri [...] apni kitāb ditti.
(adapted from Bhatia 2000:658)

4. The history of the postposition ne as ergative case-marker

What about the history of the new ergative case-marker in Hindi and western Hindi varieties? Regarding Hindustani (i.e. Hindi) it is certainly true that from the grammars of John Gilchrist (1796), William Yates (1827), John Shakespear (1813), Garcin de Tassy (1829), and other pioneer scholars of this language (cf., for example, Saurih & Price 1823; Price 1827–28; Arnot 1831; Ballantyne 1838; Forbes 1855, 1860; Eastwick 1858; Monier-Williams 1860),6 we can conclude that ne in the first half of the 19th century was used almost exactly as in contemporary Hindi. This is confirmed, apart from a few exceptions not discussed here,7 by the so-called Hindi/Hindustani texts composed in the beginning of the 19th century, as the well-known Prem Sagar of Lallujjī Lāl8 the Baitāl pacasī of Mazhar Ali Khan Whā and Lallujjī Lāl,9 the Rānī Ketki ki kahānī of Imām Allāh Khan10 and the portions of texts included in the anthology Gūkā of Sīv Prasād Simha.11

Thus what about the history of the ne12 postposition before the beginning of the 19th century? As concerns the origin of this particular ergative case-marker, according to Beames (1872–1879:270) one of the most reliable hypotheses is that the source of this new ergative marker is the Gujarati and Rājasthani dative/accusative postposition ne (see also Hoernle 1880:224–225 and Kellogg 1893:132): however, the exact origin of the latter is not completely clear and thus remains far from satisfactory (cf. Sigorsky 2007; Verbeke & De Cuypere 2009; Strömski 2009). But even if there are other hypotheses about the origin of ne, it is important to point out that the majority of scholars who have studied its history have focused their attention only on the etymology of this postposition (an exception is Montaut 2007). Consequently there are not so many studies about the history of the ne postposition used as ergative case-marker. Surely thanks to the works of Beames (1872–1879), Hoernle (1880) and Tessitori (1913) we know that the postposition ne to mark A in the perfective aspect started to be used in the course of the 17th century. In particular Beames (1872–1879) proposes that the postposition ne - "[...] hitherto used for the dative [...]" (p. 270) - began gradually to be extended to mark subjects of a transitive perfective clause in a dialect of Hindi spoken at the Muγal court (cf. also Hoernle 1880:219).13

Starting from these observations taken from reliable studies and primary texts as those mentioned above, it is possible to conclude that the process of restoration,

7. This topic is discussed in Drocco (2008): Chapter 7.
12. Other forms of this postposition are naī, neṇi, nainī. As already seen in this paper, with the exception of the examples, I always mention the form ne.
13. Beames’ hypothesis has been recently pursued by Butt (2006).
in perfective clauses, of the ergative case marking of A with ne is related only to two centuries, the 17th and 18th century. But was this process abrupt or gradual? That is, was the use of ne fixed in these two centuries, as in modern Hindi, or variable? It is possible to answer this question on the basis of both considerations of some scholars and on the analysis of some texts of this period, especially prose texts, because more reliable for a linguistic examination. According to the majority of scholars in the beginning the use of a particular postposition to mark A in the perfective aspect in the aforementioned languages was sporadic, but gradually more systematic and regular (e.g. Kellogg 1893: 407; Hoernle 1880: 217–219; Šrīvāstav 1970: Chapter 3; cf. also Nespital 1998: 205 and Balbir 1991: 195). Recently Sigorsky (2007) confirmed that in early Hindi and Braj the breaking down of the case system decreased the distinctiveness of direct marked A and ergative marked A or sometimes eliminated it. Moreover the same author adds (2007:37) that free alternation (optionality) of direct marked A and ergative marked A with ne is observed also in early Braj (see also Liperovskij 2007) and accordingly he explicitly states that “In early Hindi the postposition ne is used randomly [...]” (Sigorsky 2007:37). The initial apparent free-variation of ne as an ergative case-marker of A in the perfective aspect is testified from prose texts written in different old Hindi varieties. In fact as we can see from the following examples, taken from the few prose texts available, even if in these texts many constructions looks like the classic ergative case system of Modern Standard Hindi (cf. Examples 15, 16, 17, 18, 19 and 20), there is a complication in that not all A in perfective clauses take the ergative marker ne as in Examples 21, 22, 23, 24, 25 and 26.

Braj-bhāṣā

(15) [...] bastubicāra nai kāma kaum āgni maryau.
Bastubicārān M ERG Kāmān M DAT/ACC kill:PERF.M.SG
‘[...] Bastubicāra (= investigation into truth, personified) killed Kāma (= love, personified).’
(Prabodha nātaka, p. 105)

(16) taba gidha nem una ki pukāra suni
then vulture.M ERG 3PL.OBL GEN:F CRY.F hear:CP
khodara teni mūndha nikāsi kahyau, [...]
hollow ABL head put out:CP say:PERF.M.SG
‘Then the vulture hearing their cry, putting (his) head out of the hollow said [...]’
(Rāja Niti, p. 14)

(17) [...] desādhipati ne sūradāsa somi kahyo, [...]
Emperor.M ERG Sūradāsa INSTR say:PERF.M.SG
‘[...] the Emperor said to Sūradāsa, [...]’
(Caurāśi vaisnavana ki vārtā, vārtā 81, p. 417)

Early Dakhkhinī Hindi

(18) usa ne khela yām kheliyā.
3SG.OBL ERG game 3SG.DIR play:PERF.M.SG
‘He played this game.’
(Sab rus, p. 3; adapted from Gricourt 1988: 164)

Early Hindi

(19) yaha javāba pātiśāha nai kīyā [...]
3SG.DIR answer:M Emperor.M ERG do:PERF.M.SG
‘The Emperor made this answer [...]’
(Kutubāśatatakā vārttika tilaka, p. 12)

(20) pātiśāha nai hukama kīyā [...]
Emperor.M ERG order.M do:PERF.M.SG
‘The Emperor ordered [...]’
(Kutubāśatatakā vārttika tilaka, p. 10)

Braj-bhāṣā

(21) rājā bibeka dvārapāla kaum āgni kari [...]
rājān M Bibeka door-keeper DAT order.F do:PERF.M.SG
‘Rājā Bibeka ordered to a door-keeper [...]’
(Prabodha nātaka, p. 100)

(22) taba kṛṣṇadāsa śṛgusāṣṭī kom dāmāvata
thus Kṛṣṇadāsa.M Śṛgusāṣṭī PAT prostitution
karikē yaha pada gāye.
do:CP 3SG.DIR pada.M sing:PERF.M.PL
‘Thus Kṛṣṇadāsa, having protrasted himself to Śṛgusāṣṭī, sang this pada.’
(Caurāśi vaisnavana ki vārtā, vārtā 84, pp. 564–565)

(23) [...] taba yaha desādhipati [...] pūchā, [...]
thus 3SG.DIR Emperor.M ask:PERF.M.SG
‘Thus this Emperor [...] asked, [...]’
(Caurāśi vaisnavana ki vārtā, vārtā 83, pp. 486–487)

(24) eka dina kāgā kahi, [...]
one day crown.M say:PERF.F
‘One day the crown said, [...]’
(Rāja Niti, p. 20)

Early Dakhkhinī hindi

(25) bādasāha sarabha piyā.
Emperor.M wine.F drink:PERF.M.SG
‘The Emperor drank wine.’
(adapted from Nespital 1998: 205)

14. In this example the verb shows concord with A (= Kṛṣṇadāsa), here honorific plural.

15. Pada: a verse of devotional poetry (especially intended to be sung).
Therefore this period is marked by a high variability in the presence of *ne* after *A* in periphrastic clauses: the result was a case marking system characterized by what McGregor (2009, 2010) classifies as an Optional Ergative Marking (OEM). But even if the aforementioned scholars in their works dealt with the variable presence of *ne* in the beginning of its use, this is the only information we have about the history of *ne* used as ergative marker. As a consequence we do not know, as regards NIA and in particular Hindi and its dialects, the precise details of its initial free-variation, that is the precise details of the process of diffusion and stabilization of this postposition. In particular what were the reasons and the modalities which led to the present use of this case-marker? And what conditions the different case marking of *A* in the perfective aspect through the presence/absence of *ne* as new ergative marker? If we accept that its use with this specific function is not random, surely it is not easy to answer this question. Some authors, as Pandharipande and Kachru (1977), have stressed the importance a study along these lines would have. In the following pages I try to give some interpretations of the high initial variability of *ne* as a case-marker for *A* in periphrastic clauses and to explore some aspects of its gradual spread in this function in Braj-bhäśā, trying to establish the possible typology of case-asymmetries found in pre-18th century texts written in this old Hindi literary variety. Why this language? Because even if Modern Standard Hindi is based on the so-called Khyā-boli, the real nature of this dialect – or mixed speech of the Delhi region – before the beginning of the 19th century is not totally clear. Moreover according to the most important scholars (cf. McGregor 1974:67–68; Barz 1982:12–14; Nespoli 1998:214–215), the Braj language was closely cognate with this pre-19th century mixed speech of the Delhi region and this is the language, thanks also to its rich literature, most representative of what is usually called Old or Medieval Hindi (Busch 2010). Lastly in Braj-bhäśā are drawn up some of the earliest sample of Hindi prose (McGregor 1968).

5. The use of *ne* as ergative case-marker in Braj-bhäśa prose

5.1 Introduction

Before entering into the analysis of the relevant constructions of Braj-bhäśa, some general considerations about this language are in order. Today Braj-bhäśa is mainly a non-literary, rural and household tongue, predominant in the so-called Braj region, that is in the area between the Gaṅgā and Yamunā rivers. However, it should be emphasized that for centuries, until the consolidation of Modern Standard Hindi, the Braj language, now considered a western dialect of Hindi, enjoyed great prestige as the vehicle of the Kṛṣṇa cult literature and for approximately three centuries before the 19th century was one of the most important literary languages of northern India (Busch 2010; see also Varma 1965). Although most of the works written in Braj-bhäśa were in verse, the present investigation is based primarily on textual instances from a corpus of a few extant prose texts composed between the 17th century and the beginning of the 19th century, in particular from (i) the prose commentary of Indrajit of Orchā on the *Nītisātaka* of Bhartṛhari – composed circa at the beginning of the 17th century – edited and analyzed by Ronald Stuart McGregor (1968), (ii) the *Prabodha nāṭaka* (hereafter PN) of the maharājā Javant Sinhiha, (iii) four hagiographical stories included in the *Caurāsi vaistavan kṛt vārtā* (hereafter CVV), (iv) the first two chapters of the *Rāja Nitti* (hereafter RN) of Lalūji Lāl.

5.2 The ergative-absolutive system of early Braj-bhäśa prose

As in Old Rājasthāni (cf. § 3), also in early Braj-bhäśa the general mechanisms which lead to case-symetism in nominal inflection cause, for the majority of singular nouns, the attrition of the distinction between *S* and *A* in the perfective aspect. This is partly demonstrated by the first text of my corpus, the prose commentary of Indrajit of Orchā: here O, in perfective clauses, is in concord with the verbal form, whereas *A*, substantive or pronoun, appears in the oblique case, sometimes with but often without modification. In Tables 4 and 5 I give the case distinctions on nouns of Braj language according to McGregor (1968).

Regarding first and second person pronouns, in the singular the distinction between *S* and *A* is always realized through their instrumental forms *maṁśa* and *tam* vs. their nominative forms *haṁ* and *tum* respectively. In the plural they share the same form for *S* and *A*, with the extension of the nominative form to *A* in periphrastic clauses: see table n. 6.

In this text, according to McGregor (1968), there are not postpositions for *A* in periphrastic clauses. Consequently at the beginning of the 17th century Old Rājasthāni and early Braj-bhäśa – as already seen the latter represented by the
The restoration of the ergative case marking of 'A' in perfective clauses in New Indo-Aryan period, there are no traces of any new ergative case-marker for A in the perfective aspect.\(^{18}\)

5.3 The distribution of ergative case marking in late Braj-bhāśā prose

Contrary to the prose commentary of Indrajit of Orchā, in the other three Braj prose texts investigated we find clear signs of the restoration of the distinction of S and A in perfective clauses by means of a case-marker new for this function in Braj-bhāśā, the postposition ne. As a first approximation the analysis of the texts taken into consideration here allows us to assume that this postposition is used only as a case-marker of A in the perfective aspect. In this context, however, its use is not systematic and regular, because A is followed by this case-marker about in half of its total occurrences: see Table 7. As a consequence it is not possible to definitively conclude which of the two alternatives was the most frequent option.

The examination of all perfective clauses encountered in the texts here analyzed shows that the use of the postposition ne seems to be triggered by the type of nominal in the role of A in the perfective aspect. In fact, as we can see from Table 8, pronouns and nouns show different percentage regarding the presence of ne.

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18. One anonymous reviewer pointed out that in earlier sources of Braj poetry it is possible to find postpositional marking of A in the perfective and the forms haumh and mainh of the first person singular pronoun often used interchangeably (contrary to what found in the Braj prose texts here analyzed; cf. Note 20). For example – the same reviewer adds – in the Sūr Sāgar of Sūdrās mainh can be used as A (in imperfective and perfective), S and O; besides that, haumh can be used as S and A. However I don’t consider poems written in the Braj language reliable sources for an historical linguistic analysis. The reason for such a methodological position is the not totally clear manuscript tradition of the edited texts today available and the lack of a good critical edition for the majority of them. This is the case of the different edition of the text of the Sūr Sāgar. Hawley, one of the most authoritative scholar on the manuscript tradition of the poems of Sūdrās, clearly said in one of his study: “Like an ocean, [the Sūr Sāgar] is composed of numerous drops that form themselves into multiple, complexly related currents. […] It is likely that already in Sur’s own century, the sixteenth, other poet-performers besides the biological Sūdrās contributed to the corpus bearing his name. Clearly this pattern continued in the centuries that followed, right up to the present moment. Thus Sur’s Ocean continues to expand, and only a certain proportion of the Sūdrās compositions that are held dearest by contemporary audiences can be traced back to Sur’s own time.” (2007: 224). Cf. also Hawley (1979) and (1985) (Chapter 2: “The Growth of the Sūr Sāgar”).
Table 7. 'A' in perfective clauses

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>'A' in perfective clauses</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>without ne</td>
<td>+ ne</td>
<td>Tot.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prabodha nāṭaka</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>62,16</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Caurāśī vaśayaṇaṇa ki vārtā</td>
<td>365</td>
<td>36,76</td>
<td>628</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rājā niti</td>
<td>191</td>
<td>53,95</td>
<td>163</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 8. Distribution of 'A' in perfective clauses

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Perfective transitive clauses</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Pronouns</td>
<td>Nouns</td>
<td>Tot.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Without ne</td>
<td>+ ne</td>
<td>Tot.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prabodha nāṭaka</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Caurāśī vaśayaṇaṇa ki vārtā</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>26,05</td>
<td>88</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rājā niti</td>
<td>101</td>
<td>68,71</td>
<td>46</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In particular it is interesting to note that in the PN the optionality of ne is found only with nouns, because the pronouns are never followed by it. However this does not mean that all pronouns in perfective clauses share the same form for S and A. In fact in the PN the encoding of A in this context varies according to whether A is a pronoun or a noun, because the first and second person pronouns, in the singular, always show the opposition between S and A through the same suppletive forms found in the commentary of Indrajit of Orchā and not through the addition of any new ergative case-marker.\(^{19}\) see Example 27 vs. Example 28.

(27) [...] mainī sunyau hai [...] 1sg.instr be:perf.m.sg be.aux.pres.3sg 'I have heard, [...]’ (Prabodha nāṭaka, p. 84)

(28) [...] hauṁ [...] rājā bibeka paim 1sg.nom rājā Bibeka loc jāta hauṁ. go:part.pres.m.sg be.aux.pres.1sg 'I go to rājā Bibeka.' (Prabodha nāṭaka, p. 82)

The situation found in the RN, as regards Speech Act Participants in the singular, is very similar to that of the PN.\(^{20}\) As regards the first person singular pronoun this is illustrated in Examples 29 and 30.

(29) taba mainī vā som kahyau, [...] then 1sg.instr 3sg.obl.instr say:perf.m.sg 'Then I said to him.' (Rājā Niti, p. 56)

(30) hauṁ [...] saba sevaka [...] 1sg.nom all servant.m leta hauṁ. take:part.pres.m.sg be.aux.pres.1sg 'I take all servants [...]'. (Rājā Niti, p. 44)

Examples 31 and 32 are related to the second person singular pronoun: in the RN tainī is the form for A in perfective clauses (cf. 31), whereas tū is normally used for A in non-perfective clauses and for S (cf. 32).

(31) [...] tainī ina syārana hauṁ adhikārī 2sg.instr 3pl.obl. jackal:obl.pl dat authority.m kiyyau, [...] do:perf.m.sg ‘ [...] you have invested these jackals with authority [...]’ (Rājā Niti, p. 49)

\(^{19}\) I have no data of third person pronouns as regards to PN.

\(^{20}\) It is noteworthy that, contrary to the PN where ne is however present, in the RN this case-marker follows sometimes also the aforesaid instrumental forms mainī and tainī. It is possible that this is a consequence of the fact that already in the PN, but especially in the RN, the instrumental form mainī of the first person singular pronoun, typical for A in the perfective aspect, is also used for A in non-perfective clauses and for S, where the nominative form hauṁ was normally used instead. This process of replacement is more advanced, even if far from being completed, in the RN with regard to the PN, whereas in the four hagiographical stories of the CVV is completed, since in this text the Nominative form hauṁ of the first person singular pronoun is totally absent. The analysis of the same very process of replacement is beyond the scope of the present paper. Cf. Note 18 as regards the fact that in earlier sources of Braj poetry the forms hauṁ and mainī of the first person singular pronoun are often used interchangeably.
The restoration of the ergative case marking of 'A' in perfective clauses in New Indo-Aryan

The same is true for common nouns, but only in the plural, where alongside -ni it is possible to find also the allomorphic form -na; see Example 40 and Examples 41 and 42 respectively.

(40) sevakani kahi, [...] servanṭ:obl.m.pl say:perf
'The servants said, [...]'

(Rāja Niti, p. 50)

(41) [...] saba banabhāṣyaṇa va hi all dwellers of the forest:obl.m.pl 3sg.obl dat āśirvādā diyaub blessings.m give:perf.m.sg
' [...] all the dwellers of the forest showered down blessings upon him.'

(Rāja Niti, p. 57)

(42) yaha sunti panṣhiyaṇa kahi, [...] 3sg.dir hear:cp bird:obl.m.pl say:perf
'Having heard this the birds said, [...]'

(Rāja Niti, p. 7)

It is interesting to observe that hama and tuma, as respective forms of the first and second person plural pronouns, are used in the RN, with very few occurrences, for singular reference; in these cases, when they appear as A in perfective clauses, the postposition ne, or any other suffix, is absent. As a consequence the forms used in these occurrences are the same used in non-perfective clauses but, interestingly, the verbal agreement is in accordance with an ergative-absolutive system: see Examples 43 and 44.

(43) mahārājāḥ hama vāhi dekhyaub, [...] sire.voc 1pl.dir 3sg.obl:acc see:perf.m.sg
'Oh Sire! I saw him, [...]'

(Rāja Niti, p. 46)

(44) tuma kahyaub [...] 2pl.dir say:perf.m.sg
'You said, [...]'

(Rāja Niti, p. 29)

But if the same pronouns are used as A in perfective clauses for plural reference, then the suffix -ni is added, as in Examples 45 and 46.

(45) mitralabha ki kathā tu acqui for ming friends gen:f narrative:f ptcl
'F i
hamuni sunti, [...] 1pl:obl hear:perf
'We have heard the narrative regarding the acquisition of friends, [...]'

(Rāja Niti, p. 35)
The restoration of the ergative case marking of A in perfective clauses in New Indo-Aryan i.e. the postposition ne.\(^{21}\) As regards the use of this new ergative case-marker in Braj-bhāṣa prose texts, I have already observed that in the PN this postposition follows only nouns. As regards the RN the suffix -nal-ni is used with plural common nouns and plural pronouns, whereas the postposition ne is used especially,\(^{22}\) and as the only one ergative case-marker, with singular common nouns (cf. Examples 50, 51), proper nouns (cf. Examples 52 and 53) and third person singular pronouns (cf. Example 54):

\[(46)\] 
\[\text{taba tumani sahāyatā kari una ke} \]
\[\text{then 2P:OBL assistance,F do:CP 3P:OBL GEN:M.PL} \]
\[\text{jiva bacāye.} \]
\[\text{life:M say:PERF:M.PL} \]
\[\text{'[...] then you, rendering assistance, saved their lives.' (Rāja Niti, p. 19)} \]

As regards pronouns, there are also some instances, but only in the CVV, of the honorific plural pronoun āpal/āpu as A in perfective clauses: nearly always this pronoun occurs without ne and in concord with the verb, as in Example 47.

\[(47)\] 
\[\text{taba āpu ājñā kiyē} \]
\[\text{then HON.PL command,F do:PERF:M.PL} \]
\[\text{‘Then he commanded [...]’ (Caurāśi vaśṣṇava ki vārtā, vārtā 82, p. 455)} \]

In some other cases, as in Example 48, the same pronoun is again not followed by the ergative postposition ne but, contrary to 47 and concerning verbal agreement, is O and not A in concord with the verb.

\[(48)\] 
\[\text{[...] āpu dasamaskāṇḍha ki anukramanikā} \]
\[\text{HON.PL dasamaskāṇḍha GEN:F anukramanikā,F} \]
\[\text{kari hati} \]
\[\text{do:PERF,F be:aux:IMPF(past):F} \]
\[\text{'[...] he had done the Anukramanikā of the Dasamakṣaṇḍha [...]’} \]
\[\text{(Caurāśi vaśṣṇava ki vārtā, vārtā 81, p. 406)} \]

Sometimes with the same pronoun as A in perfective clauses is not at all clear if the verbal agreement patterns in conformity with an ergative-absolutive system or with a nominative-accusative one. For example in the following example the verb is masculine and plural, but both A and O are masculine and honorific plural.

\[(49)\] 
\[\text{[...] āpa [...] Šri Govardhananātha ji} \]
\[\text{HON.PL Šri.HON.PL Govardhananātha jī.HON.PL} \]
\[\text{ke darasaṇa kiyē} \]
\[\text{GEN:M.PL darasaṇa.M.HON.PL do:PERF:M.PL} \]
\[\text{‘He did the Darasaṇa of Šri Govardhananāthaji [...]’} \]
\[\text{(Caurāśi vaśṣṇava ki vārtā, vārtā 84, p. 485)} \]

As already said, the suppletive forms of pronouns in the PN and in the RN and the addition of the suffix -nal-ni in the RN are not the only ergative case-markers found in my corpus: in fact, in these two texts, the distinction between A and S in the perfective aspect is also realized with a third type of ergative marking.

\[^{21}\text{Therefore in the corpus analyzed, although not in all texts, the case marking system for A found in perfective clauses is not only an OEM but also, following again McGregor (2009), a Differential Ergative Marking (DEM), that is a system ‘[...] in which a language shows two or more distinct ergative case-markers’ (McGregor 2009:497).}\]

\[^{22}\text{See my remarks in note n. 20.}\]
The restoration of the ergative case marking of ‘A in perfective clauses in New Indo-Aryan

5.4 The variability of ne as ergative case-marker in late Braj-bhāṣa prose

As a first consideration to understand the variability of ne with nouns in my corpus I must say that in the RN there are many nouns related, for example but not only, to animals but used metaphorically as humans and thus treated as such in the analysis. In this manner in the texts investigated prevail, in perfective clauses, animate, especially human As: there are only five instances of true animals, all followed by ne, whereas there is not a single example of inanimate nouns. Second, starting from a preliminary analysis of the texts I decided to consider, among human nouns, not only the two macro-categories of human proper nouns and human common nouns but at least another category: the category of religious titles, like, for example, ācārya, that is instructor, and titles referred to the avatāra(s), “reincarnation”, of Viṣṇu, like Kṛṣṇa. In the CVV this kind of titles appears always with the honorific prefix śrī- and followed by the honorific suffix -ji. Thus taking into account data illustrated in Tables 9, 10 and 11, it is possible to say that:

- in the CVV, common nouns present a strong tendency to occur as A in perfective clauses with ne, in the RN the same tendency is present, but it is not so evident;
- at the opposite pole we find the aforementioned titles;
- in-between there are proper nouns: this kind of participant is that with the higher variability in the use of ne and, at least concerning the RN, with similar percentages of instances with both options.

Table 9. Variability of ne with titles

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Titles</th>
<th>without ne</th>
<th>+ ne</th>
<th>Tot.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>N</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>N</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prabodha nātaka</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>85,71</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Caurāsi vaiṣṇavana ki vārtā</td>
<td>208</td>
<td>75,64</td>
<td>67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rāja niti</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 10. Variability of ne with proper nouns

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Proper nouns</th>
<th>without ne</th>
<th>+ ne</th>
<th>Tot.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>N</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>N</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prabodha nātaka</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>47,73</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Caurāsi vaiṣṇavana ki vārtā</td>
<td>106</td>
<td>25,42</td>
<td>311</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rāja niti</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>55,41</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 11. Variability of ne with common nouns

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Common nouns</th>
<th>without ne</th>
<th>+ ne</th>
<th>Tot.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>N</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>N</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prabodha nātaka</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>37,50</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Caurāsi vaiṣṇavana ki vārtā</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>10,99</td>
<td>162</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rāja niti</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>36,84</td>
<td>84</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Therefore the evidence shows that one of the principal factors governing the presence of ne in the perfective aspect would seem to be the inherent topicality of the nominal in the role of A. However it is important to point out that, taking into account the CVV, the absence of ne with titles is often associated with the presence after them, and only after them, of apā/apu “he/himself”: in these occurrences the verb agrees in conformity to a nominative-accusative system, as in Example 58:

(58) [...] śri acārya ji apu Śrīḥon.pl Acārya jī honor.pl he/himself paramānāmāsvāmi soni aṁhā kiye, [...] Paramānāmāsvāmi ins order.fsg doperf.m.pl

‘[...] Śri Acāryaji himself commanded to Paramānāmāsvāmi [...]’

(Caurāśī vaisṇavāna ki vārtā, vārtā 84, p. 494)

In some few cases, even if titles occur followed by apā/apu and without ne, the verb agrees with O and not with A; see Example 59:

(59) [...] taba śri guśāṇi ji apu [...] then Śrīḥon.pl Guśāṇi jī honor.pl he/himself vā rājaḥu koh nāma sunāyo.

3sg.obl. Rājaḥu dat name.m.sg announce:perf.m.sg

‘[...] then Śri Guśāṇiji himself [...] initiated that Rājaḥu.’

(literal: then Śri Guśāṇiji himself announced the (divine) name to that Rājaḥu)

(Caurāśī vaisṇavāna ki vārtā, vārtā 83, p. 515)

If it is certainly true that not in all instances of titles without ne there is the presence of apā/apu (see data of column 4 in Table 12 and Example 60), it is also true that if the latter follows this kind of participant, then the ergative case-marker ne is always absent (see data of column 3 vs. data of column 5 in Table 12).

(60) taba śri govardhānaṅaṭha ji yaha then Śrīḥon.pl Govardhānaṅaṭha jī honor.pl 3sg.dir aṁhā kiye, [...] order.fsg doperf.m.pl

‘Then Śri Govardhānaṅaṭhajī commanded this [...]’

(Caurāśī vaisṇavāna ki vārtā, vārtā 83, p. 481)

Now, considering also the typology of the predicate, it is possible to conclude, on a first analysis, that some verbs, as pathā- “to send” and mārā- “to hit, to kill”, are more frequently associated with A followed by ne, while for others – as bācāra- “to think, to reflect, to consider” or āroga- “to eat” – we find the opposite situation. But some verbs, which have the greatest number of occurrences, present almost similar percentages of instances with both options: the most important examples of this kind of verbs are kara- “to do”, kaha- “to say”, pūcha- “to ask”. Focusing our attention on these verbs, if we do a cross-check between the type of main verb and the type of A followed or not by ne, we can see that, for example, in the CVV the percentage of perfective clauses without ne and with kara- as the main verb is very high, 80.7% (46/57), if as A in the perfective aspect there are titles (often followed by apā/apu), while it is very low, only the 8.11% (3/37), with common nouns. Proper nouns related to the various followers occur quite often as in A perfective clauses with this case-marker, but the percentage of their occurrences without ne (22.89%, 19/83) is higher than that of common nouns. Similarly the same is true for kaha- and pūcha-.

| Table 12. Caurāśī vaisṇavāna ki vārtā: titles as A in perfective clauses |
|-------------------------------|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|
| Tot. titles as A in perfective clauses | Tot. titles as A in perfective clauses without ne | Tot. titles as A in perfective clauses + apā/apu without ne | Tot. titles as A in perfective clauses without apā/apu and without ne | Tot. titles as A in perfective clauses + apā/apu and + ne |
| N | N | N | N | N |
| 275 | 208 | 102 | 106 | 0 |

kara- ‘to do’

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>1sg e hon</th>
<th>All others pronouns</th>
<th>Titles</th>
<th>Proper nouns</th>
<th>Common nouns</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>9 (75%)</td>
<td>5 (19,23%)</td>
<td>46 (80,70%)</td>
<td>19 (22,89%)</td>
<td>3 (8,11%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

kaha- ‘to say’

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>1sg e hon</th>
<th>All others pronouns</th>
<th>Titles</th>
<th>Proper nouns</th>
<th>Common nouns</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>3 (75%)</td>
<td>7 (25,93%)</td>
<td>108 (86,40%)</td>
<td>47 (29,19%)</td>
<td>9 (9,38%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

pūcha- ‘to ask’

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>1sg e hon</th>
<th>All others pronouns</th>
<th>Titles</th>
<th>Proper nouns</th>
<th>Common nouns</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>0 (---)</td>
<td>16 (84,21%)</td>
<td>5 (45,45%)</td>
<td>1 (14,29%)</td>
<td>6 (85,71%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
On the other hand, taking into account, for example, the verb rākha-, it is possible to say that when this verb appears in perfective clauses, the ne postposition is nearly always present with all participants in the function of A. This is also true in the CVV, for titles, even though, as we have seen, the same kind of participant with other verbs, like kara-, kaha-, pūcha-, has a strong tendency to occur without the same case-marker. How can we explain this situation? The lexical meaning of the verb rākha- is “to put, to place”: in the CVV it often means “to charge someone with something,” that is “to put, to place, to instruct someone to do something.” With this particular meaning there are in this text five instances in the perfective with titles as A, all followed by ne, and with human Os: two not followed by the object marker korn, but in first position in the sentence, as in Example 62, whereas the other three, of which two are first person plural pronoun, followed by korn and at the beginning of the sentence, as in Example 61.

(61) hama kom śri acārya ji ne
1PL.DIR DAY/ACC Śrī.HON.PL Acārya jī.HON.PL ERG
śri govardhanāthā ji ki svā Śrī.HON.PL Govardhanāthā jī.HON.PL GENP svā
mēn rēkhe hate,
LOC pūtPERF.M.PL bē.AUX:IMPF(PAST).M.PL
‘Śrī Acāryaji had charged us with the svā of Śrī Govardhanāthajī, […]’
(Caurāśī vaisṣṇavana ki vārī, vārī 84, p. 539)

(62) bāngāli śri acārya ji ne
Bengalī(3PL Śrī(HON)(PL) Acārya jī(HON)(PL) ERG
rākhe haiṁ.
pūtPERF.M.PL bē.AUX:PRÉS.3PL
‘Śrī Acāryaji have charged the Bengalis (with the svā in the temple).’
(Caurāśī vaisṣṇavana ki vārī, vārī 84, p. 533)

The situation showed by pathā- “to send” (cf. 63) – or other verbs occurring with human Os, even if the latter not followed by korn and/or not in first position in the clause (cf. 64) – is very similar to that of rākha-.

(63) […] mathurā tem pāṃcassau manusya
Mathurā ABL five hundred men
bīrabala ne pathāye […]
Bīrabala ERG send:PERF.M.PL
‘[…] Bīrabala sent five hundred men from Mathurā […]’
(Caurāśī vaisṣṇavana ki vārī, vārī 84, p. 561)

(64) […] taba śri gusānī ji pandraha
then Śrī.HON.PL Gusānī jī.HON.PL fifteen
brajvāśī dorāye.
brajvāśī.M send:PERF.M.PL
‘[…] then Śrī Gusānijī sent fifteen brajvāśī.’
(Caurāśī vaisṣṇavana ki vārī, vārī 81, p. 437)

If we do the same cross-check, but with regard to the RN, we can see that the instances of A without ne as regards nouns are almost all with the verb kaha- “to say” and with similar percentages related to the absence of ne for common nouns and proper nouns (cf. the data illustrated in Table 13).

Table 13. Rājā niti: type of main verb/proper nouns, common nouns

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Proper nouns</th>
<th>Common nouns</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>without ne</td>
<td>+ ne</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N</td>
<td>%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>kara- ‘to do’</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>kaha- ‘to say’</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>kha- ‘to eat’</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>da-‘to give’</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>de- ‘to give’</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>dēkha- ‘see, to look’</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>pā- ‘to get’</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>pūcha- ‘to ask’</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>bīcāra- ‘to think, to reflect’</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>māra- ‘to hit, to kill’</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>rākha- ‘to put, to place’</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>sunā- ‘to say’</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In these instances there is always only A with kaha- to introduce a reported speech. Moreover this verb is, in all such occurrences, in the feminine form – as typical in Old Rājasthānī and Braj-bhāṣā – probably because in agreement with the feminine noun bāṭa “something said, said statement” not expressed in the construction (cf. Smith 1975; McGregor 1968: 224, Note 3; Snell 1992: 12): see Examples 65, 66, 67 and 68.

23. A brajvāśī is a native of the Braj region. A person who is called a brajvāśī in the literature of Vallabhācārya’s sampradāya is assumed to be a vaisṣṇava; cf. Barz (1976: 125, Note 2).
65. syára kahi [...] jackal.M say:PERF
'The jackal said [...]’ (Rāja Niti, p. 31)

66. brāhmaṇa kahi [...] brāhmaṇan.M say:PERF
'The Brāhmaṇa said [...]’ (Rāja Niti, p. 8)

67. puni rājā kahi [...] again King.M say:PERF
'Again the King said [...]’ (Rāja Niti, p. 7)

68. citragrīva kahi [...] Citragrīva.M say:PERF
'Citragrīva said [...]’ (Rāja Niti, p. 6)

On the contrary the other instances where A is followed by ne with kaha- show a constant correlation: between A and the verb there is, at least, the addressee (cf. Example 69) and/or the conjunctive participle of one or more transitive verbs (cf. 70 and 71).

69. yaha bicāri brāhmaṇa nem vā som kahi [...] 3SG.DIR reflect:CP brāhmaṇan.M erg 3SG.OBL instr say:PERF
'Having thus reflected the brāhmaṇa said to him [...]’ (Rāja Niti, p. 7)

70. kiteka dina pāchāi syāra nem hirana kaun some days after jackal.M erg antelope dat/acc
aikalau pāya kahyau
alone find:cp say:PERF:MSG
'Some days after the jackal, finding the antelope alone, said [...]’ (Rāja Niti, p. 16)

71. āgai rājā nem yaha bicāri, pamphatani ko afterwards King.M erg this think:CP pamphatana:OBL.PL gen:M.SG
samāja kari kahyau
assembly.M do:CP say:PERF:MSG
'Afterwards the King thinking this, having made an assembly of pamphatana, said [...]’ (Rāja Niti, p. 4)

6. Summary

To summarize what has been seen till now, we can provisionally conclude that on the one side in the first period of NIA the distributions of case patterns found in the texts in Old Rājasthāni and Braj-bhāṣā violate the general tendencies existing in the languages with split nominal systems (cf. Silverstein 1976; Comrie 1978; Dixon 1994). In fact, contrary to these tendencies, in these two linguistic varieties it is possible to find, in the singular, an accusative or neutral paradigm with nouns and an ergative or tripartite one with pronouns; the opposite is found in the plural (see Table 14) (cf. Fillimonova 2005 for an in-depth discussion, also to other languages; see also Wierzbicka 1981).

Table 14. Case distinctions in periphrastic clauses: Old Rājasthāni and Braj-bhāṣā at the beginning of the 17th century

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Old Rājasthāni</th>
<th>Braj-bhāṣā</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1–2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SG</td>
<td>S ≠ A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PL</td>
<td>S = A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SG</td>
<td>S ≠ A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PL</td>
<td>S = A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nouns</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SG</td>
<td>S ≠ A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(M in -o)</td>
<td>(M in -au)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PL</td>
<td>S = A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(M in -e)</td>
<td>(M in -e)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SG</td>
<td>S ≠ A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(F in -i)</td>
<td>(F in -i)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PL</td>
<td>S = A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(F in -i)</td>
<td>(F in -i)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(adapted from Drocco 2008:243)

On the other side, Braj-bhāṣā, contrary to Old Rājasthāni (Smith 1975; Khokhlova 2001:167), shows, by approximately the 17th century, the tendency to change its previous alignment, perhaps because typologically odd. The change does not result in a nominative-accusative type, but in an ergative one. In particular it seems very likely that what is attested in the PN is a proof of the hypothesis according to which the ne postposition has been introduced in the Braj language exactly where the case marking system has the tendency to show the same form for S and A in periphrastic clauses, that is where the case marking system was not distinctive enough: this is true for the majority of singular nouns. As a result, the restored difference between S and A with the introduction of a new case-marker for A in a specific point of the nominal hierarchy creates gradually, but ever since the first moment, a case marking system that does not contradict the typical split nominal system. As regards nouns and starting from what I said before, if we want to accept the few examples of animates not humans as A in periphrastic clauses all followed by ne, then it seems that the process of spread of the postposition ne starts at the right end of the Nominal Hierarchy, but we cannot confirm, due to the absence...
of data, that it starts at the lower end, with inanimate nouns. As a consequence of the rare presence of this case-marker with these two kinds of nominals, its high variability in this first period concerns, as I have just noted, only one category of nouns, that is human nouns. But among them, titles, proper nouns and the majority of singular common nouns are all potential and equally candidates to the use of ne, because for all the case marking system was not distinctive enough: however the frequency of this postposition with each of them is different. About titles and common nouns it seems that this difference would reflect their diversity in terms of inherent referential characteristics and thus topicality, whereas proper nouns may be ideally placed in an intermediate position, however, closer to common nouns on the use of the ergative case-marker. Even if the data of the transitive perfective verbs confirm that one important factor related to the presence of ne in the texts investigated is the type of nominal or pronoun occurring as A in perfective clauses, on the other hand show that the postposition ne has the strong tendency to appear, also with those nominal constituents that with other verbs have the opposite tendency, if in the construction there is a human/animate O, sometimes a Speech Act Participant, followed or not by the object case-marker kom and/or at the beginning of the construction. Therefore, although in the perfective aspect the new ergative case-marker took over first with animate non-human and then to human common nouns, it would appear also to those nouns who are more on the left side of the Nominal Hierarchy, but probably only when their topicality, inherent, due to the context or the construction, is low and/or compromised. It seems thus that for them it was necessary to identify clearly their role within the sentence.

7. Conclusion

In conclusion, it is true that the present-day split non-accusative system of this particular NIA language originates from the progressive use of the perfective clause expressed by the past-participle in -ta, it is also true, as we have seen, that this system is the result of a process of restoration of an old function with a new form which started to be used only in the 17th century. On the one side the "macro-history" of this new form as ergative case-marker for A in the perfective aspect suggests that the discriminatory function of case marking is clearly important in the beginning of its process of diffusion and extension in Braj-bhāṣā. On the other side the "micro-history" of ne shows that since this process was gradual, the use of this postposition in the texts investigated was surely optional, but only apparently random, as it might appear at first sight, but due, probably, to an interplay of morpho-syntactic, semantic and pragmatic factors, all concerned the nominal in the role of A in the perfective. As a consequence, in spite of the tripartite system now predominant in contemporary Hindi (Comrie 2005), during this gradual process it is interesting to see the appearance of various case marking systems – neutral, ergative, tripartite and also accusative – depending on the position of A in the nominal hierarchy. In particular it seems that, following Haig (2008), also in Braj-bhāṣā one of the most important factor, even if not the only one, that guided the pathways down which the various alignment systems have progressed is the factor of animacy, a powerful force in shaping the outcome of alignment shift.

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doi:10.1016/S0023-3814(87)90068-4


doi:10.1016/j.linguist.2009.05.010


doi:10.1002/9781118090060-9


Syntactic lability vs. ergativity in Indo-Aryan

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Contemporary IA languages are considered to be purely nominative at the level of syntax. Ergativity is restricted to the morphological domain. However the scrutiny of certain syntactic constructions such as verbal clause chaining or coordinate conjunction reduction shows that they are not necessarily sensitive to the basic grammatical relations (Bickel & Yādava 2000), in other words, the notion of pivot is not fully operational in the IA languages. The aim of the present paper is to demonstrate that apart from the dominating syntactic A/S pivot early NIA shows: (a) instances of conversation not controlled by the A of the main clause and (b) the dropped element in coordinate or certain subordinate constructions is not always an A/S argument. The alleged syntactic lability will be observed diachronically in four dialectal groups, namely Rajasthani, Pahari, Western Hindi and Eastern Hindi.

1. Introductory remarks

A bulk of studies taking into account morphological, syntactic and even pragmatic factors has been devoted to the problem of ergativity in IA from both diachronic and synchronic perspectives (cf. Pirjeko 1968; Bubenik 1989, 1993, 1996, 1998; Peterson 1998; Bynon 2005; Verbeke 2011 to mention just a few). Since IA languages represent a split ergative type the category which appeared to be interesting from the typological point of view was the category of 'subject'. Already in the late seventies there was an attempt to apply the diagnostic tests such as conjunction reduction, reflexivization, Equi NP deletion etc. (cf. Anderson 1977) in order to demonstrate that the syntactic behaviour of the main arguments marked by the ergative case is actually similar to the one observed in accusative languages. It has been almost generally accepted that there is no uniform category of subject in contemporary IA and that the arguments marked by cases other than Nominative show different degrees of subjecthood (cf. Montaut 2001; 2004a,b). The research on the subjecthood in IA has not been constrained to contemporary stage but it has been also extended to earlier stages such as Old Indo-Aryan (OIA) (e.g. Cardona 1976; Hock 1986) and Middle Indo-Aryan (MIA) (Peterson 1998).