

Chapter 10

The rise of differential object marking in Hindi and related languages

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Differential object marking (DOM), which involves a contrast between zero marking and accusative marking by means of an originally dative postposition, appeared in Indo-Aryan languages only a few centuries ago as opposed to Dravidian languages which had it right from the earlier attested stage (1st century) and have a specific accusative marker. Hindi like other Indo-Aryan languages uses the dative postposition to mark this specific accusative, a postposition which appeared at around the same period for marking experiencers. It is now required with human objects with very few exceptions, and optional with inanimate objects even when definite and individuated. But the historical evolution of the marking shows that the prevalence of animacy over definiteness is quite recent. The paper is an attempt to find explanations for this evolution, which only partly corresponds to the scenario put forward by Aissen (2003), according to which the obligatoriness of marking develops by extension from an initial kernel of marked objects. The paper will first analyze the properties and range of DOM in Modern Standard Hindi (semantic, discourse related, particularly topic related, and syntactic ones; §2 and §3), a fairly well explored topic. I will then inquire into the historical emergence of DOM (§4), and its presence in non-standard varieties or “dialects” (§5), both topics far less studied. Finally it will suggest some hypotheses on the emergence and grammaticalization of the marked accusative in Hindi and related dialects (§6).

1 Introduction

Differential object marking (DOM), which involves a contrast between zero marking and accusative marking by means of an originally dative postposition, is a relatively new phenomenon in Indo-Aryan languages (Masica 1982) as is the rise of dative experiencer subjects, both expressed with the dative marker. This contrasts with Dravidian languages where DOM is attested since the earliest texts, with a specific accusative marker. It is obligatory in Hindi only with human individuated objects, and optional with inanimate objects even when individuated. However, an inquiry in the historical evolution of the marking shows that the supposed prevalence of animacy over definiteness is quite recent.



The aim of this paper is to attempt to find explanations for this evolution, which only partly corresponds to the scenario put forward by Aissen (2003), according to which the obligatoriness of marking develops by extension from an initial kernel of marked objects. The paper will first analyze the properties and range of DOM in Modern Standard Hindi (semantic, discourse related, particularly topic related, and syntactic ones; §2 and §3), before looking at the historical emergence of DOM (§4) and its presence in non-standard varieties or “dialects” (§5), and suggesting some hypotheses on its emergence and grammaticalization (§6).

2 Basic facts in modern Hindi DOM

DOM is largely grammaticalized in Modern Standard Hindi, where identified objects are both case marked and can trigger a change in verb agreement: in ergative constructions,¹ as well as in passive constructions, the verb agrees with an unmarked patient, but not with a marked patient. DOM is constrained first by the semantic or inherent properties of the argument (obligatory overt marking), and secondarily by discourse related properties (optional marking). DOM occurs only with formally transitive verbs and formal transitivity is found only with verbs high on the transitivity hierarchy (Hopper & Thompson 1980; Tsunoda 1985), involving a binary relation between real agent and real patient. It follows that DOM occurs only with typical agents. In turn, marked objects are more sensible to topicality (Dalrymple & Nikolaeva 2011) than to, as suggested by Næss (2004), affectedness. As for what is often analyzed as syntactic properties of marked objects, they ultimately can also be accounted for in terms of discourse related properties, such as topicality or saliency.

2.1 Morphological properties: flagging and indexation

The case marker is the postposition *ko* (suffixed to pronouns), the same which is also used for beneficiaries or experiencers, a syncretic case for dative/accusative. Example (1a) illustrates the obligatory marking of human objects (particularly proper nouns and personal pronouns) with no effect on agreement in the present, whereas (1b) illustrates the same marking with a verb showing default agreement (masculine singular) in ergative constructions (past transitive clauses), and in the non-promotional passive (1c). The contrast between agreement with unmarked objects (2b) and default agreement (2a) is found with inanimate objects:

¹Hindi is a language with (aspectually) split ergativity: *laṛke ne film dekhi* [boy.M.SG.OBL ERG film.F.SG see.F.SG] ‘The boy saw the film’ vs. *laṛkā āyā* [boy.M.SG come.3SG] ‘The boy came’, *laṛkā āegā* [boy.M.SG come.FUT.3M.SG] ‘The boy will come’. Examples are from everyday exchanges or my own when not otherwise indicated.

(1) Modern Standard Hindi (own data)

a. *maī tumko / Rām ko / apnī beṭī ko dekh rahā*
 1SG 2.ACC Ram ACC REFL daughter ACC see PROG.M.SG
hū
 PRS.1SG

‘I am looking at you /Ram / my daughter.’

b. *maīne tumko / Rām ko / apnī beṭī ko kal*
 1SG.ERG 2.ACC Ram ACC REFL daughter ACC yesterday
nahī dekhā
 NEG see.PFV.3M.SG

‘I did not see you /Ram / my daughter yesterday.’

c. *donō ādmiyō ko dekhā gayā*
 the.two man.M.PL ACC see PASS.PST.M.SG
 ‘Both men were seen’

(2) Modern Standard Hindi (own data)

a. *maīne is film ko dekhā*
 1SG.ERG DEM movie.F.SG ACC see.PFV.3M.SG

b. *maīne yah film dekhī*
 1SG.ERG DEM movie.F.SG see.PFV.3F.SG

‘I have seen this film.’

2.2 Type of arguments: Animacy, definiteness, specificity

Since the role played by the semantics of the verb as suggested in Mohanan (1994: 81) can be seriously questioned (cf., *inter alia*, Self 2012 for an overview), and given the limitations of this study, it will not be treated here.

As in many languages, the animacy (human > animate > inanimate) and definiteness scales, into which specificity can be integrated (Croft 2003: 132) (Personal pronoun / Proper name > Definite NP > Indefinite specific NP > Non-specific NP) overlap, with an apparent prevalence of animacy: (3a) with an indefinite human object is obligatorily marked, and so are proper nouns referring to human objects, in contrast with those referring to inanimate objects (3b). Pronominalized inanimate objects are more often marked than the corresponding nouns (3c). Example (3d) shows that the pronominalization of ‘the note’ does trigger the accusative marking, whereas the same noun (‘the note’) occurs thereafter in the unmarked form:

(3) Modern Standard Hindi (own data)

a. *kisī ko bulāo!*
 INDEF ACC call.IMP

‘Call somebody!’

- b. *maĩne Dilīp ko (*Dilīp) dekhā / maĩne Kalkattā dekhā*
 1SG.ERG Dilip ACC (Dilip) see.PFV 1SG.ERG Calcutta see.PFV
 ‘I saw Dilip / I saw Calcutta’
- c. *koī pitā bhī ise (is bāt ko / yah bāt)*
 INDEF father even 3SG.ACC this thing ACC this thing
bardaśt nahī kar saktā
 tolerate NEG do can.M.SG
 ‘No father at all could tolerate this (this thing).’
- d. *jeb se do rupae kā noṭ nikālā “Jivrākhan, ise*
 pocket from two rupies of note took.out Jivrakhan 3SG.ACC
rakh-lo” Jivrākhan ne noṭ mānī beg mē rakh-liyā
 put-take.IMP Jivrakhan ERG note money bag in place-took
 ‘He took a two rupee note out of his pocket, “Jivrakhan, take it”. Jivrakhan
 put the note into his purse.’

Animacy seems at first sight to be the prevalent trigger for accusative marking, while definiteness and specificity seem to act as an optional trigger only, as summarized in Aissen (2003: 469) on the basis of the dominant view in Hindi linguistics. However, the deviant cases can be better explained in terms of specificity or saliency as will be argued below.

2.2.1 Deranking

Human animates can, exceptionally, remain unmarked, a case of “deranking” in Aissen’s 2003 terms: for example, variation is found with NPs that are used to refer to the function their referents are associated with, and not to the respective individuals (4a)–(4b), NPs with collective reference (5a)–(5b), and NPs used in comparisons decreasing the referentiality of the NP (6a):

(4) Modern Standard Hindi (own data)

- a. *merī sahelī ne nayā naukār rakhā*
 my friend.F.SG ERG new servant.M.SG place.PFV.M.SG
 ‘My friend took a new servant.’
- b. *ve larḳā dekh rahe hāī*
 3PL boy.M.SG look PROG PRS.3M.PL
 ‘They are visiting a boy (a suitable groom).’

(5) Modern Standard Hindi (own data)

- a. *maĩne bahut log dekhe, bahut gāriyā dekhī, bahut*
 1SG.ERG many people.M.PL see.M.PL many car.F.PL see.F.PL much
gandagī dekhī
 dirt.F.SG see.F.SG
 ‘I saw a lot of people, a lot of cars, much dirt.’

- b. *maīne bahut logō ko dekhā*
 1SG.ERG many people.M.PL ACC see.PFV.3M.SG
 ‘I saw many people.’

(6) Modern Standard Hindi (own data)

- a. *tum jaisā koī nahī dekhā*
 2 like.M.SG INDEF NEG saw.PFV.M.SG
 ‘I didn’t see anybody like you’ (movie title)

- b. *maīne kisī ko nahī dekhā*
 1SG.ERG INDEF ACC NEG saw
 ‘I didn’t see anybody.’

Examples such as (4) have been well discussed in the literature (Mohanani 1994; Dayal 2011) and are analyzed in Self (2012) as an illustration of what he calls the specificity requirement, which, according to him, may be the main and only constraint. This constraint requires the object NP to be specific in order for it to be marked. Examples such as (5) and (6) are less frequently discussed, but also show that human non-specific objects can be unmarked, when they involve a collectivity considered as an indivisible whole (5b) rather than a set of individuals (5a) or decrease in referentiality by a comparison in a negative context (6a).

2.2.2 Upranking

Certain inanimates and abstract nouns in the object position are very frequently marked: this type of upranked objects have been noted for nouns with unique referents such as ‘moon’, ‘sun’, ‘earth’ or ‘ocean’, whose reference can be identified on the basis of shared knowledge. Abstract nouns such as ‘death’ or ‘time’, which belong to a different class and are not referential, are in fact quite frequently marked:

(7) Modern Standard Hindi (own data)

- cāḍ ko dekho!*
 time ACC look.IMP
 ‘Look at the moon!’

(8) Modern Standard Hindi (Agyeya, 1951, *Nadi ke dviṭ*)

- ham kyā samay ko / mrityu ko rok sakte hāī?*
 1PL INT time ACC death ACC stop can PRS.1M.PL
 ‘Can we stop time, death?’

In Spanish abstract nouns are far more often marked than concrete inanimates, since 79% occur with the preposition *a*, whereas only 21% concrete inanimates occur with the preposition *a* (Company Company 2002: 209). In Hindi, non-referential abstract nouns can be marked, such as ‘glass’, ‘darkness’, ‘outside’:

- (9) Modern Standard Hindi (Self 2012, from Burton Page 1957)
lohā sīse ko kāṭṭā hai
 iron glass ACC cut PRS.3M.SG
 'Iron cuts glass.'
- (10) Modern Standard Hindi (Vinod Kumar Shukla, 1996, *Khilega to dekhenge*)
 a. *ham andhere ko rok dete*
 1PL darkness ACC stop give.COND.1M.PL
 'We would stop the darkness.'
 b. *hamne pūre bāhar ko band kar diyā hai*
 1PL.ERG whole outside ACC closed make give PRF.3M.SG
 'We have locked up all the outside.'

One might think that the whole series displays nouns like mass nouns such as 'glass' in (9), which are according to Self (2012) similar to natural kind terms, and natural kind terms may have the properties of definite NPs (Gross 2009). However, the fact that they are more often marked than other inanimates (as in Spanish), which are marked only when specific, both in Hindi and Spanish, requires a different explanation. The reason, not explored to my knowledge, maybe because such abstract nouns, with semantic rigidity, are not liable to variations of definiteness/specificity – except when they change status and become discrete ('a specific blue', 'the very same sadness') they tend to be marked for their semantic rigidity. Hypotheses along these lines should be checked in a distinct study.

2.3 Syntactic properties of the object with attribute

It has been argued that marked objects have differential control properties: no unmarked object can control a non-finite adjunct (Bhatt 2007), whereas propositional adjuncts are commonly controlled by marked objects, particularly after main verbs of perception. Bhatt's 2007 examples are the following:

- (11) Modern Standard Hindi (Bhatt 2007: 17)
 a. *Minā_i ne bāzār mē ek sailānī_j ko nācte hue_j dekhā.*
 Mina_i ERG market in a tourist ACC dancing being see.PFV
 'Mina_i saw a tourist_j dancing_j in the bazar.'
 b. *Minā_i ne bāzār mē ek sailānī_j nācte hue_{i/*j} dekhā.*
 Mina_i ERG market in a tourist dancing being see.PFV
 'In the market Mina_i saw a tourist_j when she_{i/*j} was dancing.' (*a tourist dancing)

According to Bhatt (2007), the non-finite adjunct 'dancing' in (11b) can only be controlled by the subject of the matrix clause *Mina*, not by the unmarked object, whereas the same, when marked, controls the adjunct. However, unmarked objects are commonly

used with an adjunct that they control, although they are in this case typically inanimate. In (12a), the implicit subject of the participial clause ‘having come back / be back’ (state, past) is controlled by the unmarked object *gārī* ‘car’, and in (12b), the participial clause (dynamic event, present) is controlled by the unmarked object *jāmun* ‘Java plums’. Both sentences involve a coverb, whose subject is controlled by the main verb’s subject, and the same control rule within the participial clause apply as in (11a):

(12) Modern Standard Hindi (Krishna Baldev Vaid, *Dusra na koi*)

- a. *gārī vāpas āi huī dekhkar maine socā...*
 car.F.SG back come be.PTCP.F.SG see.CV 1SG.ERG think.PFV.M.SG

‘I saw the car having come back and thought...’ (not ‘Having come back/I came back and I saw the car.’)

- b. *kāle-kāle jāmun gāyab hote dekhkar uske mūh se*
 black-black jamun vanished being see.CV his mouth from
zāl ṭapakne lagī
 saline.F.SG drip start.PFV.F.SG

‘Seeing the black Java plums disappearing his mouth started watering.’/ ‘He saw the black Java plums disappearing and he started salivating’

Both participles *āi huī* past participle of verb *ānā* ‘to come’ in (12a) and *gāyab hote*, present participle of verb *gāyab honā* ‘to disappear’, are clearly controlled by the object of the coverb. In other words, a small clause complement of a matrix verb may license an unmarked noun only if it is inanimate and accompanied by an attributive participle, as in (12), not when the noun is animate.

The differential behavior of (11b) and (12), both with unmarked object, can be explained by the fact that in (11b) the unmarked object is a human being in the singular, which makes its unmarkedness highly atypical: a tourist in the market, as an unmarked human patient, must be totally devoid of individuation (like ‘people’ in example 5a), treated as a mere element of the bazaar. Therefore, its individuation by means of a striking event (dancing in the bazaar) contradicts its implicit characterization as non salient. The ‘car’ or the ‘Java plums’ in (12) in contrast are definite inanimates, but their unmarkedness conforms to the tendency for inanimates to remain unmarked if devoid of discourse prominence (cf. below). What is centre-staged in (12) is not the entity (‘plum’ or ‘car’) but the global scenario of the disappearance or re-appearance respectively. The objects are not described for their own sake since what prevails for the speaker is the event in which the object is involved, not the object itself.

Similar reasons account for the systematic marking of all objects with nominal or adjectival attributes, whether human or inanimate and non-specific, a fact which remains unnoticed in the literature on Hindi DOM. The following series (13) involves verbs with two objects such as ‘judge’ / ‘consider’ / ‘call’ / ‘make’ (X Y), a main object and its attribute:

¹The complex predicate *gāyab honā* ‘to disappear’ is formed with the adjectival unit *gāyab* and light verb *ho* ‘be’, here in the present participle form.

(13) Hindi (own data)

- a. *maī cor ko / *∅ cor kahtā hū*
 1SG thief ACC thief say PRS.1SG
 ‘I call a thief a thief.’
- b. *maī billī ko apnā duśman / beimān māntā hū*
 1SG cat ACC REFL enemy disloyal consider PRS.1SG
 ‘I consider cats as my personal enemies/disloyal.’
- c. *ve rassī ko / *∅ sāp samajhte hai*
 3PL rope ACC snake understand PRS.M.PL
 ‘They mistake a rope for a snake’ (or ‘ropes for snakes’).
- d. *ve puṇya ko / *∅ pāp banāte hai*
 3PL virtue ACC sin make PRS.M.PL
 ‘They transform virtue into sin.’

The marking is obligatory even for non-specific indefinite inanimate objects. Here the attributive adjunct, noun or adjective, does not describe an event in which the object could in principle be a simple element less salient than the process itself as in (12), where the adjunct is a mere qualification. The sentence amounts to attributing a property to the noun, and this attribution itself makes the noun centre-staged and not secondary to the property or part of it.

2.4 Information structure

The above examples (11)–(13) corroborate a major principle of differential object marking that Dalrymple & Nikolaeva (2011) as well as Iemmolo (2010) have captured with the relevance of information structure and the notion of topicality (Iemmolo 2010) or secondary topicality (Dalrymple & Nikolaeva 2011). The syntactic properties analyzed in §2.3 are in conformity with a more general tendency which holds also in the absence of syntactic constraints. Dalrymple & Nikolaeva (2011) assume that topical objects are marked, while narrow focused objects – even if definite specific – are obligatorily unmarked, giving the following Hindi example:²

(14) Hindi (Dalrymple & Nikolaeva 2011: 167)

- a. *ham mez paūchēge*
 1PL table wipe.FUT.M.PL
- b. *ham mez ko paūchēge*
 1pl table ACC wipe.FUT.M.PL
- ‘We will wipe the table.’

²Wide focused objects are preferably unmarked, narrow focused objects are obligatorily unmarked as opposed to topicalized objects, which are marked. For a definition of wide vs. narrow focus, see Rebuschi & Tuller (1999: 215). Wide focus sentences felicitously answer “out of the blue” questions such as “What happened?”, whereas in narrow focus at least one of the participants is given or known, such as “What did X do?, What did X do with Y?”.

In (14a) “the object is construed as part of the event and is not individuated as a pragmatically salient element: informationally, it is part of wide focus” (Dalrymple & Nikolaeva 2011: 167), whereas in (14b) the ‘table’ was already the centre of attention.

However, topics can remain unmarked in Hindi, either by simple fronting (15a) or fronting with topic particle (15b), which suggests that topicality, whether secondary or primary, is not in itself responsible for the marking of objects.

(15) Hindi (own data)

a. *yah film kisne dekhī?*
 this film.F.SG who.ERG see.PFV.F.SG

‘This film, who saw it?’

b. *yah bāt to ham sab jānte hāī*
 this thing TOP 1PL all know PRS.PL

‘This thing, we all know it.’

Besides, internal objects, which are, by nature, very low in topicality, may be marked and statements such as (16) are in no way exceptional:

(16) Hindi (Vinod Kumar Shukla, 1996, *Khilega to dekhenge*)

zindagī ko jīnā sthagit maut ko jīnā hai
 life ACC live postponed death ACC live is

‘To live life is to live a deferred death.’

The reason why some topics remain unmarked whereas some internal objects are marked is, again, related to how the speaker wishes to represent the situation involving the object: even a topicalized object may be deprived of saliency in comparison with the process that it is part of (knowing in (15b)) or with the focus in (15a), and thus can remain unmarked, since it is the event or the focus, and not the object, that is discursively salient. An initial sentence like (15b) can be followed by a proposition discussing its whole content (“but we don’t care”), but not bearing on the topicalized notion (“this thing is most important or interesting”).³ In contrast, internal objects, if emphasized for the purpose of parallel contrast as is the case in (16), acquire sufficient saliency to be marked: this is not really life that we are living, it is rather like living death. Semantically the added meaning to ‘life’ is its opposite (‘death’), hence the marking. Without marking, the object comes back to its ordinary status as an internal, non-individuated object, which is part of a process from which it cannot be dissociated.

In a discourse with no particular constraints, the same reasons account for the marking of the vast class of optionally marked inanimate objects. In (17) for instance, the same object ‘door’ occurs first as marked and then as unmarked, although the first occurrence

³For instance *phir bhī log is saccāī se dūr bhāgte hāī* ‘however people run away from this truth’ [that *jisne is dharti par janm liyā hai use mrityu prāpt hogī* ‘whoever was born on this earth will die’] (Bollywoodadka). A continuation bearing on the topicalized notion requires an initial sentence with a marked object (*is bāt ko*). One may hypothesize that both sentences in (15) have a focused constituent, which makes topicality less prominent.

refers to an indefinite, and the second has more specifying properties since it does not refer to just any ‘door’, but to ‘our own’ door.

- (17) Hindi (Vinod Kumar Shukla, 1996, *Khilega to dekhenge*)

ek darvāze ko band kar, hamne pure bāhar ko band kar
 one door ACC close do.CV 1PL all outside ACC close do
diyā hai. ... apne kamre kā darvāzā band kar sārī
 give.PFV.3M.SG PRT REFL room of door closed do.CV all
duniyā ko bāhar band kar diyā.
 world ACC outside closed do give.PFV.3M.SG

‘By closing a (mere) door, we have locked up the whole outside. (...) By closing the door of our room, we have locked outside the whole world.’

The door in the first sequence, although appearing as new information and not specific, is singled out as responsible for huge consequences, in contrast with its triviality: hence the marking. In the second occurrence, this disparity is already given, and it is the event as a whole (to lock oneself in one’s room) that is emphasized: hence the absence of marking.

In (18), this object is already present in the anterior context, where the village head asked the master, Guruji, to open a lock on a door. In (18a), lock, the object, is topicalized by its position and it is definite, however it is not marked: what is emphasized is the inference of the speaker’s ability of the speaker to do the unlocking, since he had locked the door himself. Besides, the subject is focalized (preverbal position). In contrast, in the very next sequence, the same lock, again in a topic position (18b), is given centre stage because the protagonist is confronting it for itself (testing its solidity), and since, in segment (18c) as well, the process singles out the lock (and key) as the centre of everybody’s attention, although it is non-topicalized. When the protagonist goes to open the lock, everybody’s attention shifts from the lock to the process of opening the lock:⁴

- (18) Hindi (Vinod Kumar Shukla, 1996, *Khilega to dekhenge*)

- a. ‘*Yah tālā māne xud lagāya hai*,
 this lock 1SG.ERG REFL put.PRF 3M.SG
 ‘This lock, I put it myself.’
- b. *tāle ko Gurūjī ne jhanjhanāyā.* (...)
 lock ACC Guruji ERG shake.PFV.3M.SG
 ‘Guruji shook the lock noisily.’
- c. ‘*Māi tāle ko khol saktā hū, cābī mere pās hai*.
 1SG lock ACC open can PRS.1M.SG key 1SG near be.PRS.3SG
 ‘I can open the lock, I have the key with me.’

⁴As confirmed by his wife’s insistence on the act of opening, totally backgrounding (omitting) the object: *bahār ‘kharī uskī strī ne kahā ‘māi khol dū?’* ‘His wife, who stood outside said ‘Shall I open it (myself)?’

- d. *Unhōne cābī ṭēṭ se nikālī. Ve tālā kholne jā*
 3.HON.ERG key belt ABL take.out.PFV.F.SG 3HON lock open go
rahe the.

PROG PST.3HON

‘He took the key from his belt. He was going to open the lock.’

What such examples highlight with marked objects is their saliency (Croft 1991: 155; Montaut & Haude 2012), a notion I am invoking in the sense of Dalrymple & Nikolaeva (2011: 14–15, 57) on the role played by a referent in the pragmatic structure of the proposition, rather than Næss’s (2004) more general interpretation of the term (which focuses on the question as to which entities are of greater interest for human perception in general).

3 Particular clause types in Hindi

3.1 The case of non-promotional passive

A characteristic of the Hindi passive, apart from the fact that it applies equally to intransitives, is that it is very frequently non-promotional, and retains the object marker *ko* for the noun which is the corresponding object in the equivalent active clause, with the result of blocking the agreement (cf. example (1c) above). The conditions for marking the ex-object are not the same as those for marking the object in an active sentence and an attempt is made below to define them better. Given the fact that promotional passive is also frequent, and consequently marked objects in the passive are less frequent than in the active, one would expect that the obligatorily marked objects of an active sentence such as a human referential object is better retained in the passive sentence than inanimate objects, which are only optionally marked in the active sentence.⁵ But this is not the case. Unmarked human patients which are absolutely compulsory in active sentences, such as first person pronouns (19b) or proper nouns (20), are quite frequent, as are marked inanimates in (21) and (22):

(19) Modern Standard Hindi (own data)

- a. *mujhe aspaṭāl le jāyā gayā*
 1SG.ACC/DAT hospital take go PASS.PFV.3M.SG

‘I was taken to the hospital.’

- b. *mai aspaṭāl le jāyī gayī*
 1SG hospital take go PASS.PFV.F.SG

‘I was taken to the hospital.’ (feminine speaker)

⁵In keeping with Aissen’s (2003: 468) ‘basic hypothesis: if overt marking is possible with direct objects with property α , then it is possible with direct objects with property β , where β dominates α ’.

- (20) Modern Standard Hindi (*Times of India*, January 2013)
śef Hemant Oberāy apne das sahyogiyō kesāth vahā̃ bheje gae
 Chef Hemant Oberoy REFL ten helper.M.PL with there send PASS
the
 PPRF.M.PL
 ‘The chef Hemant Oberoi had been sent there with ten of his helpers.’
- (21) Modern Standard Hindi (*Times of India*, January 2013)
mere hazārō samarthakō ko Madurai ikāi se nikāl diyā
 my thousand supporter.M.PL ACC Madurai unit from expel give
gayā hai
 PASS PRF.M.SG
 ‘Thousands of my supporters have been ousted from the Madurai unit.’
- (22) Modern Standard Hindi
- a. *mṛtyu ko / samay ko rokā nahī̃ jā saktā*
 death ACC time ACC stop NEG PSV can.PRS.3M.SG
 ‘Death / time cannot be stopped.’ (single entities, common knowledge) (own data)
- b. *par bahut dinō tak sthagit maut ko bhī nahī̃ jiyā jā*
 but many days till postponed death ACC even NEG live PASS
saktā
 can.PRS.3M.SG
 ‘But one cannot live even a deferred death for very long.’ (Vinod Kumar Shukla, 1996, *Khilega to dekhenge*)
- c. *unke vilamban ko 24 janvarī kī subah us vaqt kiyā*
 3PL.GEN suspension ACC 24 January of morning that time do
gayā jab...
 PASS.M.SG when
 ‘Their suspension occurred on the morning of January 24 when...’ (*Times of India* 13/1/2015)

The marking of such inanimates, which are essentially compact abstract nouns, is common to active and passive sentences. The non-marking of human patient in contrast is possible only in passive sentences. The fact that the marking of abstract nouns such as in series (22), is maintained irrespective of the construction, whether active or passive, seems to suggest that this category may be deemed as ranking high in the hierarchy of markable objects.

3.2 Reduced passive clauses

Passive nominalizations do not confirm this equal frequency of marked human and inanimates, since human objects behave quite differently from inanimates in reduced passive clauses, and there is a triple distinction for inanimates. In Hindi, the nominal or adverbial reduction of a clause, whether active or passive, requires the genitive marking of its subject when distinct from the main subject ((23a) and (23b)), with a few exceptions (23c) corresponding to nouns analyzed as pseudo-incorporated (Dayal 2011) and analyzed in Montaut (2012) as anti-salient, or as having extremely low individuation.⁶

(23) Modern Standard Hindi (own data)

a. *āpkā yahā ānā mujhe bilkul acchā nahī lagā*
 2H.GEN here come.INF 1SG.DAT really really NEG seem.PFV.M.SG
 ‘I did not like at all (the fact) that you came here.’

b. *rām ke āte (*rām āte) hī sab gāyab ho*
 Ram GEN coming Ram coming just all.M.PL disappeared be
gae the
 go PPRF.M.PL
 ‘Right after Ram came, all had disappeared.’

c. *andherā (*?ke) hote hī sab gāyab ho gae the*
 darkness GEN being just all.M.PL disappeared be go PPRF.M.PL
 ‘Right after the coming of darkness all had disappeared.’

In the nominalized passive clause, the patient is in the subject position and can either be marked by accusative *ko*, by the genitive or unmarked, depending on the type of passive (promotional or not) and on the type of (promoted) object (animate vs. inanimate referent, individuation). While a human patient is obligatorily marked in the active and optionally marked in the passive, the nominalized clause echoes both possibilities with the optionality of a regular subject marking in the genitive and a retention of the accusative marking, but it cannot remain unmarked (24):

(24) Modern Standard Hindi (Bhatt 2007: 9)

*Rina kā / ko / *∅ bāzār mē dekhā jānā śaram kī*
 Rina GEN / DAT market in see PASS.INF shame of
bāt hai.
 thing is

‘For Rina to be seen in the market is a matter of shame.’

In contrast, inanimate nouns may either be marked as ordinary subjects, retain their object marking or have no marking at all like the so-called incorporated objects:

⁶The way Dayal (2011) and Mohanan (1994) define incorporation excludes the morphophonological features usually associated with the notion, hence the suggested appellation of “semantic incorporation” (Dayal 2011).

- (25) Modern Standard Hindi (Bhatt 2007: 9; author's translation)
Peṛ kā / ko / Ø is tarah kāṭā jānā śaram kī bāt hai.
 tree GEN DAT this way cut PASS.INF shame of thing is
 'The fact that the/a tree was cut in this way/this kind of tree cutting is a matter of shame.'

3.3 The opposite type of noun-verb relation: "Incorporated" objects

Example (25) shows a distinct meaning of the unmarked noun, devoid of any individuation to the point of being incorporated. The notion of (semantic) incorporation in Hindi was elaborated by Dayal (2011) to account for a type of bare nominals with special behavior, particularly in disallowing pronominal anaphorization. Such objects fail to control agreement in sentences ordinarily constraining object agreement, namely ergative sentences involving a complement infinitive (26), and abilitative or obligative sentences with transitive main verb in the infinitive (27). The standard Object-Verb agreement occurs in (26b) and (27b), where the feminine object *sāikil* 'bike' controls the agreement of the matrix verbs 'do' and 'come' as well as the infinitive 'drive', which in Hindi, may vary in gender. In (26a) and (27a), on the contrary, it does not vary, and the infinitive remains in the masculine form, controlling the agreement of the matrix verb, as do intransitive verbs (26c):

- (26) Modern Standard Hindi (own data)
- a. *bacce ne sāikil calānā śurū kiyā*
 child.M.SG ERG bike.F.SG drive.INF.M.SG beginning do.PFV.3M.SG
 'The boy started to ride a bicycle.' (has started bicycle riding)
- b. *bacce ne sāikil calānī śurū kī*
 child.M.SG ERG bike.F.SG drive.INF.F.SG beginning do.PFV.3F.SG
 'The boy started to ride a bicycle.'
- c. *baccō ne skūl jānā śurū kiyā*
 child.M.PL ERG school go.INF.M.SG beginning do.PFV.3M.SG
 'The children started going to school.'
- (27) Modern Standard Hindi (own data)
- a. *mujhe sāikil calānā ātā hai*
 1SG bike.F.GS drive.INF.M.SG come PRS.3M.SG
 'I know how to ride a bicycle (how to cycle).'
- b. *mujhe sāikil calānī ātī hai*
 1M.SG bike.F.SG drive.INF.F.SG come PRS.3F.SG
 'I know how to ride a bicycle.'

In (26a) and (27a) the constituent triggering agreement is the whole infinitival clause, sometimes considered to be an instance of incorporation of the object into the verb since *sāikil calānā* “bicycle drive” it behaves in this respect like an intransitive verb.

Although both alternating constructions can be used in similar unmarked contexts, there is a preference for the non-agreeing type, with some conventional object-verb expressions like ‘drink tea’ or ‘buy vegetable’.⁷ Here, the infinitive triggers agreement on the matrix verb:

- (28) Modern Standard Hindi (own data)
mujhe sabzī kharīdnā / ?? kharīdnī hai
 1SG vegetable.F.SG buy.INF.M.SG buy.INF.F.SG be.PRS.3.SG
 ‘I have to buy vegetable.’

To summarize, only “incorporated” objects with very low individuation can dispense with indexation on the verb in the relevant clause types. Marked objects pattern at the opposite side of the following hierarchy of objects: incorporated (unmarked) > unmarked (non incorporated) > marked.

The triggering feature for this triple syntactic differentiation is individuation. It is not, directly, topicality, nor is it the role played within the focus, although of course, the semantic feature individuation is also relevant in information structure.

4 The emergence of object marking

Most scholars do not date the emergence of Modern standard Hindi before the 18th century. Previous to this stage, the language, although it is systematically called medieval or ancient Hindi, is expectedly not standardized, and as such it is much closer to some of the regional varieties today analyzed as independent languages. What is generally called “Old Hindi” is the so-called *sant bhasha*, a poetic language forged by the first mystic poets who expressed their religious opposition to the brahmanic world order by using popular vernacular speech instead of Sanskrit. This language, which was first used by the devotional mystic Kabir (14th c.), and later by Mira Bai (16th c.), has been fairly well studied and shown to display various regional features, taken more from the Eastern languages in Kabir, and more from the Western varieties in Mira, but fused in what will become the literary *koine* of medieval Northern India. In what follows I will discuss the three main stages of the DOM evolution in pre-modern “Hindi”.

4.1 First New Indo-Aryan stage: 14th century

During the first stages of Hindi and of other New Indo-Aryan languages (NIA), the inflectional system of Sanskrit is in the process of being replaced by adpositions (nominal cat-

⁷Similarly, in ergative sentences, like ‘I began/wanted to drink tea’ or ‘I wanted to buy vegetables’ minimal individuation is required for the object of the complement infinitive to trigger agreement, and agreement with the object is highly improbable with the bare noun (as opposed to ‘I wanted to buy various vegetable’ or ‘drink this excellent tea’). More examples in Montaut (2012).

egory) and auxiliaries (verbal category). Yet this process is far from being completed and the absence of clear relators is a common feature of ordinary discourse, the few oblique cases maintained in the language being used for various syntactic purposes: the *-i* locative for the agent in past transitive processes, and a syncretic oblique *-hi* (derived from the fusion of the old dative/instrumental already achieved in Middle Indo-Aryan) for all kinds of obliques. Most of the time, nouns remain unmarked, the meaning being easily recoverable from the context and sequence since sentences are usually minimal. This *-hi* ending is the most frequent marker of objects in Kabir, whereas the postpositional marking (*kū̃/kau*) is just starting to appear (Strnad 2013: 325), but in both inflectional or adpositional cases, the marking is far from systematic.

Human objects, including proper names, are either marked (29b) or unmarked (29a), and sometimes in the same sequence both marked and unmarked proper nouns occur (29b):

- (29) a. *Hiranākasa māryau.*
 Hiranakashyapu kill.PFV.M.SG
 ‘[He] killed Hiranyakashyapu.’
- b. *Rāmahi janai janai Rahimāna.*
 Ram.ACC know.PRS.3SG know.PRS.3SG Merciful.Ø
 ‘[He] knows Ram, he knows the Merciful.’ (Kabir, verse 302)

Even a proper name, if occurring with a predicative adjective, can be unmarked (30a), whereas other human referents can be marked (30b):

- (30) a. *Rāma.Ø kari sanehī.*
 Ram make.CV dear
 ‘Making Ram your dear.’ (Kabir, verse 381)
- b. *āpana ādha aura kū̃ kahai kanānā*
 self blind other ACC say.PRS.3SG one-eyed
 ‘[Being] himself blind, he will call others one-eyed.’ (Kabir, verse 149)

The only category which is systematically marked is the personal pronoun (1st and 2nd person), and occurrences of the 3rd person are frequently unmarked even when referring to a human entity.

- (31) *jaga.Ø maī deṣū̃ jaga na deṣi mohi*
 world 1SG see.PRS.1SG world NEG see.PRS.3SG 1SG.ACC
 ‘I see the world, the world does not see me.’ (Kabir, verse 76.3)

Given the fact that humanity, which is today the main (compulsory) trigger for object marking, does not apply, we would expect that inanimate objects are systematically unmarked, but this is not the case, and the marking of inanimates seem to be as random as the marking of human objects. Example (32) for instance displays two parallel clauses patterning identically, with the same construction, the same semantic class of objects

(the so-called class of single entities), the same relation between predicate and object and the same ordering of both sequences. Yet ‘ocean’ is marked and ‘sun’ is unmarked:

- (32) *ulaḥī Gangā sāmudra-hi sosai, saṣihara sūra.Ø grāsai*
 reversed Ganga ocean-ACC dry.up.PRS moon sun swallow.PRS
 ‘The reversed Ganga dries up the ocean, the moon swallows the sky.’

The adpositional marking by means of *kū/kau*, infrequent and more recent, occurs in similar conditions, and most often without apparent reason. In (33), we may hypothesise that the relative pronoun is topicalized since the Hindi correlative system amounts to topicalizing the relative clauses (Gupta 1986; Montaut 2012) in the same way as conditionals (Haiman 1978), but in (34), the noun *pada* ‘word, line’, which is a marked object, is not the head of the relativized expression:

- (33) *jākū yahu jaga ghini kari cālai*
 REL.ACC DEM world horrible do.CV go.PRS.3SG
 ‘That which this world avoids with disgust.’ (*lit.* that which considering horrible the world goes by) (Kabir, verse 185.4)

- (34) *yā pada kū bujhai tākū tinyū trībhuvana*
 DEM verse ACC understand.PRS.3SG 3SG.DAT three world
sūjhai
 think.PRS.3SG
 ‘[Who] understands this pada, he knows the three worlds.’

In (34) the reason why the inanimate is marked is probably, apart from definiteness (not in itself a triggering factor as shown by (29)), the intrinsic importance of the word ‘word/verse’ in the ideological context of the time: for a devotional mystic nothing is more central and more emphasized than the deity’s speech, or the word pointing to the deity. What is also noticeable is the parallel marking of the marked object (*jākū, pada kū*) and the dative subject (*tākū*) by the same postposition in (33).

4.2 Second stage: 16th century

In 16th century classical texts like Tulsidas Ramayana (T), the inflectional marking (*-hi*) is maintained yet the postpositional marking occurs more often, in conditions similar to the ones in stage 1: pronouns for 1st and 2nd person are consistently in the oblique, (35) and (36), as in the stage 1, and the same oblique form is also used for oblique subjects (36). But unlike the earlier period, human objects are systematically marked ((35) and (37)), and only exceptionally unmarked, either as proper nouns or pronouns (38):

- (35) *tehi na jānā nṛpa.Ø, nṛpa-hi so jānā*
 3SG.OBL NEG know.PFV king king-OBL 3SG know.PFV
 ‘The king did not recognize him, he recognized the king.’ (T 140)

- (36) *kahā tapas nṛpati.Ø jānaũ tohi ... lāg bhala mohi*
 said hermit king know.1SG 2.OBL seem good 1SG.OBL
 ‘Said the hermit: “I know you as the king [this move] pleased me/I liked”’ (T 160)
- (37) a. *Raghupati-hi nihāri prabhū-hi citai.*
 Sun.lord-OBL look.CV Lord-OBL look.CV
 ‘[Sita] seeing Rama (king of sun lineage).’ ‘[Sita] looking at the Lord.’ (T 140)
- b. *Sīya-hi biloki.*
 Sita-OBL see.CV
 [Ram] ‘Looking at Sita.’ (T 250)
- (38) a. *Rām biloke log [...] citai Sīya kṛpāyatan jāni vikal*
 Ram see.PFV people [...] look.CV Sita gracefully knew worried
biseṣi.
 special
 ‘Ram saw the folk, [...] looking at Sita with mercy he perceived her great distress.’ (T 251)
- b. *rāu tṛṣit nahī so Ø pahicānā*
 prince thirsty NEG 3SG recognize.PFV
 ‘The king, overcome by thirst, did not recognize him.’ (T 158)

Whereas the unmarkedness of the collective *log* ‘people’ is still possible (cf. §1), the zero marking of the proper noun *Sita* is no longer grammatical, even though it was quite usual two centuries earlier. Indeed, all instances of X looks at/sees Y exhibit marking of proper names in (37): whether Ram looks at *Sita* or *Sita* at Ram, whatever verb is used (*cita* ‘look at/gaze’, *nihār* ‘see/look’, *bilok* ‘see/look’).

Another difference with the previous stage it seems to be a more frequent marking of nouns in small clauses (39) – which however is still not systematic (40) – even when the small clause includes a participle (41):

- (39) *bhale-hi manda manda-hi bhale karahũ*
 good-OBL vile vile-OBL good do.PRS.2SG
 ‘You debase the good man (make vile the good), you praise the vile.’
- (40) *kol biloki bhūpa baṛa dhīrā bhāgi paiṭh giriguhā*
 boar see.CV king much determined flee enter mountain.cave
gabhīra
 deep
 ‘Seeing the king so much determined the boar entered a deep cave.’
- (41) *jo prabhū tumah bipin phirat dekhā*
 REL Lord 2PL forest roaming see.PFV
 ‘The Lord whom you saw roaming in the forest.’

Examples (37) to (41) are from Tulsidas *Ramayana*, in an Eastern variety (Awadhi), but in the Western dialects the situation was similarly unconstrained. Even proper nouns can remain unmarked, as was the case in the first stage:

- (42) *māī rī mhā̃ liyā Govinda mol*
 sister INTERJ 1SG take.PFV Govinda buy.CV
 ‘Sister, I bought (and took) Govinda [a name for Krishna].’ (Mira Bai, 16th c.)

4.3 Third stage: 17th–18th centuries: the modern system

There is not much to comment after the 17th century since the system does not present noticeable differences with the modern system. The literature available during this period makes a more liberal use of Persian idioms and structures (particularly *ezafe* for determination of nouns) than in earlier Hindi and today standard Hindi. *Ezafe* specified objects can be either marked (in (43a) ‘fire of torment’) or unmarked (in (43b) ‘heat’): what prevails is the degree of topicality in the discourse:

- (43) a. *wafādārī ne dilbar kī bujhāyā ātīś-e-gam*
 faithfulness.F.SG ERG lover of extinguish.PFV.3M.SG fire-of-torment
ko
 ACC
 b. *ke garmī dafā kartā hai gulāb āhistā āhistā*
 that/as heat off make PRS.3M.SG rose slowly slowly
 ‘My faithful love has quenched the fire of my love (FOC), as rose dispels the effect of heat, step by step.’ (Wali, mid. 17th c.)
- (44) *jab sō dekhā nahī nazar-bhar kākul-e-muškin-e-yār*
 when from see.PFV NEG glance-full locks-EZ-scented-EZ-beloved
 ‘Since I did not see fully her [my love’s] scented locks (FOC).’ (Wali, mid 17th c.)

In the two parallel constructions (X diminishes Y) of (43), the first object, an abstract NP, is extracted and put in a postverbal position at the rime, in conformity with its discourse function, since love torment is the main topos of the poems. It is marked. In turn, the second object, also an abstract noun, remains preverbal as an ordinary part of the wider focus and is unmarked. However, in (44), an *ezafe*-specified object similar to (43a), ‘scented locks of the beloved’, remains unmarked although concrete and in a postverbal position; even though it is strongly emphasized by its position, it is not given centre stage. Discourse saliency is the triggering factor, as it is today for inanimates.

Objects are always marked when controlling nominal or adjectival adjuncts, either relative pronouns with inanimate reference (whereas relative pronoun with human referent could be unmarked in the earlier period) or nouns, inanimate as well as animate:

- (45) *ke jisko kasīne kabhī vā na dekhā*
 that REL.ACC INDEF.ERG ever open NEG see.PFV.M.SG
 ‘That which (ACC) nobody has seen bloom.’ (‘which’ = *merā dil* ‘my heart’)

- (46) *kiyā mujh īsq ne zālim ko āb āhistā āhistā*
do.PFV.3SG my love ERG despot ACC water slowly slowly
ke ātiś gul ko kartī hai gulāb āhistā āhistā
that/as fire flower ACC do PRS.3FSG rose slowly slowly
‘My love has melted the despot (made this despot water), step by step, as fire distil (make the flower rose-perfume) the essence of rose, step by step.’ (Walid, mid 17th c.)

The following tables provide an overview of the different referent types according to the animacy and definiteness scales (1), and the syntactic constraints (2).⁸

Table 1: Animacy and definiteness constraints on DOM

		Stage 1: 14 c.	Stage 2: 16 c.	Stage 3: 17–18 cc.	Modern Hindi
Human objects	SAP pronouns	always	always	always	always
	Proper noun	optional	frequent	always	always
	Third person pronoun	optional	frequent	always	always
	Other human nouns	optional	frequent	always	always
Inanimate nouns	Specific nouns	optional	optional	optional	optional
	Abstract (compact) nouns	optional	optional	frequent	frequent

Table 2: Syntactic constraints on object marking

	Stage 1: 14 c.	Stage 2: 16 c.	Stage 3: 17–18 cc.	Modern Hindi
Human noun in small clause (human referents)	optional	frequent	always	always
Inanimate noun in small clause with participle	optional	optional	frequent	very frequent
Passive finite clauses	no data	no data	optional (human, inanimate)	optional (human, inanimate)

The only objects obligatorily marked in stage 1 and 2 are first and second person pronouns, whereas neither person names, nor titles and nouns referring to culturally prominent persons are consistently marked. Objects controlling adjectival / nominal adjuncts

⁸Table 1 does not take into account the cases of deranking. In Table 2 data is lacking for passive transformation in the earlier stages of the language since passive was rare and always with a modal meaning of incapacity.

are still only optionally marked before stage 3 (17th c.). Inanimates are optionally marked right from stage 1 as well as animates other than first person pronouns. At no stage was marking used as a distinguishing device, contrary to Comrie's (1979) or Croft's (1988) hypothesis, and in accordance with the observations made by Malchukov (2008: 213) that the discriminatory function is quite rare across languages, by Arkadiev (2009) that it is not relevant for Indo-Iranian languages, and by de Hoop & Narasimhan (2005) that it is absent in Hindi.

Regarding pronouns, the consistent marking from the very beginning of 1st and 2nd person pronouns should not be over-emphasized, since they retained the accusative inflection till the late Middle Indo-Aryan stage as opposed to all other nominal categories (including 3rd person pronoun: unmarked in (38b) and marked in (35)). Table 3 is according to Bubenik (2006) the table of pronominal forms in the late Apabhramsha stage (10–11th c.): 1st and 2nd persons retain an accusative, which is distinct both from nominative and from dative/ablative, whereas accusative is fused with nominative for the 3rd person:

Table 3: Syntactic constraints on object marking

1 st	NOM <i>hau/haū</i> (Sk <i>aham</i>)	ACC <i>maī, maī, maī, me</i> (Sk <i>mām</i>)	DAT <i>mujh</i>
2 nd	NOM <i>tuhu/tuhū</i> (Sk <i>tvam</i>)	ACC <i>paī, paī, taī</i> (SK <i>tvām</i>)	DAT <i>tujh</i>
3 rd	NOM/ACC <i>so</i> (M.SG), <i>sa</i> (f.SG)		

A considerable morphological restructuring of the system occurred between this stage and the first stages of New Indo-Aryan, with the genitive in *-r-* in most regional varieties, and various oblique forms depending on the region, which came to be used both for marked accusative and dative (36), before adpositions substituted for inflectional morphemes with the same bi-functional use as the old dative/accusative. Remarkably, modern standard Hindi maintained the oblique form *mujh* and *tujh* before postpositions and the old inflectional forms *mujhe* and *tujhe* for dative/accusative, in alternation with the adpositional forms *mujhko* and *tujhko*, and it extended this system to the third person: the direct (*vah*) and oblique (*us*) cases are distinct, and in the dative accusative there are two alternate forms, one inflectional (*use*) and one adpositional (*usko*). Yet the fact that the distinctive accusative was retained throughout Middle Indo-Aryan certainly played an important role in the marking of 1st and 2nd person pronouns, in contrast with third person pronoun and other nouns.

5 Object marking in the “dialects” of Hindi

A good deal of ambiguity prevails in the field of language description since these language varieties are considered, administratively and politically, as dialects of Hindi, with various names and inner variation. Yet linguistically the variations in comparison with modern standard Hindi are so important that many regard them as distinct languages:

nominal and verbal flexions are different, some languages (like Bhojpuri, Awadhi, Maithili) ignore grammatical gender and ergative alignment, others have three grammatical genders or had them until recently (Western Rajasthani, or close to the three genders, languages like Gujarati and Marathi). The modern stage of these “dialects” itself displays great variations regarding the object marking, some maintaining the old situation as sketched above, some closer to the system of standard Hindi. A comprehensive representation of the whole picture, that involves 331 distinct varieties, out of which there are at least a dozen distinct languages, is obviously outside the limits of this study. I will therefore limit myself to the presentation of a few features that are distinct from modern standard Hindi, and that may help explain the general trends in the evolution of object marking.

Let us begin with a step ahead of the evolution of standard Hindi, if one takes agreement to be a reliable marker of the integration into the grammatical system. In Hindi the verb never agrees with a marked object, and indexation on the verb is only by default. In Marwari, a Western dialect of Rajasthan, like in Gujarati, on the contrary, the marked object is indexed on the verb (gender number agreement) as shown by (47). This is also the case in Magahi, an Eastern dialect (Bihari) that shows agreement with marked objects, though somewhat differently, since all animate participants are indexed in the verb (48):

(47) Marwari (Khokhlova 2001)

mhaī śaraṇ naī dekhā
 1SG Sharan.F.SG ACC see.F.SG

‘I have seen Sharan.’

(48) Magahi (Verma 1991)

ham dekh-l-i ham dekh-l-i-a ham dekh-l-i-ain
 1SG see-PST-1 1SG see-PST-1-3nonH 1SG see-PST-1-3H

‘I saw it.’ ‘I saw him (servant).’ ‘I saw him (guru).’

One could also argue that indexing the marked object the same way as the unmarked object is not a step further if it is expected that marked objects should also be indexed in a marked way. Yet no example in the various stages of object marking in Indo-Aryan displays an agreement with marked objects prior to agreement with unmarked objects (the ergative pattern precedes the emergence of DOM by far), whereas all other examples point to the agreement blocking effect of DOM.

Another factor observed in certain regional varieties which is at discrepancy with standard Hindi and its historical emergence is the correlation in object and subject marking: in 19th century Kumaoni for instance, no marked object occurs with an ergative agent, as in (49), even when controlling an adjunct, as in (50), whereas with a nominative subject, objects are marked when human or specific centre-staged inanimates, as in (51):

- (49) Kumaoni (Grierson 1903–1928: IX-4)
myārā dagariyana.le ek bāman pakaro
 my companion.M.PL.ERG one Brahmin seize.PFV.M.SG
 ‘My companions captured a Brahmin.’
- (50) Kumaoni (Grierson 1903–1928: IX-4)
prithvi.m lag yo pahār hamārī thātī raci dev.le
 earth.on too this mountain our place.to.live make.PFV god.ERG
 ‘God made this mountain a place to live for us on earth too.’
- (51) Kumaoni (Grierson 1903–1928: IX-4)
tab ū wī bwaj kaṇi apan ghar huni lī āy
 then 3SG DEM load ACC REFL home ALL take come.PFV
 ‘Then he brought this load to his house.’

According to Stroński (2013) and Sharma (1987), object marking has now in some varieties started to extend to ergative sentences: a modern development, still unknown in standard Kumaoni, as in (52a), which contrasts with Garhwali, very closely related to Kumaoni and part of the same sub-group of Pahari languages, which allows the object to be marked in presence of an ergative agent, as in (52a):

- (52) Kumaoni (Krzysztof Stroński p.c.)
- a. *mī.le naunai *saṇī baiṭ le māre*
 1SG.ERG child ACC cane INS strike.PFV
 ‘I hit the boy with a cane.’
- a. Garhwali (personal field work)
mī.na naunai tai / saṇī (nauno.Ø) baiṭ na māri
 1SG.ERG child ACC ACC child cane INS strike.PFV
 ‘I hit the boy with a cane.’

In Garhwali, the marked object is allowed in a sentence displaying an ergative agent right from the first attested texts collected by Grierson (1903–1928) (53), whether the object is inanimate or human, but it is not compulsory even today, except for proper names (54). Its optionality is not constrained by the presence vs. absence of an ergative agent. In folk songs, which are linguistically archaic, it is optional, and prosodic considerations, for instance, may possibly apply, as in (55) where a married girl is not allowed to visit her family. The objects nouns consisting of one long syllable and one short, ‘mother’, ‘brother’ are marked, while nouns with two long syllables ‘father’, ‘sister in law’, ‘sister’ remain unmarked.

- (53) Garhwali (Grierson 1903–1928: IX-4)
ve-na sattu saṇī ve talau mā ḍāl dini/dine
 3SG-ERG sattu ACC DEM lake in throw gave
 ‘He threw the sattu (a sort of cereal) in the lake.’
- (54) *Tā Anil Rawat tai/saṇi/kū jāndi cha?*
 2SG Anil Rawat ACC/ACC/ACC know PRS
 ‘(Do) you know Anil Rawat?’
- (55) a. *chorie, mu jāṇ na deule*
 girl 1SG go NEG give.FUT.1SG
 ‘girl, I won’t let you go.’ (GCT 124)
- b. *tero bāpū yakhī bulaulo, mu jāṇ na deule*
 your father here call.FUT 1SG go NEG give.FUT.1SG
 ‘I will invite your father, I won’t let you go.’
- c. *terī amī ku yakhī bulaulo, mu jāṇ na deule ...*
 your mother ACC here call.FUT, 1SG go NEG give.FUT.1SG
- d. *tere bhāi ku yakhī bulaulo, mu jāṇ na deule ...*
 your brother ACC here call.FUT 1SG go NEG give.FUT.1SG
- e. *terī bhābhī yakhī bulaulū, mu jāṇ na deule ...*
 your sister.in.law here call.FUT 1SG go NEG give.FUT.1SG
- f. *terī dīdī yakhī bulaula, mu jāṇ na deule ...*
 your sister here call.FUT 1SG go NEG give.FUT.1SG
 ‘I will invite your mother, I won’t let you go. I will invite your brother, I won’t let you go. I will invite your sister-in-law, I won’t let you go. I will invite your elder sister, I won’t let you go.’

Similarly in Bhojpuri, which is not a language as closely related as Garhwali and Hindi, popular songs display unmarked human objects such as ‘my child’ in (56a), whereas in modern speech a similar object ‘my son’ is obligatorily marked with the dative/accusative marker *ke* in (56b):

- (56) Bhojpuri (Saxena 1937 [1970])
- a. *apnā bālaka mohi dīte, apnā bālaka nahī*
 REFL male-child 1SG.DAT give.COND.1SG REFL male.child NEG
debo
 give.FUT.1SG
 ‘If you give me your son – I will not give [you] my son.’
- b. *tū apnā laikā ke bhejā*
 2SG REFL boy ACC send.IMP
 ‘Send your son.’

Obligatoriness in flagging human objects giving the priority to human referents over inanimates is clearly a recent phenomenon, in Bhojpuri as well as in Hindi, and it is limited to certain dialects. Discourse related triggers are active everywhere, and affectedness does not play a noticeable role (cf. (1) and (34)). As for agreement, it is exceptionally present in the Hindi belt and has been attributed to contact with in the case of Magahi (see example (48)): Verma (1991) suggests that this peculiarity of the language, which also presents numerous cases of double agreement, results from contact with Mundari, an Austro-Asiatic tribal language spoken in central-eastern India. With few exceptions, DOM can co-occur with differential agent marking when the subject is an ergative agent, which is a clear indication that the discriminatory function is weakly relevant. It never co-occurs with an experiencer subject in the dative case, nor did it in stage 1 (34), because DOM is strictly restricted to formally transitive clauses, while experiential clauses, even with two arguments, are not transitive *sensu stricto*.

The fact that the accusative marker is morphologically identical to the dative marker, whatever the form of the marker in the various dialects, also accounts for this situation. In Dravidian languages, where the accusative is distinct from the dative, in Tamil for instance, *-ai/e* (ACC) vs. *-akku* (DAT), such a constraint does not hold:

(57) Tamil (own data)

enakku avar.ai pidikkum / teriyum
 1SG.DAT 3M.SG.ACC like know

‘I like / know him.’

(58) Modern Standard Hindi (own data)

*mujhe vah *usko acchā lagtā hai / milā*
 1SG.DAT 3SG 3SG.ACC good seem PRS.3SG meet.PFV

‘I like / met him.’

6 Some hypotheses regarding the origin of the marking and the markers

6.1 Contact with substratum, adstratum and prestige language

As already mentioned, DOM is part of the dozen features that are systematically considered to define South Asia as a linguistic area, along with dative subjects, prevalence of complex predicates, coverbs, causative derivation, lack of ‘have’ verb, head final order, reduplication, etc. (Masica 1976; Emeneau 1980). Its appearance in Indo-Aryan is more or less contemporary with the rise of dative subjects: it has not been inherited from Sanskrit, an inflectional language where accusative is a structural case (all objects are case-marked, a purely syntactic phenomenon). On the contrary, the agglutinative Dravidian languages had, right from the first attested texts (slightly before the Christian era), a DOM marking for human objects (suffix *-ai*), while it developed the Dative Subject pattern much later with a distinct suffix (Murugaiyan 2004), only slightly before

Indo-Aryan languages. Given the importance of structural borrowings from Dravidian in IA, such as the use of coverb and quotative, and the evidence of a Dravidian substratum in the area now occupied by Indo-Aryan speakers (Witzel 1995), Dravidian could be a plausible source for the IA marking. The behavior of the “accusative” suffix *-ai* in modern Tamil, however, is not constrained by transitivity since it can occur with dative subjects, as in (57), unlike in Hindi, as in (60):⁹

- (59) Tamil (own data)
enakku avar.ai pidikkum / teriyum
 1.SG.DAT 3M.SG.ACC like know
 ‘I like / know him.’

- (60) Modern Standard Hindi (own data)
*mujhe vah *usko acchā lagtā hai / milā*
 1.SG.DAT 3SG 3SG.ACC good seem PRS.3SG meet.PFV
 ‘I like / met him.’

Moreover, the wide time gap observed before the borrowing makes the hypothesis of a structural borrowing dubious. Similarly, Austro-Asiatic languages which also played a non-trivial role in the evolution of early Indo-Aryan (Witzel 1995), have always been around so that a sudden borrowing in the second millennium is little convincing. They consistently index human objects as well as beneficiaries on the predicate, but do not index inanimates, whatever their syntactical function, since indexing is constrained by semantics, particularly the animacy and activity, and by the general grammatical structure as in semantically aligned languages. Moreover, they do not have differentially marked objects:

- (61) a. (*in*) *lel-jad-in-a-e*
 (1SG) see-PST-1SG-V-3SG
 ‘He saw me’ (V marks the predicative function, in a language with no noun-verb polarity)
- b. (*in*) *om-am-tan-a-in*
 (1SG) give-2SG-PRS-V-1SG
 ‘I give (it/them) to you’

Such features can only very indirectly be deemed responsible for new features in IA, whether DSM (Montaut 2013) or DOM, yet they may have acted as favoring factor.

The other possible source in terms of contact is Persian, which came to be the dominant cultural and administrative language at the time when DOM became systematic in Hindi (16th c. onwards). Extremely influential in the renewal of the predicate lexicon by means of complex predicates (Montaut 2015), Persian, which extensively uses a marker

⁹Note that Bengali also allows the accusative marker, even if the same as the dative marker, in experiential sentences such as Tamil (57), because experiential subjects are in the genitive in Bengali.

(*râ*) (originally a topic marker) for specific objects, is also sometimes credited to have triggered DOM in Hindi/Urdu. Krishnamurti et al. (1986: 143) observe that the development of DOM is more developed in the North Western IA languages than in central and Eastern ones, and conclude on a probable influence of Persian and more generally of central Asian languages.¹⁰

While none of these hypotheses fully explains the rise of DOM in Indo-Aryan – as expected in keeping with its interpretation as a mainly discourse factor – the latter, allowing for a possible convergence with other substrata in the sub-continent, must definitely be taken into account. The origin of the new case markers has in contrast nothing to do with contact.

6.2 The origin of the case markers

Since the function is anterior to the morphological renewal of markers as seen in examples (29b), (31) and (32) with inflectional forms in *-hī* (§3.1), one can expect that some other case marker, already present in the language, extends its range of functions to the marking of certain objects, and that the dative is chosen for such an extension as for instance the Spanish preposition *a*. But the new Hindi marker appeared at the same time as the other case markers, continuing the oblique flexion of the earlier language, which was largely syncretic and not restricted to goals. It is obvious, however, that in all IA languages, although they display several distinct forms of markers for accusative, the same marker is now used for dative (including DSM) and marked accusative (Krishnamurti et al. 1986): the case meaning specialization (its syntactic function) came later than the marking itself of DOM, and the double use of a single marker as a dative and an accusative has a logic *per se*, which is found in too many languages in the world to be specific to the area.

Now the question remains: why are there so many morphologically unrelated markers for dative/accusative case in languages which are so closely related, in contrast with Dravidian languages, which all exhibit related forms? Marathi for instance has *lā*, Gujarati has *ne*, Konkani, until recently considered a dialect of Marathi has *-k*; Hindi/Urdu has *ko*, Punjabi which is structurally extremely close to Hindi/Urdu and established a distinct identity after the 16th c. has *nū̃*, Hindi “dialects” such as central Pahari (Garhwali, Kumaoni) have *sañī*, Eastern Pahari, such as Nepali, has *lāi*.

The basis used most extensively is *lā* (*le*, *lāi*, *lai*), *ko* (*kau*, *kū*, *kū̃*) or *ne* (*nai*, *nē*, *nū̃*), and neither of them, except *lā* to a certain degree, derives from a clearly allative notion. The base for *lā* and its reflexes for instance is generally derived since Beames (1970 [1875]) from the verbal root *lag*, meaning ‘touch’, ‘be stuck to’ (although some scholars have suggested the verb *labh* ‘to get, obtain’ as an alternative derivation (Tiwari 1955)). The regular path is as follows; *lagya* ‘having come in touch with’ > *lage* > *laĩ*, *lai* (*le*) ‘for the

¹⁰Eastern IA has other devices for marking specificity such as the so-called “article” or “classifier” *-ṭa*, which does not co-occur with the accusative marker as shown by Dasgupta (2015 (manuscript)). Besides, all Dardic languages, spoken in the North West of the South Asian area, have always shared features with Iranian languages, before the Mughal Empire which marked the entrance of Persian as a cultural language in Central India.

sake of’, ‘with the object of’ (Juyal 1976). As for *ko* and its reflexes, it comes from the Sanskrit noun *kakṣa* ‘side, place’, with intermediate forms closer to the original in certain Pahari varieties (*kakh*, *kākh*, *kakhā*), initially a locative, which further developed a directional meaning, then became dative/accusative marker (Strnad 2013: 325). Similarly *ne* and its reflexes were initially locatives derived from a Sanskrit noun meaning ‘ear’: a shortened form of *kaṇhai* according to Tessitori (1914–1916), from **kaṇhasmin* (itself a reconstructed analogical locative of Sanskrit *kaṇṇe*, the locative case of the noun ‘ear’), which is attested in Apabhramsha as *kaṇṇahī* and developed the meaning ‘aside, near’, then ‘towards, to’. Trumpp (1872: 401) also gives the original meaning ‘near’ for *naī/ne*, a derivation accepted by Tiwari (1955; 1966) and by Chatak (1980) who relates to it the alternate form *kuṇī*, frequent in Garhwali (central Pahari). The originally locative meaning is very clear in (62):

(62) Old Rajasthani (Tessitori 1914–1916: 68–70)

- a. *cārāi naī nirmala nīra*
road LOC pure water
‘A limpid lake close by the road’
- a. *āvyā rā kaṇhai*
come.M.PL king LOC/ALL
‘[They] went to the Raja (king)’
- a. *te savihū naī karaū paranām*
3PL all.OBL LOC/ALL do.PRS.1SG salutation
‘I bow to all of them (in front of/ for)’

The adessive/locative meaning still visible in (62a), is also the original meaning of the ‘side’ base (at the origin of *ko*), and the main meaning of the ‘touch/be in contact’ base (origin of *lai*). As a matter of fact, the word ‘ear’, is according to Heine & Kuteva (2002: 121), a very infrequent source for dative, and mentioned only as a source for locative.

Other sources for DOM markers are even farther from a goal source or they are semantically totally empty: not common but not rare either (it is present in Sinitic languages, cf. Chappell 2014), is the comitative source, which is found in markers such as Garhwali/Kumaoni *saṇī* (*haṇī*), from the Sanskrit noun *sanga* ‘society, company’, then ‘with’, now the dative/accusative most usual marker. Other unusual markers, also used in Pahari languages, are *taī*, *tai*, derived from the locative of the indefinite *tavati* (*tāvahī*, *tāmhi***taaī*, **tannī*, *tāī*) ‘so long, so far, up to, till’, *thaī* from the existential verb *sthā* ‘stand’, ‘exist’ and *te/tī*, from the present participle of the verb ‘be’ in the locative (Sk *bhavati* > *hontai*, *hunti*). One marker has not yet been convincingly traced to a reliable origin, *baī*, *be*, dative/accusative marker in modern Kullui (Western Himalaya) as well as in Bundeli (South Madhya Pradesh).

This *be* is perhaps related to the Garhwali/Kumaoni *bāṭi*, used in these languages as an ablative, and derived from the verbal noun *vartamāna* (from Sanskrit *vṛt* ‘turn, expand’, then ‘what happens’, ‘present’). Ablative and goal obviously encode with opposite se-

mantic meanings, but similar “opposite” uses of case markers are extremely common across IA: *te/tī* is also used as an ablative in other northern dialects, *ne* is a frequent marker for ergative (Hindi/Urdu, Panjabi, Marathi) and *le* (a reflex of *lai*) is the Nepali and Kumaoni ergative marker.

Even more striking is the fact that, in the very same language, the same marker may work as an ergative, an instrumental/ablative, and a dative/accusative, as is the case in Bangaru in both southern (63a) or northern (63b)–(63c) varieties:

(63) Bangaru

a. *rupay tī us-tī le lo*
 money ACC 3SG-ABL take take.IMP

‘Take the money from him’ (Tiwari 1955: 177)

b. *kutte nae dande nae mārya*
 dog ACC stick INS strike.INS

‘Strike the dog with the stick’ (Singh 1970)

c. *balkā nae toriyā hongē*
 child.M.PL ERG break PRSUMPT.3M.PL

‘The children have probably broken [it]’ (Singh 1970)

All the IA case markers are derived from words with such a vague semantic content that they are able to fulfill all casual functions, with the exception of the new locative *mē/mā*, even if in most languages they are now more or less specialized into broad functions. New functions (DOM, EXP) as well as inherited ones (ERG, DAT, INS) selected any of the available markers when case marking shifted from the old inflections, by then much eroded and syncretic, to the new postpositional system during the first part of second millennium. But, interestingly, none developed a specific marker on the Dravidian or Persian model, and none selected a DOM marker distinct from the DAT one.

7 Conclusions

As a result of the identical case-marking for dative and accusative, experiential subjects and marked objects are similarly encoded, and the rise of DOM and DSM is chronologically very comparable: starting with only sporadic non-consistent occurrences during the 14th c. and getting systematic and consistent after the 17th c. Is it an argument for making both processes complementary as suggested by Aissen (2003)? This is highly controversial since experiential subjects are strictly constrained by the lexical semantics of the predicate (and to a certain degree by its morphology since it occurs almost exclusively in Hindi with complex predicates), whereas marked objects obey discourse constraints. Specificity can be considered the more important triggering factor for DOM, yet in order to account for those alternations which at first glance seem to be syntactically constrained (§2.3 and §3) another factor is required, namely discourse saliency. This is not incompatible with Dalrymple & Nikolaeva’s (2011) notion of secondary topicality,

nor with the prominence involved in the twin scales of animacy and specificity, yet it also allows us to account for examples where unmarked objects are in a topicalized position and vice-versa. Not surprisingly, the first constraints which emerged during the diachronic evolution of the structure are neither animacy nor specificity but discourse prominence, of which prosodic requirements can be considered an auxiliary. Besides, the existence of a threefold distinction between objects ('incorporated', unmarked and accusative-marked) in nominalizations, depending on their individuation, has no equivalent for subjects.

Abbreviations

1	first person	INS	instrumental
2	second person	INTR	intransitive
3	third person	M	masculine
ACC	accusative	NEG	negation, negative
ALL	allative	NON	non-
COND	conditional	NOM	nominative
CV	coverb	OBL	oblique
DAT	dative	PASS	passive
DEF	definite	PFV	perfective
DEM	demonstrative	PL	plural
DET	determiner	POSS	possessive
ERG	ergative	PPRF	pluperfect
EZ	ezafe	PRF	perfect
F	feminine	PROG	progressive
FOC	focus	PRS	present
FUT	future	PRSUMPT	presumptive
GEN	genitive	PST	past
H	human	REFL	reflexive
HON	honorific	REL	relative
IMP	imperative	SG	singular
INDEF	indefinite	TOP	topic
INF	infinitive	V	predicative function

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