

# MALAYALAM CASE MARKERS: HISTORICAL AND COMPARATIVE STUDY

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## ABSTRACT

The present paper is an attempt to study the case markers of Malayalam language of South Dravidian group. The source and the historical development of case markers are shown in this paper. Deictic is shown as a major source of case markers in Malayalam, as well in Dravidian. There are very few markers which have been developed from the noun and verb used in the language. More number of case markers has been developed from different deictic in Malayalam. Among deictic, three each of case markers have been developed from distal and proximate, respectively, and intermediate is used as a dative case marker. The ablative marker *-nintu* is a debatable one. This is a past participial form of verb *nil*. Each marker has been explained with the historical development from the respective sources.

Attempt is also made to understand the Malayalam case markers in the South Dravidian group. A comparative picture with all other members of the group is shown and discussed. This attempt has shown the relation between Malayalam and any of the language of the group. Malayalam shares most of all the case markers except the ablative one, with Irula, Kannada and Tamil, locative, dative and accusative case markers with Kasaba, dative and instrumental case markers with Toda and Kota, and it shares no marker except the dative with Kodagu, Koraga and Tulu languages. Malayalam stands unique in some of the developments, like ablative case marker and in development of two dative case markers *-annu* and *-innu*, which are not found in any language of the group.

**Keywords:** Case System, Case Markers, Dravidian Linguistics, Historical Linguistics, Comparative Linguistics

Paper received on 08.04.2013; Revised paper 06.09.2013

## 1. Introduction

Malayalam is a major language of South Dravidian family, used in India mainly in South part of India. The history of Malayalam literature starts from 12<sup>th</sup> century and its grammatical tradition starts from 14<sup>th</sup> cen. *Lilatilakam* is an early grammar of Malayalam.

This paper is an attempt to understand the historical evolution of case markers in Malayalam, and also to realize the comparative picture of Malayalam case markers in the group. Such a comparative study of Malayalam case markers helps us to understand the position of Malayalam within the sub-group and also in the family.

The south Dravidian language group consists of major languages like Irula, Kannada, Kasaba, Kodagu, Koraga, Kota, Malayalam, Tamil, Toda and Tulu. All these languages have been considered for the present study. The present study has observed some of the traditional grammars of Malayalam, namely, *Lilatilakam* and *Kerala Paniniyam* for collection of data, and mainly

depended on the modern work on grammatical tradition of Malayalam by Ezhuthachan (1998). Data for all the languages and dialects have been collected from descriptive grammars of each language respectively.

## 2. Case system in Dravidian

Verbal and nominal are the two major lexical sources for case markers, with verbs constituting the most common source. In Dravidian linguistics several scholars, such as Caldwell (2000/1857), Krishnamurthi (2003), Shanmugam (1972), Zvelebil (1972) have attempted to reconstruct the proto-forms of case markers. Few markers for different case relations have been reconstructed to the Proto-Dravidian. Zvelebil's contribution in this regard is significant. He has reconstructed the markers for six case relations. The reconstructed forms are mostly accepted in Dravidian linguistics and are discussed elsewhere with minor modifications and developments. Although it is believed that case markers in the world languages have developed from free morphemes and the reconstructed forms of case markers are generally explained to be either verbs or nouns, in the case of Dravidian, the reconstructed forms seem to be markers, but not free morphemes. For example, forms like *\*-ān/\*-āl*, *\*-in/\*-il*, and *\*-kk* (v), etc. have been reconstructed to the Proto-Dravidian for different case relations. These forms can be markers but not free morphemes, as it is very difficult to establish the grammatical status of these forms, and interestingly, discussion over meanings of these forms is absent in the literature. Forms like *\*-ul* ('in, inside'), *\*-il* ('house') are explained as nouns. However, of all the forms that have been reconstructed to the Proto-Dravidian, very few can be explained.

Recent research (Kodagunti 2011) has shown that there are three major sources for the case markers in Dravidian family. Most of the case markers of the family, from any language or dialect can be explained to have formed from one or other of the following three sources:

- i. Deictic
- ii. Locational nouns
- iii. Past participle forms of verbs

Some important theoretical aspects required to understand the historical development of case markers of the Dravidian family are (for more discussion see Kodagunti 2011a):

1. Each case marker in a given language or dialect was a locative case marker at an early stage of the Dravidian

Ex. (from Kannada)

Proto form	Case relation expressed in early stage	Present form	Case relation expressed today
<i>*-an</i>	Locative case	<i>-annu</i>	Accusative case

2. Each case marker has moved or has been moving from the locative case relation to other case relations

Ex. (from Kannada)

Proto form	Case relation expressed in early stage	Present form	Case relation expressed today
<i>*-akan</i>	Locative case	<i>-aga, -āga</i> <i>-āga, -ga, -ge</i> <i>-āga</i> <i>-āga</i>	Locative case Dative case Accusative case Instrumental case

## 3. Compound case markers are being formed

Ex. (from Kannada)

Compound Case Marker	Structure and Development
-inda	*-i/*-ī>*-in+*-atan=*-intan>-indan>-inda

## 3. Sources of case markers in Dravidian

## 3.1 Deictic: There are three deictic in Dravidian:

Deictic	Type
*a/*ā	Distal
*u/*ū	Intermediate
*i/*ī	Proximate

Table 1: Deictic in Dravidian

In most of languages of the world, deictics are source for several forms of grammatical categories. ‘Demonstratives provide a common source for a wide variety of grammatical items such as definite articles, relative and third person pronouns, copulas, sentence connectives, complimentizers, number markers, and possessives.’ (Diesel, 1999:115). Diesel observed that the developed forms of deictic are used to mark the case relations in some languages. ‘Guugu Yimidhir, a Pama-Nyungan language spoken in North-Eastern Australia, has case markers which are derived from the deictic.’ (Diesel, 1999:12)

Deictic has developed into various forms of grammatical categories in Dravidian family as well. Grammatical forms like third person pronouns, such as *avan*, *uvan*, and *ivan*, quantifiers such as *anitu*, *unitu*, and *initu*, and locational forms such as *alli*, *ulli*, and *illi* (All examples from Old Kannada) have developed from the deictic.

The deictic have also been developed in to case markers. Deictic expressions have traditionally focused on the relative distance of a referent from the speaker. It signifies the location. Dravidian has three locational distances. The locative case dose signifies or it specifies the location. The function of the deictic and locative case meets in signifying or in specifying the location. Deictic forms, which are source for different grammatical categories, have moved to express the locative case relation. In due course of time, the locative case markers have moved to express the different case relations. (Kodagunti 2011b)

Markers such as \*-ān/\*-āl/\*-āl, \*-un/\*-ul/\*-ul, and \*-in/\*-il, etc. are used in various languages of Dravidian family, to express various case relations. In addition, various languages and dialects employ forms related to these markers.

A compound case marker consists of two or more markers. It is frequently found in Dravidian family. Markers mentioned above appear as both the first and the second term in many of the compound case markers in several languages of the family. Ex. -linda, an ablative marker in Kannada (\*-a/\*-ā>\*-āl+-inda(-indan<-intan<\*-in+\*-atan)=-ālinda>-linda).

The following three sets of markers have developed from the deictic forms \*a/\*ā, \*u/\*ū, and \*i/\*ī, which have been considered as the deictic forms of Proto-Dravidian respectively. This development is shown in the table (2) below.

Earlier Form	Developed Form
*a / *ā >	*-ān / *-āl / *-āl̥
*u / *ū >	*-un / *-ul / *-ul̥
*i / *ī >	*-in / *-il̥

Table 2: Deictic and Their Development in to Case Forms in Dravidian

One or more derivational suffixes are used in word formation in Dravidian family (Caldwell, 2001/1857) and Krishnamurthi (2003), etc. A derivational suffix has a role to play in the lexicalisation and in the grammaticalisation as well. Also, the proto-form of the deictic, which was monophonic, has been added with the derivative suffix to develop into diaphonic form. As the monophonic deictic form, which is a proto-form, was used to express the case relations, the developed form also continued to be used for the same. As mentioned earlier, each developed form used to express one or more grammatical categories as well. Markers such as \*-ān/\*-āl/\*-āl̥, \*-un/\*-ul/\*-ul̥ and \*-in/\*-il̥, -at, -an are available in several languages/dialects of the family. It remains to be established whether each of these sounds was added to the proto-form or any of them is a later development. Each developed form of the deictic from each language and dialect could be collected and studied. Such a study would throw light on phonological and morphological development in the early days of the Proto-Dravidian. Different sounds available in different languages and dialects would suggest an understanding that deictic must have been used as case marker at the Pre-Proto-Dravidian stage and a derivational suffix must have been joined to the deictic at the early stage of the Proto-Dravidian. And this is resulted at the diversity in case forms of present Dravidian languages.

**3.2 Locational nouns:** Nouns are one of the major sources for forms belonging to different grammatical categories, including the case markers. Most of the case markers in Dravidian family were believed to have developed from nouns. However, nouns are the second largest source for case markers in the Dravidian, deictic being the first. There are several locational nouns, which mark the locative case. The traditional grammarians of major languages of the Dravidian had noticed this. *Tolkappiam*, an early Tamil grammar made an attempt to list the locational nouns that express the locative case. This attempt is unique in this sense.

**3.3 Past participle form of a verb:** Verbs are considered as the major source for the case markers in the world languages. However, in Dravidian family, very few markers have developed from verbs. This particular development from verb to a case marker seems to be a recent one compared to developments of case markers from other sources.

#### 4. Malayalam case markers

As it is mentioned above, the grammatical tradition in Malayalam starts from 14<sup>th</sup> Cen. and more number of Malayalam grammars have been produced in the last two centuries. All the grammars have dedicated considerable space for the explanation of case system. Most of the traditional grammars stand together with minor changes while explaining case markers. Ezhuthachan (1998) provides an elaborative discussion of tradition of Malayalam grammars, case markers and case relations.

The nominative case does not require an overt case marker in Malayalam, as it is found in the most languages of the world. However, there are five case relations, which expect a marker. These are explained in the Indian grammatical tradition. Malayalam has also got the same pattern. However, it shares with Tamil and differs from Indian tradition with reference to the instrumental

case, which is placed third in the list of case relations in Indian grammatical tradition. Instead of instrumental case, Tamil has sociative case placed third in the list. It is quite interesting to note that *Panini* (Subrahmanyam 1999) has explained the instrumental case as third one, which also serves the purpose of the sociative relation. *Tolkappianar* (Sastry PSS 1979/1945) has considered the sociative, the sub relation in *Panini*, as a major relation, and the instrumental, which has got a major explanation in *Panini*, as a subordinate relation. Malayalam grammatical tradition follows Tamil tradition, on one side, and western tradition, on the other side. The Tamil model for the third case or the sociative case is also used in Malayalam grammars and the case has got a place in the grammatical explanation, while the other Dravidian languages, like Kannada and Telugu, follow the Sanskrit tradition in this regard.

The present study concentrating on case markers have collected data for five case relations. The table below (3) lists the Malayalam case markers.

Case relation	Marker
Locative Case	-il, -ile
Dative Case	-kku, -u, -annu, -innu
Accusative Case	-e, -ai
Instrumental Case	-āl
Ablative Case	-niṇtu

Table 3: Malayalam case markers

It is true that there are different markers and various allomorphs of these forms in different dialects of Malayalam, even historical dialects too show different forms. Due to the limitations of the present study, all the markers and allomorphs are not considered.

## 5. Source and historical development of case markers of Malayalam

The sources of case markers of Malayalam are shown in the table (4) below.

Source		Marker
Deictic	Distal (*a/*ā)	-annu, -ai, -āl
Deictic	Intermediate (*u/*ū)	-u
Deictic	Proximate (*i/*ī)	-e, -il, -ile, -innu
Noun	*akan	-kku
Verb	*nil	-niṇtu

Table 4: Source of Malayalam Case Markers

A descriptive picture of Malayalam case markers, source of the same and case relations they express are shown in table (5).

Source		Marker	Case Relation
Deictic	Distal (*a/*ā)	-annu	Dative
”	”	-ai	Accusative
”	”	-āl	”
”	Intermediate (*u/*ū)	-u	Dative
”	Proximate (*i/*ī)	-e	Accusative
”	”	-il	Locative
”	”	-ile	”
”	”	-innu	Dative
Noun	*akan	-kku	”
Verb	*nil	-niṇtu	Ablative

Table 5: Malayalam Case Markers, Source and case relations

More number of case markers have been developed from different deictic in Malayalam. Among deictic, three each of case markers have been developed from distal and proximate, respectively, and intermediate is used as a dative case marker. There is only marker developed from a noun. The ablative marker *-niṇtu* is a debatable one. This is a past participial form of verb *nil*. There are few markers which are past participial form of verb used in different languages as case markers. Here the problem here is whether this past participial form used in Malayalam can be considered as a suffix or as a post position. There are some past participial forms, which were used to express the case relation, have changed in due course of time, while some past participial forms have not changed. For instance, there are several locational nouns, which have not undergone any changes and are common to the case forms, are considered as post positions. But for several reasons they cannot be considered as suffixes. For the same reasons considering past participial form as a suffix may not be possible. The present paper has taken into consideration only suffixes, as post positions need separate treatment.

The structural development of Malayalam case markers are shown here in table (6).

Source		Marker	Development
<b>Deictic</b>	<b>Distal</b> (*a/*ā)	-annu	<u>*a/ā</u> > *a/*ā > -a(C)[-n-] > -an > -annu
	”	-ai	<u>*a/ā</u> > *a/*ā > -a(C)[-y(?)-] > -ay > -ai
	”	-āl	<u>*a/ā</u> > *a/*ā > -ā(C)[-l-] > -āl
<b>Deictic</b>	<b>Intermediate</b> (*u/*ū)	*-u	*-u
<b>Deictic</b>	<b>Proximate</b> (*i/*ī)	-e	<u>*i/ī</u> > *i/*ī > -i > -e
	”	*-il	<u>*i/ī</u> > *i/*ī > -i(C)[-l-] > -il
	”	-ile	<u>*i/ī</u> > *i/*ī > -i(C)[-l-] > -il > -ile
	”	-innu	<u>*i/ī</u> > *i/*ī > -i(C)[-n-] > -in > -innu
<b>Noun</b>	<i>Akan</i>	-kku	<u>*akan</u> > *-akan > -akku > -kku
<b>Verb</b>	<i>Nil</i>	-niṇtu	<u>*nil</u> > -niṇtu

Table 6: The structural development of Malayalam Case Markers

## 6. Common features of phonological development of deictic into case markers

Given below is the list that provides common features of the phonological development of the deictic forms into case markers. Each of the three deictic forms has similar kind of possibility of development. Each of Malayalam case markers may be explained in the light of these features. These features are common to all the languages of the family and any marker may be explained by them.

6.1 A deictic form is sometimes used in its monophonic form which is considered to be the proto-form e.g. \*-a, \*-ā, \*-u, \*-ū, \*-i, \*-ī.

6.1.1 \*-u is used in Malayalam to express the dative case relation.

6.1.2 In the process of /i/ > /e/ development in Dravidian the proto form of proximate deictic \*-i have been developed in to -e and used in Malayalam for the accusative case relation.

6.2 The monophonic form is extended with a derivative suffix from which a diaphonic form develops. A number of diaphonic forms are used in each language of the family e.g. \*-a > \*-an, \*-ā > \*-ān, \*-a > \*-al, \*-ā > \*-āl, \*-a > \*-aḷ, \*-ā > \*-āḷ, etc.

6.2.1 The distal deictic \*-a/\*-ā has been elevated into \*-āl and used to express the accusative case in Malayalam

6.2.2 The form *-ai* is used in Malayalam to express the accusative case relation, however, the consonant ending form *\*-ay* has been reconstructed to the Proto Dravidian. The form *\*-ay* is developed from the distal deictic *\*-a/\*-ā* by adding a derivative suffix.

6.2.3 The proximate deictic *\*-i/\*-ī* has been developed into *\*-il* by getting a derivative suffix and used for the locative case relation.

6.3 A consonant-terminal form develops into a vowel-terminal form e.g. *\*-a>\*-an>-anu*, *\*-a>\*-al>-ali*, *\*-ā>\*-āl>-āle*, etc.

6.3.1 The form *\*-il*, which is a developed form of proximate deictic has been developed into the vowel ending form *-ile* and it is used to express the locative case.

6.4 A consonant-terminal form develops into a geminated form e.g. *\*-a>-an>-annu*, *\*-a>-al>-alli* etc.

6.4.1 *-annu* is used to express the dative case relation in Malayalam, which is a geminated form of *-an*. The form is used in several Dravidian languages to express the different case relations; however, the use of *-an* in Malayalam either have been lost or has not been identified yet.

6.4.2 *-innu* is another marker to express the dative case relation in Malayalam, which is a development of the form *\*-in* basically from the proximate deictic *\*-i/\*-ī*, however the form *\*-in* is not been reported yet as it is attested. The step either has been lost in the language development or has not been identified. However, as in the case of the form *\*-an*, *\*-in* is also used in several other Dravidian languages to express different case relations. *\*-in* is considered as an augment by several grammars of Malayalam: *marattine*, *marattinnu* (Ezhuthachan.1998). it certainly need to be studied in order to understand the development of augments. The augments added before case markers seems to be used as case markers once and now they have lost the meaning of case relation and remaining as augment by allowing the addition of a new form.

6.5 A developed form loses its initial vowel. *\*-a>\*-an>-anna>-nna*, *\*-a>\*-al>-l* etc.

6.5.1 The form *-akku*, attested in Old Kannada for locative and dative cases is developed from the noun *\*akan*, and the form has lost the initial vowel to form the marker *-kku*, which is used in Malayalam to express the dative case.

These features are important; they explain each case form of the family. Further, these features explain the development of a noun form into a case marker.

## 7. Malayalam case markers: A comparative overview in SDr

Malayalam case markers have been listed along with the case markers of other members of the SDr in the table (7.1). Each case is shown separately followed by the discussion on the same.

### 7.1 Locative case markers

Case	Mal.	Iru.	Kan.	Kas.	Ko.	Kod.	Kor.	Tam.	To.	Tu.
Loc.	<i>-il, -ile</i>	<i>-i, -ili</i>	<i>-i, -in, -il</i>	<i>-ili, -li</i>	<i>-l (&lt;-al?)</i>	--	--	<i>-il</i>	--	--

Table 7.1: Locative case markers of SDr.

Locative case markers *-il* and *-ile* and its similar forms are available in Irula, Kannada, Kasaba and Tamil. Some of the languages like Kannada, Tamil have got the consonant ending

form, however, other have got vowel ending form. The consonant ending form is the earlier one, as it is explained already, and those consonant ending forms have developed in to vowel ended forms in different languages in due course of time. Kota has *-l* as a locative case marker, however in the language development, it seems to be developed from the distal deictic, but not from the proximate as it is in Malayalam. Languages namely, Irula, Kannada, Kasaba and Tamil have got a structurally related form and similar form is absence in other languages.

## 7.2 Dative case markers

Case	Mal.	Iru.	Kan.	Kas.	Ko.	Kod.	Kor.	Tam.	To.	Tu.
<b>Dat.</b>	<b>-kku</b>	<i>-kk,</i> <i>-kke,</i> <i>-kku</i>	<i>-ke,</i> <i>-kke,</i> <i>-akke, -ge,</i> <i>-age</i>	<i>-kk, -</i> <i>kke</i>	<i>-k</i>	<i>-ki,</i> <i>-gi</i>	<i>-ga</i>	<i>-ku</i>	<i>-k</i>	<i>-ki,</i> <i>-gi</i>
	<b>-annu</b>	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--
	<b>-innu</b>	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--
	<b>-u</b>	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--

Table 7.2: Dative case markers of SDr.

7.2.1 Malayalam shares dative marker *-kku* with all the members of the group. The final vowel is different in each language. All the languages and also dialects of major languages have developed different vowels at the end of the marker. Some languages like Kannada, Kodagu have developed the voiced sound in the marker. And in some of the languages including Malayalam, the geminated form is used, whereas others do not have. The marker has developed from a similar source in the group Ex. *\*-akan*.

7.2.2 The other dative markers like *-annu* and *-innu* are innovative development in Malayalam. At present, these markers or related markers have not yet reported as dative case markers in any language of the group and also of the family, though they are used for other case relations in different languages. The form *-annu* is a developed form of the distal deictic and *-innu* is developed from the proximate deictic. *\*u* is intermediate deictic used for the dative case relation. The different deictic forms used for different case relations in different languages of the Dravidian family.

## 7.3 Accusative case marker

Case	Mal.	Iru.	Kan.	Kas.	Ko.	Kod.	Kor.	Tam.	To.	Tu.
<b>Acc.</b>	<b>-e</b>	<i>-e, -ne</i>	<i>-e</i>	<i>-e</i>	--	--	--	--	--	--
	<b>-ai~-ay</b>	--	--	--	--	--	--	<i>-ai</i>	--	--

Table 7.3: Accusative case markers of SDr.

7.3.1 The accusative case marker *-e* is found in Irula, Kasaba and in Old Kannada. This form was explained as an accusative case marker in Kannada by an early grammar of 13<sup>th</sup> cen. (Keshiraja).

7.3.2 The other marker *-ai* is shared between Malayalam and Tamil, no other language of the group share the same. The form *\*-ay*, which is consonant ended, is considered to be a proto form, instead the diphthong form, which is used. The development of *-ay* form is from *\*-a*, the distal deictic. There are forms like *-an, -al, -al, -at, -aṇ* etc. which are developed from the distal deictic, with different consonants, and used for the accusative case relation in different languages. The



form *-an* is used for accusative case relation in several other languages of SDr. And language like Kodagu have the proto form of distal deictic *\*-a* as an accusative marker.

#### 7.4 Instrumental case marker

Case	Mal.	Iru.	Kan.	Kas.	Ko.	Kod.	Kor.	Tam.	To.	Tu.
Inst.	<i>-āl</i>	<i>-āle</i>	<i>-āl, -le</i>	--	<i>-āl, -ār</i>	--	--	<i>-āl</i>	<i>-āl, -ār</i>	--

Table 7.4: Instrumental case markers of SDr.

7.4.1 The other instrumental case marker *-āl* is found in various languages of the group. Languages like Irula, Kannada, Kota, Tamil and Toda have got this form to mark the instrumental case. Irula has got *-e* ended form, that, *-āle* for the instrumental case and this form has lost the initial vowel and found in a dialect of Kannada for the instrumental case.

#### 7.5 Ablative case marker

Case	Mal.	Iru.	Kan.	Kas.	Ko.	Kod.	Kor.	Tam.	To.	Tu.
Abl.	<i>-niṇṭu</i>	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--

Table 7.5: Ablative case markers of SDr.

7.5.1 Most of the Dravidian languages have got only compound case marker for the ablative case. And, most of the time they are innovative development of a language and many a times of dialects of major languages. Malayalam has also got independent development in this regard. The form *-niṇṭu* which is a past participial form of the verb *\*-nil* (see-section 5, above) is found only in Malayalam language, no other language not only of the group but also of the family shares this form.

### 8. A Comparative overview of Malayalam case markers in SDr.

Case	Mal.	Iru.	Kan.	Kas.	Ko.	Kod.	Kor.	Tam.	To.	Tu.
Loc.	<i>-il, -ile</i>	<i>-i, -ili</i>	<i>-i, -in, -il</i>	<i>-ili, -li</i>	--	--	--	<i>-il</i>	--	--
Dat.	<i>-kku</i>	<i>-kk, -kke, -kku</i>	<i>-ke, -kke, -akke, -ge, -age</i>	<i>-kk, -kke</i>	<i>-k</i>	<i>-ki, -gi</i>	<i>-ga</i>	<i>-ku</i>	<i>-k</i>	<i>-ki, -gi</i>
	<i>-annu</i>	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--
	<i>-innu</i>	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--
	<i>-u</i>	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--
Acc.	<i>-e</i>	<i>-e, -ne</i>	<i>-e</i>	<i>-e</i>	--	--	--	--	--	--
	<i>-ai~-ay</i>	--	--	--	--	--	--	<i>-ai</i>	--	--
Inst.	<i>-āl</i>	<i>-āle</i>	<i>-āl, -le</i>	--	<i>-āl, -ār</i>	--	--	<i>-āl</i>	<i>-āl, -ār</i>	--
Abl.	<i>-niṇṭu</i>	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--

Table 8: Comparative overview of Malayalam case markers in SDr.

The comparative analysis of Malayalam case markers with other members of the South Dravidian group of the family helps to understand the relation with other languages of the group.

Malayalam shares most of all the case markers except the ablative one, with Irula, Kannada and Tamil, e.g. locative, dative, accusative and instrumental. It shares no marker except the dative with Kodagu, Koraga and Tulu languages. This clearly suggests that Malayalam has closer affinity to Irula, Kannada and Tamil and lesser affinity to Kodagu, Koraga and Tulu, which are considered to be early branch out of SDr. Kota and Toda shares only dative and instrumental case markers with Malayalam. Further, Malayalam shares three, locative, dative and accusative case markers with Kasaba.

The development of case markers took place in the Proto-Dravidian stage, and later several forms have been developed in different languages and dialects. One can observe the development of new forms as case markers in different dialects, and also development of compound case markers. Hence, there are unique developments in more languages.

## 9. Conclusion

The study supports the argument that deictic is a major source for case markers in Dravidian languages. More number of case markers in Malayalam language has been explained from the deictic and there are very few which may be explained from the noun and verb. The paper has provided a clear phonological explanation for each case marker from the source.

Malayalam has several other markers in its different historical stages and in different geographical dialects. All the markers have to be collected and need to be explained, only after which the historical development of case markers of the language would be clear. It is necessary to study Malayalam case markers cross case relationally within the group and in the family. A form used for different case relations in different languages/dialects. The study of these kinds of markers can bring more understanding in the historical development of case markers of the family, and it would extend the strength to the understanding of the phonological development in the group. There is a need to understand the Malayalam case markers with other languages of the Central and North Dravidian groups too.

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