Unique S Case

Morphological case on nouns often expresses the syntactic and semantic relationships between clausal constituents. In this study, we investigated to what extent a unique case marker was used in the past (or perfective) for the subject argument of an intransitive clause (S), vis-à-vis the subject of a transitive clause (A), the direct object of a transitive clause (P), and a recipient (R). This is the case in Indo-Aryan Hindko, as seen in ‎(1), in which the subject of an intransitive clause is zero marked, whereas the subject of a transitive subject is marked with an ergative case clitic *=suɳ* and the (definite) object is marked with a dative case clitic *=koː*.

1. Hindko [hno] (Indo-Aryan)

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| a. | sap | mər | | ɡijaː. | | | | | |
|  | snake | die.cv | | go.pfv.msg | | | | | |
|  | ‘The snake died.’ (HNO-ValQuestRH:061) | | | | | | | | |
| b. | dʒandak | ɖuːɡiː=bətʃ | | | saːməɳĩː | | aː-jaː. | | |
|  | boy | field=loc | | | appearing | | come.pfv-msg | | |
|  | ‘The boy appeared on the field.’ (HNO-ValQuestRH:081) | | | | | | | | |
| c. | dʒandk-aː=suɳ | | suːʈiː=naːl | | | sap=koː | | ʈoː-jaː |  |
|  | boy-obl=erg | | stick=ins | | | snake=dat | | beat.pfv-msg |  |
|  | ‘The boy beat the snake with a stick.’ (HNO-ValQuestRH:027) | | | | | | | | |

Unique case-marking of the S argument is present in only 13 of the sample languages. In the other languages its case marking is the same as that for one or more of the other arguments, A, P or R.

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| Feature value | # of varieties displaying it | % |
| Present | 13 | 22 |
| Absent | 46 | 78 |
| Indeterminate | 0 | 0 |