Unique P 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 object argument of a transitive clause (P), vis-à-vis the subject of an intransitive clause (S), the subject of a transitive clause (A), and a recipient (R). This is the case in Indo-Aryan Khowar, as seen in (1), in which the oblique case suffix -o is used with the (specific) object of transitive clauses, or the plural equivalent -an, whereas the subject is zero marked, whether it occurs in a transitive or an intransitive clause.

1. Khowar [khw] (Indo-Aryan)

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| a. | ɖaq | aji-**o** | | ban-en | pr-aj. | | |  | |  |
|  | boy | snake-obl | | stick-inst | hit.pst-3sg | | |  | |  |
|  | ‘The boy hit the snake with a stick.’ (KHW-ValQuestAA:028) | | | | | | | | | |
| b. | aji | obrit-aj. | |  | | |  | | | |
|  | snake | die.pst-3sg | |  | | |  | | | |
|  | ‘The snake died.’ (KHW-ValQuestAA:061) | | | | | | | | | |
| c. | kumoːru | tan | waw-o=te | | | gamburi-**an** | | | anzeːt-aj. | |
|  | girl | refl | grandmother-obl=to | | | flower-obl.pl | | | give.pst-3sg | |
|  | ‘The girl sent flowers to her grandmother.’ (KHW-ValQuestAA:037) | | | | | | | | | |

Unique case-marking of the P argument is present in 19 of the sample languages, i.e. in approximately a third of the sample. The languages displaying this property are primarily found in the region’s northwest.

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Feature value | # of varieties displaying it | % |
| Present | 19 | 32 |
| Absent | 40 | 68 |
| Indeterminate | 0 | 0 |