CASE MARKERS IN AUSTRALIAN LANGUAGES

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Abstract: In several Australian languages it is possible for nominals to carry more than one inflectional case marker. This can be due to adnominal multiple case marking where two or more cases are assigned to a nominal. A further possibility is derivational multiple case marking ('compound cases'). Here a case marker forms an oblique stem ('founding form') which may attract further case markers. The paper presents the result of a pilot study which is based on a sample of 20 languages from the Pama-Nyungan and the Tangkic family.

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1. MULTIPLE CASE MARKING

Following Austin (1995) we can identify at least three situations where multiple case marking occurs:

(i) Derivational: a case form serves as the basis (the 'founding form') for an additional case marker. A typical example comes from JIWARLI.

ABS   *wuru* 'tree'
LOC   *wuru-ŋka*
ABL1   *wuru-ŋka-ŋuru*

(ii) Adnominal: case-marked nominals serve as adnominal modifiers and take a further case affix in agreement with the modified head (this is the prototypical instance of multiple case as Suffixaufnahme. The recent book *Double Case* (F. Plank, Ed., 1995) gives a good survey of this topic (including data from Australian languages). Suffixaufnahme proper

occurs when all words in the phrase are marked for case. An example comes from NGIYAMBAA.

ŋadhu	giyanhdha-nha	ŋidji-la:	winar-gu-dhi	miri-dji
1Sg=NOM	fear-PRES	this+CIRC-EST	woman-DAT-CIRC	dog-CIRC

'I am frightened of this woman's dog'

[EST stands for 'established reference', CIRC for a case called circumstantive.] Multiple case marking also occurs due to phrase-marking. We give an example from ALYAWARRA.

aylila	artwa	ampu-kinh-ila
boomerang	man	old-GEN-INST

'with the old man's boomerang'

Schweiger (1995) gives a survey of Suffixaufnahme in Australian languages.

(iii) Referential: nominals serving as adverbial modifiers or secondary predicates can be assigned case following their local suffixes. We give an example from WARLPIRI.

ŋarrka-ŋku	ka	yankirri	luwa-rni	ŋapa-ŋka-rlu
man-ERG	PRES	emu	shoot-NONPAST	water-LOC-ERG

'The man is shooting the emu at the waterhole'

The present investigation deals with compound cases (a subtype of derivational case marking in the sense of Austin 1995). In JIWARLI we find for some nouns ALL=DAT+*rla*, e.g.

ABS	*mathanma* 'hill kangarro'
ACC	*mathannha*
DAT	*mathanku*
ALL	*mathankurla*

A comparison with

ABS	*wirta* 'boy'
ACC	*wirtanha*
DAT	*wirtawu*
ALL	*wirtarla*

shows that the suffix *-kurla* can be segmented into DAT *-ku* plus ALL *-rla*. However, ablative 1 consistently is built on the locative, namely ABL1 = LOC+*ŋuru* but ablative 2 is formed by the suffix *-parnti* attached to the stem. Therefore we find

LOC	*wirta-ŋka*
ABL1	*wirta-ŋka-ŋuru*
ABL2	*wirta-parnti.*

Similarly, we have

1sg LOC	*ŋatha-la*
1Sg ABL1	*ŋatha-la-ŋuru*
1Sg ABL2	*ŋatha-parnti.*

On the other hand, in THALANYJI, pronouns form the ablative case form built upon the dative

1du Incl DAT	*ŋali-ma*
1du Incl ABL	*ŋali-ma-parnti.*

The grammatical status of case suffixes appearing in the inner layer of adnominal constructions is controversial. One can regard them as case inflections or as derivational suffixes. An example where the head nominal is left out comes from KALKATUNGU (Blake, 1979).

> kupaŋuru-u-ya-thu   ŋai   ityayi
> old=man-DAT-LIG-ERG   1Sg=NOM   bite=PAST
> 'the old man's [dog] bit me'

This example also illustrates the use of a ligative suffix (labelled LIG). A number of Australian languages that allow multiple case marking require the insertion of an additional morpheme between genitive and further inflection. Strange enough the ligative may depend on the following case. In DJABUGAY (Patz, 1991) we find -mu- for ergative and dative, -muŋgu- for purposive/allative and -munda- for aversive; no linking morpheme is used before instrumental/locative. The ligative suffix -mu- obviously is cognate with the ligative suffix -mu found in other languages (e.g. GUUGU YIMIDHIRR). The ligative muŋgu can be analysed as mu+ERG and the ligative munda as mu+LOC.

Pronominal forms very often are based on oblique stems which may be historically related to genitives but synchronically the genitive is different. In WARGAMAY (Dixon, 1981) all oblique stems have final -n as can be seen by examples.

1sg GEN	ŋaygu	1du GEN	ŋaliŋu
1sg DAT	ŋaygun-gu	1du DAT	ŋalin-gu
1sg LOC	ŋaygun-da	1du LOC	ŋalin-da
1sg ABL	ŋaygun-iny	1du ABL	ŋalin-iny .

Evans (1995) in his study of KAYARDILD identifies five types of functional domains in which cases operate. The *adnominal* function relates one NP to another. The *relational* function either relates core arguments to the verb or peripheral arguments to the clause. *Modal* case indicates mood, tense, and aspect. *Associating* case links NPs with nominalized verbs. *Complementizing* case applies to whole clauses. With some exceptions all five functions show complete concord over their domain. We give one example from KAYARDILD (Evans, 1995 p. 115).

> maku-ntha   yalawu-jarra-ntha   yakuri-naa-ntha
> woman-COBL   catch-PAST-COBL   fish-MABL-COBL
> daŋka-karra-ŋuni-naa-ntha   mijil-ŋuni-naa-nth
> man-GEN-INSTR-MABL-COBL   net-INSTR-MABL-COBL

'The woman must have caught fish with the man's net [since she ...]'

A good survey on the problems of case and case marking with ample material drawn from Australian languages is given in Blake (1994).

2. TENDENCIES FOR COMPOUND CASES

The data of my investigation suggest the following tendencies.
(a) *Compound cases typically are found within local cases.*
(b) *The most frequent founding forms are dative, genitive, and locative.*

(c) *Personal names and kin terms are more likely to develop compound cases.* This tendency may be related to a hierarchy of lexical content, e.g. it is well known that accusative marking is more likely with specific and animate objects (see Blake, 1994).

(d) *The oblique stem for pronouns is either derived from the genitive or dative form or at least related to it in a regular pattern.*

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