

# Perfective tenses and alignment in Gawarbatí (Indo-Aryan)

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In many Indo-Aryan languages ergative alignment is limited to the forms originated from the Old Indo-Aryan *-ta* passive participle (Verbeke 2013: 75-88), and due to this fact, it is sometimes claimed that split ergativity in Indo-Aryan is not semantically motivated, i.e. it is conditioned by a morphological form of the predicate rather than by TAM (Creissels 2008; Witzlak-Mararevich 2010: 144-147). One of the arguments supporting this idea is the following: “for the languages with known etymological motivation of alignment splits (Indo-Aryan, Iranian and Carib languages) no cases have been reported of the spread of such splits bound to a certain morphological form to semantically similar contexts with verb forms with a different morphological composition” (Witzlak-Mararevich 2010: 147). The aim of this paper is to report an example of such a spread, thus providing evidence for the existence of the “true” TAM-based split ergativity. My data come from Gawarbatí, an Indo-Aryan language spoken in the Pakistan-Afghanistan border area.

The Gawarbatí TAM system includes three perfective tenses, Past, Perfect and Pluperfect (1)-(3), all of which trigger ergative alignment in case marking.

- (1) *t<sup>h</sup>o-um* (put-PST.1SG)
- (2) *t<sup>h</sup>o-itum* (put-PRF.1SG)
- (3) *t<sup>h</sup>o-ida:um* (put-PLUPRF.1SG)

While in related languages, e.g., in Palula (Liljegren 2016: 234), the perfective tenses clearly involve participle-based morphology, the perfective tenses in Gawarbatí look much less archaic. The Past forms synchronically do not show any participle-associated morphology, although, according to Morgenstierne (1950: 22), the Past 1SG suffixes *-um* and *-a(w)um* are derived from *-ita-* and *-āpita-* which resemble the *-ta* participle suffix. The origin of the Perfect suffixes is not completely clear: although the *-t-* element might look similar to the *-ta* participle suffix, it seems more likely that the Perfect markers are derived from the converb suffix *-i* and the inflected copula, e.g., *-itum* < *-i* (cv) + *t<sup>h</sup>-um* (COP-PST.1SG), cf. the same etymology suggested for the Perfect suffixes in related Dameli (Morgenstierne 1942: 143). Finally, the Pluperfect markers are almost certainly derived from the converb suffix *-i* and the verb *dar-* ‘stay’ (Bashir 2008: 834). To sum up, two of three perfective tenses in Gawarbatí most probably developed relatively recently and are unlikely to be connected to the older participle forms. Thus, even if originally a TAM-based split ergativity emerged in Gawarbatí as a side effect of the reorganization of the TAM system, it apparently became a stable feature of the language system, and the tenses developed later followed this pattern.

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