Variable case marking and agreement patterns in Indo-Aryan experiencer constructions

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1. Introduction

"Non-canonical marking of subjects" denotes the phenomenon in which the argument in the subject position of a sentence is not assigned a "structurally" expected morphological case, i.e., nominative in accusative systems (intransitive and transitive constructions) or either nominative ("absolutive") or ergative in ergative systems (in intransitive and transitive constructions, respectively). Instead, a case that normally does not mark subjects is used, in particular the accusative, dative, genitive, or instrumental (cf. Verma and Mohanan 1990, Bossong 1998, Aikhenvald *et al.* 2001, Bhaskararao and Subbarao 2004). As a rule, verbs taking non-canonically marked arguments belong to specific lexical classes, among which verbs with so-called "experiencer" arguments probably constitute the most important subclass. Experiencer constructions with non-canonical argument marking are found in many Indo-European (IE) languages (cf. Eythórsson and Barđdal 2005). In typological linguistics, they have been classified as a separate class on the basis of the semantic roles that are involved, the fact that no nominative agent-subject is present and their unusual verb valency pattern. Experiencer constructions are considered to lie between transitive and intransitive constructions, but they regularly possess two arguments. Moreover, there is often an unmarked ("nominative") argument present in the construction, with which the verb agrees. However, the question whether this argument is a "subject" depends on various syntactic properties, which vary across languages, and on the definition one uses for the term "subject" (cf. Bossong 1998: 259-285, Haspelmath 2001: 67-79). In the literature, examples are frequently drawn from the Germanic languages. For instance, in present-day German, one finds constructions with an experiencer argument either in the accusative (*mich friert*) or in the dative (*mir ist kalt*, both meaning 'I am cold'). *Mér er kalt* 'I am cold' is also one of the many examples from Icelandic. In Old English, constructions with non-canonical subject marking such

as *me liketh* 'I like it' were not uncommon. Note that the above examples constitute complete syntactic structures ("sentences") and are not dependent of a further argument slot. However, experiencer constructions with an additional argument are frequent, for instance, *es gefällt mir* 'I like it' and *es freut mich* 'I'm very pleased' in German. Similar experiencer constructions can also be found in Romance languages, e.g., *mi dispiace* 'I'm sorry' in Italian, *me gusta la cerveza* 'I like beer' in Spanish, and *ça me plaît* 'I like it' in French. With regard to the latter constructions, it is interesting to observe that they are not being replaced by the canonical transitive pattern, as has been the case, e.g., in the history of English (cf. Bossong 1998).

According to Barðdal (2011), verbs occurring in non-canonical constructions can either be classified as experience-based predicates (verbs of emotion, attitudes, cognition, perception, bodily states, and changes in bodily states) or so-called "happenstance" predicates (verbs of decline, failing/mistaking, success/performance, ontological states, social interaction, gain, personal properties, and verbs denoting aspects of landscape and nature). Broadly speaking, non-canonical constructions occur with verbs of physical sensation, psychological states, desire, obligation, and receiving; verbs expressing kinship relations may be included in this category as well (Barðdal 2011, Cole *et al.* 1980). Instead of having the common semantic role of agent (complemented by a patient role if the sentence is transitive), the verbs in non-canonical constructions instantiate the semantic role of experiencer, often in combination with a stimulus role (cf. Dixon 2010).

Experiencer constructions in IE have been discussed extensively over the last 30 years, in particular with respect to the controversial subject status of the experiencer argument (cf. Cole *et al.* 1980, Andrews 1976, Eythórsson 2000, Faarlund 2001, Barðdal and Eythórsson 2003, Bayer 2004, Eythórsson and Barðdal 2005, Malchukov and Spencer 2009, Barðdal 2011, among others). The main focus of discussion has been whether the argument in the experiencer role possesses enough "subject properties" to be considered a real subject. The common morphological properties of a subject, viz., being the argument in an unmarked case and controlling verb agreement, obviously do not apply to non-canonical subjects. However, it has been noted (cf. Keenan 1976, Barðdal and Eythórsson 2003) that non-canonical arguments may possess certain syntactic "behavior-and-control" properties that do qualify them as subjects, in particular with respect to conjunction reduction, coordination, and reflexivization. This observation suggests that non-canonically marked arguments may be said to function as subjects on a syntactic level even as they are morphologically and

semantically different from subjects marked in a canonical morphological case. On the other hand, certain scholars argue that non-canonically marked arguments in experiencer constructions are in fact objects, or at least derived from object arguments (cf. Cole *et al.* 1980, Faarlund 2001, Barđdal and Eythórsson 2009).

This article addresses the non-canonical case marking of experiencer arguments in a number of Eastern and Western Indo-Aryan (IA) languages from a synchronic point of view. Our study also pays attention to the sometimes highly interesting concomitant agreement patterns of those syntactic constructions in which experiencer arguments appear. The languages and constructions that we focus on are selected in such a way as to be representative of the IA language group as a whole, thus providing relevant points of comparison with similar constructions in the more familiar IE languages. Our findings are likely to have relevance for a number of important historical questions about the development of case and agreement patterns in IA languages, but for reasons of limited space this article is exclusively devoted to a synchronic analysis, and we will not discuss any historical data. In Section 2, we introduce the typical experiencer construction in IA and briefly review the possible "subject properties" of the non-canonical argument. We then proceed in Sections 3 through 5 to a discussion of various constructions that deviate markedly from the typical experiencer construction in IA. Our aim is to show that non-canonical constructions exhibit a great deal of variation with respect to morphological case and agreement patterns across the IA languages. The interplay among morphological cases, semantic roles, and certain additional semantic motivations is actually much more complex than what can be observed in the better-known IE languages. Although our findings might not be sufficient to resolve the thorny issue of whether experiencer arguments must be considered subjects, we hope to demonstrate that it is more rewarding to analyse new or lesser-known data with an unbiased, empirical view rather than trying to make the data fit pre-established theoretical concepts of subjecthood, case and agreement. In so doing, we are committed to an empirical approach that Dominique Willems has been championing for decades in her research.

2. Experiencer constructions in Indo-Aryan

In IA, the so-called objective case is the "default" case of the non-canonically marked experiencer argument. The objective is normally used to mark indirect

objects and definite/animate direct objects[1], but in most IA languages, it also occurs in the type of constructions that interest us here. The following examples of experiencer constructions are from Hindi; the first two are very commonly heard expressions, and the third one is taken from McGregor (1995)[2]:

(1) yah kitāb   mujh-e   pasand   ā+rah-ī+h-ai
    this book[F] I.OBL-OBJ   approval [F][3]   come+PROG-F.SG+AUX-PRS.3SG
    'I like this book.' (Literally ≈ 'This book pleases me.')[4]

(2) mujh-e   būkh   lag-ī
    I.OBL-OBJ   hunger[F]   be attached-PST.F.SG[5]
    'I am hungry.' (Lit. ≈ 'Hunger is attached to me.')

(3) us-e   tīn   aurat-eṃ   acānak   dikhāī   d-ī
    he.OBL-OBJ three   woman[F]-NOM.PL   suddenly appearance give-PST.F
    'He suddenly saw three women.' (Lit. ≈ 'Three women suddenly
    appeared to him.')
    McGregor (1995:132)

The pattern illustrated in these examples is quite straightforward. The experiencer role—*mujhe* in (1) and (2) and *use* in (3)—is in the objective, whereas the stimulus

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[1] Despite the fact that the objective usually marks direct objects in IA and, hence, may be said to be the equivalent of the "accusative," a number of scholars prefer to call it the "dative" case. Because this usage is bound to cause confusion, we prefer to use the term "objective" case in this article (following Kelkar 1997).

[2] Here, as in the following, the sources of the examples are always mentioned in the running text. Whenever no source is mentioned, the examples were elicited from native speakers. In accordance with common practice, we use A, O and S as tags for the grammatical relations associated with the transitive subject, transitive object and intransitive subject, respectively. The following abbreviations are used in this article: ACC: accusative, AUX: auxiliary, DAT: dative, EMPH: emphasis, ERG: ergative, F: feminine, FUT: future, GEN: genitive, H: honorific, IMP: imperative, INF: infinitive, INS: instrumental, LOC: locative, M: masculine, N: neuter, NOM: nominative, OBJ: objective, OBL: oblique, PL: plural, PRF: perfect, PROG: progressive, PRS: present, PST: past, SBJV: subjunctive, SG: singular.

[3] Note that the noun *pasand* (f.) 'approval' occurs only as part of the construction *pasand ānā* 'to like', and is never used as an independent substantive in modern Hindi, being a bare noun that never takes a case marker. The compound verb construction is considered the standard way to express 'liking'.

[4] As a rule, to make the examples transparent to the reader, we add not only approximate English translations but also extra glosses (≈), which are as close to the original sentences as possible. With respect to the interpretation of these glosses, it is important to keep in mind that English, our metalanguage, is the language in which the "principe d'abstraction," which treats experiencer verbs like transitive agentive verbs, has had the strongest influence, contrary to the opposite "principe de spécification" prevailing in IA languages (Bossong 1998:291).

[5] Note that in Hindi, verbs in the PAST tense only agree in gender and number, not in person. Moreover, with feminine forms, there is no difference between the singular and plural form of the verb.

roles—*kitāb*, *būkh,* and *auratem*—are in the nominative and control the agreement. Semantically, all three constructions are "experience-based," including the use of verbs of emotion ('to like', 'to be hungry') and a compound verb of perception ('to see/to be visible'). Note that in sentence (3), the action designated by *dikhāī dī* is said to occur unexpectedly (*acānak*), with the experiencer argument being profiled as a witness rather than an agentively involved person. If no unexpected circumstances are involved and the action of seeing is actively performed, then a regular construction with the perception verb *dekhnā* ('to see/to look at') and a subject in the ergative would be used, as in (4):

(4) us=ne   tīn   aurat-em   dekh-ī
     he=ERG   three   woman[F]-NOM.PL   see-PST.F
     'He saw/looked at three women.'

Note that in Hindi, the subject (e.g., *us=ne* in 4) is obligatorily in the ergative whenever the verb comprises a perfect participle expressing past tense (*dekhī*).

Parallel to the discussion of the "subjecthood" of oblique experiencer arguments in Icelandic and other Germanic languages (cf. Bayer 2004, Eythórsson and Barđdal 2005), it has been debated whether experiencer arguments control certain syntactic subject properties in IA languages and can therefore be considered "subjects" (cf. Klaiman 1981, Mohanan 1994:96, Verma and Mohanan 1990, Montaut 2001, 2004b). As noted above, non-canonically marked arguments in experiencer constructions do not display the formal coding properties most commonly associated with "subjecthood," i.e., nominative marking and subject-verb agreement (cf. Keenan 1976). However, with regard to certain properties, non-canonical arguments seem to display a number of similarities with true-to-type subjects. Bickel and Yadava (2000:364ff) compare the behavior of arguments, including the experiencer type, in a series of syntactic constructions such as "converbial clause chaining, coordinate conjunction reduction, and reflexivization" in the IA languages Hindi, Maithili, and Nepali. Converbial clause chaining, coordinate conjunction reduction, and reflexivization are traditionally used as "syntactic diagnostics" to establish whether there is a grammatical subject in a specific construction. The "subjecthood" issue is even more complicated in IA languages compared to other IE languages because in the IA languages, subjects may be marked in the ergative case. The controversial question of whether the ergative case is as much a subject case as a nominative one has been discussed vigorously.

The following two examples of elliptical constructions in Hindi are taken from Montaut (2004:259):

(5) us=ne   ciṭṭhī   paṛh-ī   aur ro-ne+lag-ī
     she.OBL=ERG letter[F]NOM.SG read-PST.F and cry-INF+be attached-PST.F
     'She read the letter and [she] started to cry.'
     Montaut (2004:259)

(6) us=ne   ciṭṭhī   paṛh-ī   aur us   din=kī
     she.OBL=ERG letter[F]NOM.SG read-PST.F and that.OBL day=GEN
     yād   ā-ī
     memory[F]NOM.SG   come-PST.F.
     'She read the letter and [she] remembered that day.'
     Montaut (2004:259)

The first example (5) prompts the question of whether the ergative-marked argument is treated in the same way as the nominative argument, i.e., whether there is a subject category in Hindi that may be marked in either the ergative or the nominative. Note that the first verb *paṛhī* is a transitive verb which agrees with its direct object *ciṭṭhī* following the ergative system, whereas in the second clause, the verb *lagī* is intransitive and must agree with an unexpressed feminine subject. The second example (6) illustrates the behavior of a non-canonical argument compared to that of a canonical, nominative subject. One argument of the main verb of the second clause in the coordinated sentence is not overtly expressed, the context providing the necessary information to infer the correct coreference.

From (5) and (6), it can be observed that ellipsis is not case-sensitive in Hindi; apparently, the case marking of the omitted argument does not matter. In ex. (5), the verb *paṛhī* is transitive and takes the ergative-marked A *us=ne* 'he', but the coordinated verb *lagī* is intransitive, which implies that its overt argument would have to be in the nominative case. However, although the S of the verb *lagī* is not overtly expressed, it is clear from the overall semantics of the sentence that the intended S in the second clause coincides with the overtly expressed A *us=ne* in the first clause. Ex. (6) is almost the same construction as ex. (5), only here, the experiencer predicate *yād āī* normally takes a non-canonical argument indicated by the objective marker (clitic) *ko*, which is not overtly expressed in the sentence. Again, one can readily assume that the non-overt experiencer argument in the second clause cross-references to the ergative subject of the first clause.

According to Bickel and Yadava (2000), tests with conjunction reduction and

control verbs often fail to identify the subject in IA because. In their opinion, the patterns of coreference and reflexivization are determined by semantic constraints rather than syntactic constraints on case marking or grammatical role. Bickel and Yadava (2000:366-367) offer the following examples (7)-(9) to illustrate the "free" coreference and reflexivization patterns in Hindi:

(7) rām   ā-yā   aur sab-oṃ=ne   piṭ-ne+lag-ā
ram[M]NOM.SG come-PST.M.SG and all-OBL=ERG beat-INF+be attached-
PST.M.SG
'Ram came and everyone started to beat [him].'

(8) maiṃ=ne glās   pheṃk-ā   aur ṭuṭ+ga-yā
I=ERG   glass[M]NOM.SG throw-PST.M.SG and break+go-PST.M.SG
'I threw the glass and [it] broke.'

(9) rām=ne   patnī=ko   apnī   sarī   d-ī
Ram=ERG wife[F]=OBJ   one's own sari[F]NOM.SG give-PST.F.SG
'Ram gave his wife her own sari.'

As part of the present study, we presented the above examples to native speakers of Hindi.[6] All three sentences were considered to be unacceptable by our informants, in particular (7) and (9). Moreover, they judged ex. (7) to be not only unacceptable but also grammatically wrong because the verb *lagnā* 'to be attached' is intransitive and cannot possibly take an ergative-marked subject. Consequently, the subject *saboṃ ne* should be replaced by the nominative form *sab* for the sentence to be grammatical.

According to Montaut (2004:259), constructions comparable to (8) can occur exceptionally if, and only if, O is high in topicality. Thus, in a sentence such as (8), *glās* is the topic, fulfilling a discourse function normally associated with the subject. However, *glās* in (8) is not inherently a topic; topicality always arises from a proper discourse context. Interestingly, one of our informants suggested inserting the third person pronoun *vah* in the second part of the sentence, which results in *maiṃ ne glās pheṃkā aur vah ṭuṭ gayā*. His "correction" indicates that the non-overt subject in the second clause is not immediately understood as coinciding with the object *glās* from the first clause; on the contrary, the second clause is deemed to need an overt subject. Finally, whereas (7) and (8) are elliptical constructions, ex. (9)

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[6] Our five informants are native speakers of standard Hindi. It is possible that Bickel and Yadav's examples are derived from a specific register or dialect. The authors, however, do not specify the language as anything other than standard Hindi.

illustrates the use of the reflexive in Hindi. According to Bickel and Yadava (2000:368), the reflexive *apnī* refers to the O *patni=ko*, but *apnī* could also refer to the A *rām=ne*. Because of the context (specifically that a sari normally belongs to a woman), the first interpretation is said to be favored and wins out. Recall, however, that this construction was also deemed unacceptable by our informants.

Comparing examples (5)-(6) with the more controversial examples (7)-(9), it is evident that S and A resemble each other both semantically and syntactically to a much larger extent than do S and O (cf. the dubious acceptability of (8)). It could therefore be argued that a syntactic "subject" entity, which includes arguments that are either marked ergatively or nominatively, can be distinguished (at least theoretically) in the IA languages. This claim is corroborated by evidence from the IA language Nepali. In Nepali, the verb always agrees with the subject argument, irrespective of its case. Consider the following example; the verb *hāle* is third person singular and honorific, agreeing with the ergative marked subject *rājā* 'the king':

(10) rājā=le   mukh   bharī   pānī   hāl-e
     king=ERG mouth full   water   put-PST.3SG.H
     'The king filled his mouth with water.'
     Thapa (2001)

However, the resemblance between S, A, and an experiencer argument is arguably less clear, as is the subjecthood of experiencer arguments. On the morphological and semantic levels, the experiencer argument is very different from common subject arguments, even if examples such as (6) prove that the experiencer argument may be treated like a nominative subject, albeit in coordinate conjunction reduction. It should be borne in mind that the experiencer construction, particularly because of the idiosyncratic behavior of its arguments, is exceptional. That is, in contrast to "normal" transitive constructions, the marking and behavior of an experiencer construction's arguments are primarily determined by the semantic roles they instantiate in the sentence. In our view, the question of whether an experiencer is a subject may ultimately prove irrelevant if one accepts that the morphosyntactic and semantic properties of the semantic roles of experiencer and stimulus are, quite simply, different from those of A and O (cf. Hook 1990:320, Montaut 2004b:43, Næss 2007:190 for similar observations). If this reasoning is valid, then we cannot expect the properties of an agent-subject to be attributable to an experiencer argument. Moreover, the problem of whether a

non-canonically marked experiencer argument is a "subject" might prove less of a problem than sometimes claimed and be of theoretical importance only.

There are significant semantic differences between, on the one hand, agent and agent/patient constructions and, on the other hand, experiencer and experiencer/stimulus constructions. Furthermore, there is also remarkable variation among non-canonical arguments themselves, both with respect to the semantic roles they represent and to the constructional patterns in which they appear. Although experiencer verbs are the most frequently occurring in non-canonical constructions, the term "experiencer" does not equally apply to all non-canonical subject-like arguments. It should not come as a surprise, then, to find several non-canonical constructions varying considerably in their case marking and agreement patterns. In the next sections, we discuss a number of different non-canonical constructions in both Eastern and Western IA languages, thereby showing that this conjecture is indeed confirmed by the data.

3. Non-canonical subject marking in Eastern Indo-Aryan

As already noted above, the objective case, which is the one generally associated with the indirect object, is the case that is most commonly used to indicate non-canonical subjects in Hindi; the objective is thus comparable to the dative in the Germanic languages. From the standpoint of a "semantic map," this Hindi case choice appears to be logical, as the recipient argument is semantically close to the experiencer argument (see, e.g., Haspelmath 2003). Both arguments are typically animate, living beings. In many accounts of the development of non-canonical constructions in Germanic languages, the fact that the dative is used for the non-canonical subject marking is given special consideration. Barđdal and Eythórsson (2009), for instance, refer to a "free-dative" hypothesis for Modern German. According to this hypothesis, a noun or pronoun in the dative can be freely added to any expression. Barđdal and Eythórsson (2009:8) suggest that *mir* is added to *das ist eine grosse Freude*, yielding the following non-canonical construction: *das ist mir eine grosse Freude* 'this is a great pleasure for me'. In generative linguistics, the dative is considered the "thematic case" for experiencer arguments, i.e., "a regular lexical case" (Barđdal 2011) associated with a particular semantic role. By contrast, other cases marking experiencer arguments, in particular the accusative, are considered "idiosyncratic" or "older" and associated with particular verb meanings in languages such as Icelandic (Jónsson and Eythórsson 2005:223).

In this connection, Barđdal (2011) also discusses the phenomenon of "dative substitution" in Icelandic, i.e., the well-known replacement of "idiosyncratic"

accusative non-canonical subjects with "thematic" dative non-canonical subjects (see also Eythórsson 2000 for a comprehensive overview of the data). The original construction with the accusative (11) is gradually being replaced by the construction with the dative (12) (*langa* 'long for, want' is an impersonal verb in Icelandic):

(11) Mig   langar   í   ís
     I.ACC   long.3SG   in icecream
     'I want ice cream.'

(12) Mér   langar   í   ís
     I.DAT   long.3SG   in icecream
     'I want ice cream.'
     (Barđdal 2011:62-63)

Barđdal argues that although the dative and accusative can be used interchangeably with verbs such as *langa* 'want', the class of verbs occurring with non-canonical subjects can nevertheless be subdivided along semantic lines into a subclass of verbs preferring a dative subject and a subclass of verbs preferring an accusative subject. The accusative is preferred with those experience-based verbs that express "emotion," "cognition," and "bodily states" (e.g., 'to bleed' or 'to tickle'). Conversely, the dative is preferred (albeit more in Old Norse-Icelandic than in Modern Icelandic) with experience-based verbs that are usually called "happenstance" verbs expressing "decline, failing/mistaking, success/ perfor-mance, ontological states, social interaction, gain and personal properties" (Barđdal 2011:67). According to Barđdal, only a few verbs denoting aspects of "landscape" can take an accusative. Finally, in Icelandic, unlike in German, an experiencer argument can also be marked in the genitive, e.g.,:

(13) henn-ar   var   saknađ
     her-GEN   was   missed
     'She was missed.'
     Bayer (2004:6)

In Eastern IA, a similar distinction can be made in marking non-canonical subjects either in the objective or the genitive. As the accusative and the dative case are no longer formally distinct in modern IA because of syncretism, it is impossible to trace the different markings between these two cases. However, at first sight, it appears that both the objective and the genitive are used randomly in the IA languages. In particular, it is unclear which case represents the "thematic

marking," i.e., the case marking structurally associated with a non-canonical argument, and which case represents the "idiosyncratic" marking, i.e., the case marking assigned on the basis of the lexical meaning of the verb.

In all IA languages, experiencer verbs present an alignment pattern different from the other verbs. Many of the verbs used in non-canonical constructions are so-called compound verbs, i.e., idiomatic combinations of a verb and a noun or adverb. Frequently occurring examples from Hindi are *mālum honā* 'to know', *pasand ānā* 'to like', and *yād ānā* 'to remember'. Among the most common non-compound verbs are *lagnā* 'be attached' (in expressions such as *būkh lagnā* 'to be hungry'), and *milnā* 'to accrue'. Constructions with *milnā* can refer to a situation in which someone either 'receives' something (cf. ex. 14) or 'meets' someone else (cf. ex. 15).[7] In both examples, there is a nominative stimulus argument, but as we explained in the introduction, this does not in itself prove that these sentences exemplify a canonical construction with a nominative subject.

(14) mujh-e   āp=kā   patr   mil-ā
I.OBL-OBJ you=GEN.M.SG letter[M]NOM.SG accrue-PST.M.SG
'I got your letter.' (Lit. ≈ 'Your letter reached me.')
McGregor (1995:98)

(15) kal   śahr=meṃ vah   mujh-e   samyog=se
yesterday city=LOC   he.NOM.SG I.OBL-OBJ chance=INS
mil-ā+th-ā
accrue-PST.M.SG+PST-M.SG
'Yesterday I ran across him in the city.' (Lit. ≈ 'Yesterday, he incidentally ran into me in the city.')
McGregor (1995:98)

Whereas in Hindi, the non-canonical subject is standardly marked in the objective, in the Eastern IA languages, there is more case variation. For instance, in Asamiya, non-canonical subjects can be marked in the objective or the genitive, although the genitive is more common. The objective marker is the suffix *-k*. The following two examples are constructed with the verb *lāg*, literally meaning 'to be attached to' but referring to a need in (16) and a desire in (17). In such constructions, the

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[7] Cross-linguistically, it is not unusual to find verbs with a meaning varying between 'find' and 'meet' in constructions with a non-canonical subject. For instance, in the Caucasian language Tsez, the subject of the corresponding verb *esu* is marked in the lative case (Cysouw and Forker 2009:597).

verb always occurs in the third person and does not appear to agree with any of the arguments.[8] The experiencer takes the suffix -*k*.

(16) teoṃ-r=kārane   mo-k   etā   ausadh   lāg-e
     he-GEN=for   I-OBJ now   medicine.NOM be attached-PRS.3
     'I need a medicine for him.' (Lit. ≈ 'Medicine is attached to me for him.')
     Baruah (1980)

(17) sihaṃta-k   māchahe   lāg-e
     they-OBJ   fish   be attached-PRS.3
     'They want fish.' (Lit. ≈ 'Fish is attached to them.')
     Kakoti (2011)

The genitive occurs with verbs of emotion, attitude, cognition, and bodily states; again, the verbs agree with the nominative argument, e.g.:

(18) cowāc-on,   tomā-r   pacand   ha-ich-e   ne?
     look-IMP   you-GEN   approval.NOM   be-PRF[9]-3 EMPH
     'Look, do you like it?' (Lit. ≈ 'Look, is [it] of your liking?')
     Baruah (1980)

(19) rātul riṇṭi-r   bar   ānando   lāg-ich-e
     Ratul Rinti-GEN   very   joy.NOM   be attached-PRF-3
     'Ratul and Rinti are feeling very happy.' (Lit. ≈ 'Joy strongly takes hold of Ratul and Rinti.')
     Baruah (1980)

(20) mo-r   mana-t   āch-e...
     I-GEN   mind-LOC   be-PRS.3
     'Then I remember...' (Lit. ≈ 'In my mind there is...')
     Kakoti (2011)

(21) to-r   ṭopani   ahā   nāi?
     you-GEN   sleep.NOM   coming   not be.PRS
     'Are you not able to sleep?' (Lit. ≈ 'Sleep is not becoming yours?')
     Kakoti (2011)

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[8] This can however not be said with complete certainty, since the verb only shows person but no gender and number agreement and since stimulus roles are typically third person. Note that, whenever the stimulus is not third person, e.g. 'I like you', an active agent-patient construction is used. A similar pattern is found in the neighbouring language Bangla (cf. ex. 25).

[9] A perfect verb form is also used to express the progressive aspect in Asamiya (Goswami 1982:112).

(22) ketiyābā   tā-r   dhāranā   hay...
     sometimes   he-GEN   assumption   be.PRS
     'Sometimes he feels...' (Lit. ≈ 'Sometimes, his is the assumption...')
     Kakoti (2011)

(23) asama-khan   tāi-r   kene   lāg-ich-il?
     Assam-NOM   she-GEN   how   be attached-PRF-PST.3
     'How did she like Assam?' (Lit.: 'How was Assam attached to her?')
     Baruah (1980)

(24) mainā=lai   tā-r   maram   lāgi+ga'l.
     Moina=DAT   he-GEN   love.NOM   be attached+become.PST.3
     'He felt love for Moina.' (Lit. ≈ 'Love towards Moina took hold of him.')
     Kakoti (2011)

As the examples show, the verb *lāg* is used either with the objective or the genitive. The objective seems to be preferred when reference is made to a need or desire (16-17), whereas the genitive is favored when uncontrollable emotions such as joy (19) or love (24) are expressed. However, the genitive and objective constructions further differ in that the genitive is used with compound verbs, e.g., *ānando lāg*, an idiomatic combination meaning 'to feel happy.' Conversely, the objective is used when there is an independent object rather than a nominal or adverbial part of a compound verb. Whether this constructional distinction always co-occurs with a different case marking of the non-canonical subject is currently the subject of further investigation.

The genitive is also the common case marking the experiencer in Bangla:

(25) āmā-r   ām   bhālo lag-e
     I-GEN   mangoe good   be attached-PRS.3
     'I like mangoes.' (Lit. ≈ 'Mangoes are well attached of me.')
     Radice (2007:145)

In Bangla, in contrast to Asamiya, the objective is incidentally hardly ever used in non-canonical constructions. Desires are generally expressed by means of a canonical construction. Compare the following Bangla example (26) with ex. (27) from Hindi (*cāhiye* is an invariable verb form that does not display any agreement with an argument):

(26) āmi   āiskrīm   cāi
     I.NOM   ice cream.NOM   want.PRS.1
     'I want ice cream.'

(27) mujh-e   mithāī   cāhiye
     I.OBL-OBJ sweet.NOM want.3SG
     'I want candy.' (Lit. ≈ 'As far as candy is concerned, it is wanted for me.')

In Bhojpuri, a language spoken between the Central IA area (whose main representative is Hindi), and the Eastern IA area, the genitive is not used at all to indicate a non-canonical subject, although the language possesses a genitive case. According to Verma (1990:86), experiencer arguments in Bhojpuri are rendered in an oblique case that is different from the genitive and normally occurs in combination with a postposition. Example (28) below is a typical experiencer construction with the oblique case. Ex. (29) is a possessive construction that also makes use of the same oblique case. Finally, in ex. (30), the genitive is used; however, the meaning of the sentence is not identical to that of (29). According to Verma (1990), ex. (30) does not primarily express possession; rather, the son is the topic of the discourse, and it is therefore likely that the sentence will be continued by a relative clause referring to *laikā* (cf. Verma 1990:87-89):

(28) ham-rā   sardī   b-ā
     I-OBL   cold   to be-PRS.3
     'I feel cold.' (Lit. ≈ 'To me [it] is cold.')

(29) ham-rā   ego   laikā   b-ā
     I-OBL   one   boy   to be-PRS.3
     'I have a son.' (Lit. ≈ 'To me [there] is one boy.')

(30) ham-ār   ego   laikā b-ā   (je...)
     I-GEN   one   boy   to be-PRS.3 REL
     'There is a son of mine (who...).'

These few examples suffice to show that there is a continuum in the IA languages ranging from a clear preference for marking the non-canonical argument by means of the objective case to a clear preference for marking the same argument by means of the genitive. In between these two ends of the continuum, there are languages such as Asamiya in which both the genitive and the objective are used to mark experiencer subjects. As far as agreement is concerned, it is noteworthy that in the Eastern IA languages verbs in experiencer constructions are predominantly in the third person, which is most logically explained as agreement

with the stimulus. However, because the agreement marker only indicates person, not gender and number, it is a matter of contention whether the verb form arises from agreement with the stimulus or is a kind of (impersonal) default form. In the next section, it will be shown that in other IA languages agreement in experiencer constructions is not necessarily with the stimulus.

4. Non-canonical subject marking and agreement in Western Indo-Aryan

It has long been established that experiencer arguments in Icelandic can control agreement under certain circumstances. This type of agreement has been considered an acquired subject property (Bayer 2004), giving credence to the idea that non-canonical subjects in Icelandic are fundamentally different (i.e., more "subject-like") than those in other Germanic languages (Barðdal and Eythórsson 2003). An exceptional agreement pattern with experiencer verbs can be found in IA as well, namely, in two varieties of the language Shina (a Western IA language spoken in the border region between India and Pakistan). The two language varieties are known as the Shina of Skurda and the Shina of Gultari (cf. Hook 1990, 1996). In both varieties, the experiencer verb agrees with an object marked in the objective case, as illustrated in the following examples from Shina of Skardu (Hook 1990:327) in which the verbs agree with the objective arguments *mo=re* and *salime=re*:

(31) mo=re   a   cis   paś-emus
      I.OBL=OBJ that   mountain.NOM   see-PRS.M.1SG
      'I see that mountain.'

(32) salim-e=re   agrezi kitāb-e   si-e   dasṭ-oṃ
      Salim-OBL=OBJ   English book[F]-PL.NOM   good-F.PL   seem-PRS.M.3SG
      'Salim likes English books.'

In Shina of Gultari, on the other hand, the objective marking of the experiencer alternates with an ergative marking involving "little or no change in meaning," according to Hook (1996). The stimulus argument, which in Hindi is always in the nominative case, can be marked either in the nominative or in the objective in Shina (Hook 1996). Note that in both Shina varieties, all verbs invariably agree with the subject, irrespective of whether it is in the nominative or the ergative. The following example from Shina of Gultari is an illustration of the verb agreeing in number and gender with the experiencer argument, with the stimulus argument in the objective (Hook 1990:328):

(33) kulsum-i=re   ikbāl-e   paś-i
      Kulthum.OBL=OBJ   Iqbal-OBJ   see-PST.F.3SG
      'Kulthum saw Iqbal.'

According to Hook (1990b:82), the agreement pattern in sentences such as (33) can be considered the historical result of the experiencer argument acquiring subject features. The stimulus argument is in the nominative in most non-canonical constructions, but in Shina of Gultari, it can be in the objective as well (cf. *ikbāle* in (33)). Following Hook, the case marking of the stimulus could be changing in the direction of a canonical construction, perhaps under the influence of the canonical agreement pattern involving verbs and experiencer subjects.

Although the alignment pattern with experiencer agreement and objective marking of the stimulus does not seem to occur in any other IA language except for Shina, there are certain patterns in the neighboring languages that give rise to the question as to whether the agreement with the experiencer argument is purely a matter of the experiencer argument "acquiring" a subject property or whether more traceable historical developments are involved. For instance, it could be that the use of so-called "pronominal suffixes" has contributed to the rise of experiencer agreement in Shina. Pronominal suffixes are a typical phenomenon of Western IA languages. They are added to the verb and refer to pronominal "core" arguments, which may or may not be overt. Depending on the language, pronominal suffixes are either optional or obligatory. In Kashmiri, for instance, the ergative subject, as well as any object in the objective case, can be marked on the verb with a pronominal suffix. The following two examples are non-canonical constructions in Kashmiri. Contrary to ex. (34), where all core arguments are overt, in ex. (35), the pronoun in the objective case has been dropped, leaving the (optional) pronominal suffix on the verb to indicate the person of the pronoun:

(34) temis   āv   asun
      he.OBJ   come.PST.3SG   laughing
      'He laughed.' (Lit. ≈ 'To him laughing came.')
      Koul and Wali (2006:116)

(35) asun   ā-s
      laughing   come.PST.3SG-3SG
      'He laughed.' (Lit. ≈ 'To him laughing came.')
      Koul and Wali (2006:116)

It stands to reason that there is only a small step from pronominal suffixation to person agreement between the verb and one or more core arguments, the only difference being that verb agreement is obligatory, whereas pronominal suffixes are generally optional.

Recall that the experiencer argument is also a rather "salient" one in the argument structure of a sentence. It hardly comes as a surprise, then, to find languages in which the verb agrees with an experiencer argument. However, stressing the salience of the experiencer argument is not tantamount to saying that an experiencer argument in Shina has more "subject properties" than an experiencer argument in other IA languages such as Hindi, in which the experiencer does not agree with the verb. Rather, in both languages, the experiencer argument is a core argument of the construction, but Shina and Hindi differ in the extent to which the experiencer is cross-referenced by the verb.

5. Case variation with verbs of obligation

In the range of lexical verbs associated with non-canonical constructions in IE, verbs of obligation are rarely mentioned, which is surprising given that obligational constructions with a non-canonical subject are quite common across the IA languages. In Hindi, for instance, the objective case is the regular case used to mark the subject of an obligational construction, as shown in the following example:

(36) āp=ko   hindī   bol-nī   h-ai
     you=OBJ   Hindi[F]   speak-INF.F.SG   AUX-PRS.3SG
     'You have to speak Hindi.' (Lit. ≈ 'To speak Hindi is [imperative] to you.')

In Hindi, Punjabi, Marathi, and several other IA languages such as Nepali, Garhwali, and Kumaoni, the obligational construction is not exclusively formed with a non-canonical, objective argument (Montaut 2009:311). It has been reported that in Hindi, the obligational construction also occurs with the ergative case marker *ne*, specifically in the Hindi variety spoken around Lahore and Delhi (cf. Butt and King 2004:6, Bashir 1999). Butt and King (2004:6) argue that a subject marked with the postposition *ne* "is interpreted as *wanting* to perform the action." Conversely, if the objective postposition *ko* is used (which is the unmarked form), then the subject "*must* perform the action." Butt and King (2004:6) provide the following contrasting examples to illustrate this semantic difference:

(37) nadya=ne   zu   jā-nā   h-ai
     N=ERG   zoo   go-INF   be.PRS-3SG
     'Nadya wants to go to the zoo.' (Lit. ≈ 'Nadya is [willing] to go to the zoo.')

(38) nadya=ko   zu   jā-nā   h-ai
     N=OBJ   zoo   go-INF be.PRS-3SG
     'Nadya must go to the zoo.' (Lit. ≈ 'Nadya is to go to the zoo.')

In standard Hindi (as well as Urdu), this particular volitional use of the marker *ne* is rather unusual. Because the postposition *ne*, which is the common marker of the ergative in Punjabi, can also be used in constructions of obligation in Punjabi, it is assumed that Hindi borrowed this use of the ergative postposition from Punjabi through language contact. Note that the marker *ko* does not exist in Punjabi, with the Punjabi postposition for the objective case being *nū(ṃ)*. In an obligational construction, the experiencer argument normally takes the objective case in Punjabi, as illustrated by *muṇḍe=nūṃ* in the following example:

(39) muṇḍe=nūṃ   katāb   paṛ-nī   pav-egī
     boy=OBJ   book[F]SG   read-INF.F   compel-FUT.F.3SG
     'The boy will have to read a book.' (Lit. ≈ 'To read a book will be necessary for the boy.')
     Bhatia (1993:37)

According to Masica (1990:335), when *ne* marks the experiencer of a construction of obligation in Punjabi, it expresses "weak compulsion," yet it cannot be used in combination with a first or second person pronoun. Compare the following examples:

(40) muṇḍe=ne   jāṇā   ai
     boy=ERG   go.INF   be.PRS.3SG
     'The boy has to go.' (This sentence cannot be translated as 'The boy *must/ought to* go'.)
     Masica (1990:335)

(41) maiṃ   jāṇā   ai
     I   go.INF   be.PRS.3SG
     'I have to go.'
     Masica (1990:335)

If a "strong compulsion" is meant, then, as in ex. (39), the objective postposition *nūṃ* must be used. This finding is in line with Butt and King's observation (2004: 6) that in Hindi and Punjabi, objective postpositions are used for strong obligations, whereas the ergative postposition invariably denotes a lesser degree of compulsion.

Just as in Hindi and Punjabi, an infinitive construction combined with an argument marked in the objective can also express an obligation in the Southern IA language Marathi, as observed in the following example:

(42) tyā=lā   śaḷe=lā   zāyca   āhe
      he=OBJ   school=LOC   go.INF   be.PRS.3SG
      'He has to go to school.' (Lit. ≈ 'To go to school is [necessary for] him.')
      Pandharipande (1990:163)

Interestingly, the additional functions that the postposition of the ergative *ne* (*ne* in the singular, *nī* in the plural) can assume in Marathi are more numerous than those in both Hindi and Punjabi. First, in Marathi, *ne* is not only the marker of the nominal A of a perfective construction, but also the instrumental marker of inanimate agents in constructions with intransitive verbs, as in ex. (43):

(43) varya-ne   arsa   phuṭ-l-a
      wind-INS   mirror   be broken-PST-3M.SG
      'The mirror was broken due to the wind.' (Lit. ≈ 'The mirror was broken with the wind.')
      Wali (2005:45)

Second, in Marathi, *ne* is also used—and much more frequently than in Punjabi and Hindi—in constructions of obligation, which often have the verb in the subjunctive, as in ex. (44):

(44) lili=ne   dhav-av-e
      Lili=ERG   run-SBJV-3N.SG
      'Lili should run.'
      Wali (2005:46)

Obligational constructions with the subjunctive can either be transitive or intransitive (ex. (44) is intransitive), but the subjunctive verb never agrees with the *ne*-marked argument (Pandharipande 2003:711). However, if the agent is in the nominative case, then the meaning is optative rather than obligational (cf. Wali

2004, Montaut 2009). In conclusion, the pattern with the ergative postposition and the subjunctive expresses a weaker compulsion than the infinitival construction with an experiencer argument marked in the objective case. Thus, it can again be concluded that there is a strong correlation between the case marking and the type of obligation intended.

Finally, it is worthwhile to examine the obligational construction in the Eastern IA languages, which, as noted in Section 3, are generally characterized by a more frequent use of the genitive in experiencer constructions. A case in point is Bangla, as shown in the following example:

(45) ām-ār   iṃgrejhi   bhāsā   sakhā-r   prayojhan
     I-GEN   English   language   learning-GEN   necessity
     'I must learn English.' (Lit. ≈ 'The learning of English is a necessity of mine.')

Compare this example with the following one from Hindi:

(46) mujh-e   angrezī   sikh-nī   zarūrī   h-ai
     I.OBL-OBJ   English   learn-INF.F   necessity   be-PRS.3SG
     'I must LEARN English.' (Lit. ≈ 'To learn English is a necessity for me.')

The genitive construction found in Bangla also appears in the closely related Asamiya language. However, according to Masica (1990:336), in Asamiya an obligation can also be expressed by means of a highly peculiar construction classified as an "impersonal construction" by Baruah (1980:620). The most striking feature of this construction is that although the subject is in the nominative case, the verb does not agree with that subject, e.g.,:

(47) maï   zā-bo+lāg-e
     I.NOM   go-INF+be attached-PRS.3
     'I have to go.' (Lit. ≈ 'As far as I am concerned, there is the need to go.')

6. Conclusion

In this article, we have presented and discussed a number of non-canonical constructions in IA languages that differ with respect to morphological case marking and agreement patterns. The astonishing range of morphological cases and agreement patterns that we came across provides evidence for the conclusion that there is neither a one-to-one relationship between an experiencer argument

and a morphological case nor such a relationship between an experiencer construction and a particular agreement pattern. If one restricts oneself to the study of the better-known IE languages such as the Germanic and Romance languages, one could easily assume that such a one-to-one relationship exists, particularly between the experiencer argument and the dative, or between the experiencer construction and object agreement (e.g., German, Icelandic, and Spanish). Moreover, one could assume that these correlations represent a general tendency among the IE languages. However, focusing on the IA languages not only reveals a more complex picture but also shows that speaking of a single, homogeneous category of "experiencer argument" might turn out to be spurious. More precisely, our discussion indicates that both the long-lasting debate over whether "experiencers" are subjects or objects and the received view on the syntactic behavior of non-canonically marked arguments (i.e., typically being either in the dative or the accusative and co-occurring with object agreement) miss the mark. Instead of comparing the non-canonical argument of an experiencer construction with a canonical nominative subject argument, it seems much more illuminating and appropriate to compare different types of experiencer constructions on a cross-linguistic basis. As we hope to have shown in this article, the findings of such an inquiry not only shed light on how semantics is related to constructional syntax, but eventually they may also tell us something about how syntactic preferences have evolved through the ages. We leave this issue for future research.

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