

## **A Brief Note on Balti Case**

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Linguistically, the Jammu and Kashmir State and its surrounding areas constitute a complex region in the subcontinent and its linguistic complexity is evident by the segmentation of population into following language inventories: 1. Dard group which includes within it the languages/dialects like Kashmiri, Shina, Kishtwari, Poguli, Siraji, Rambani and Kohistani (Grieson, 1919, Kachru, 1969). 2. Indo-Aryan language family which includes the languages like Punjabi, Urdu, Dogri, Lahanda, Pahari and Gojri, 3. Tibeto-Burman family which includes languages like Ladakhi, Balti and Purki, 4. Eastern Iranian which includes Pashtu, 5. Language Isolates like Burushaski.

Balti or Bhotia of Baltistan, the prevailing language all over Baltistan, belongs to the 'Tibeto-Burman' family of languages (Grierson, 1909). The Tibeto-Burman family comprises various dialects spoken from a) Tibet in the north to Burma in the south, and b) Baltistan in the west to the Chinese provinces of Szechuan and Yünnan in East (Grierson, 1909). All Tibeto-Burman languages are verb-final (SOV), so is the case of Balti which too has subject-object-verb pattern.

The areas/villages in Ladakh where Balti speakers are settled down are: Kargil, Namso, Lamsu, Kanoor, Minji, Tripson, Batambis, Apati, Wakha, Chicktan, Kharbo, Shumsha, Batalik, Nubra, Hano, etc. Some families have migrated to Srinagar and other parts of the Jammu and Kashmir State for various purposes and settled there.

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### Case in Balti

Case is a syntactic feature of noun phrases which may or may not be realized morphologically. In syntactic terms case is overt when realized morphologically and covert when not realized morphologically.

According to Grierson (1909), Balti nouns have nominative, accusative, agentive, dative, ablative, genitive and vocative cases. A.F.C Read (1934) shows eight cases which are nominative, accusative, vocative, genitive, agentive, dative, locative and ablative. Both the authors have worked in the Baltistan area which presently comes under the dominion of Pakistan. The present study is an attempt to see the cases of Balti spoken in Kargil which is cut off from the rest of the Baltistan where the majority of Baltis live.

#### Nominative

ŋa thun

i-nom see-pr

I see.

ŋa ŋus

i-nom weep-pr

I weep.

ŋas urdō:s

i-nom beat-pr

I beat.

ŋas ne:k zoŋs

i-nom fish-accu. catch-past

I caught a fish.

[ŋa] is the 1<sup>st</sup> person singular pronoun marked for nominative case. It occurs in sentences where the verb is a stative verb.

[ŋa-s] is 1<sup>st</sup> person singular pronoun marked for agentive case. It occurs in sentences where the verb is an action verb and also transitive.

Similarly [s] is added to other nouns or pronouns to mark the agentive case e.g.

[kho:s] 'he-agentive', [bila:s] 'cat-agentive', [saja:tis] 'Sajad-agentive' etc.

kho: šehza:d in  
 he-nom shazad be-pr  
 He is Shahzad.

kho: ja:n min  
 he-nom john be-pr-neg  
 He is not john.

bilas pitses zuṅs  
 cat-ag rat chase-past  
 Cat chased the rat.

kho:s kirket tses  
 he-ag cricket play-past  
 He played cricket.

### Accusative

It is similar to nominative and is unmarked used at the object position of the sentence e.g.

di yul in  
 this village-acc be-pr  
 This is a village.

diyu: biya: in  
 this hen-acc be-pr  
 This is a hen.

### Genitive

ṅa-či ajā di yul pe: duk-pat  
 i-gen-sg uncle this village in live-pr  
 My uncle lives in this village.

ṅa-če naṅ-po khinti basak čho yot  
 i-gen-pl house-nom you-gen than big be-pr

Our house is bigger than your house.  
(lit. meaning 'our house than yours big is')

ŋa-či naŋ-po tshuntse duk/yot  
i-gen-sg house small be-pr  
My house is small.

khinti naŋ-po čho duk  
you-gen house big be-pr  
Your house is big.

[khyan] is 2<sup>nd</sup> person singular pronominal marked for nominative case. When it is marked for genitive case it becomes [khinti] which means 'you-genitive'.

Genitive in Balti precede the element that they modify e.g.

ŋa-či naŋ-po  
i-gen-sg house  
My house

khinti naŋ-po  
you-gen house  
your house

[či] is used for 1<sup>st</sup> person singular while [če] is used when the pronoun is plural (1<sup>st</sup> person).

ŋa-či naŋ-po  
i-gen-sg house  
My house

ŋa-če naŋ-po  
i-gen-pl house  
Our house

## Dative

The dative case in Balti is shown by the use of [la] case marker. Below are few examples:

amas phru-la orjan ta:ŋ duk  
 mother-nom child-dat milk give be-pr  
 Mother is giving/gives milk to the child.

ja:vetis khuri buk-po amja-la taŋs pin  
 javid-nom his book amjid-dat give-past perf.  
 Javid had given his book to Amjad.

ja:vetis amja-la khuri buk-po taŋ-en yot pin  
 javid-nom amjid-dat his book give-past prog.  
 Javid had been giving his book to Amjad.

## Locative

ŋa-ča di naŋ pe: duk pat  
 we this house in stay-pr  
 We stay in this house

Balti uses [pe:] as a locative case marker. [la], which is a dative case suffix, is also used as a locative case suffix e.g.

kho:i phru:n khačul-la duk  
 he-gen child-nom-pl Srinagar in be-pr  
 His children are in Srinagar.

## Sociative

The sociative case in Balti is shown by the use of [na yambo] with [na] acting as a case suffix while as [yambo] acts as the postposition e.g.

ŋa-ča na yambo  
i-dat-pl with  
with us

ŋa khyā:na yambo yoŋ et  
i-nom you-soc with come-fut  
I will come with you.

### **Ablative**

The ablative case in Balti is shown by the use of [la] which is also used as a dative and locative case suffix.

ŋa-či kaka yul-la yoŋ cin  
i-gen brother village-abl come-past-perf.  
My brother had come from village.

### **Instrumental**

The instrumental case is shown by the use of [na] and [na yambo] which is also used as a sociative case suffix e.g.

ŋas hrta: thakpana činš  
i-ag horse-acc rope-inst tie-past  
I tied the horse with rope.

ŋas a:rena yambo hiŋ čes  
i-ag saw-inst with wood cut-past  
I cut the wood with saw.

ŋas grena yambo kušu čes  
i-ag knife-inst with apple cut-past  
I cut the apple with a knife.

## Conclusion

In Balti, we find case suffixes are added to nouns/pronouns as bound morphemes. Certain case suffixes in Balti have multiple roles and it makes them interesting things of study. For example [la] is used in a broader sense in Balti. It is used as a locative, dative and ablative case marker. Balti also takes the different postpositions to show the different cases. Nominative and accusative are overtly unmarked whereas agentive case marker is [s] and genitive case markers are [či] ,[ēe] and [i]. [pe:] and [la] are used as locative case markers. [na yambo] is used as sociative case marker and [na] and [na yambo] are the instrumental case markers. The present study shows the eight cases of Balti nouns which are: nominative, accusative, genitive, dative, locative, sociative, ablative and instrumental. This was an attempt to show the case in Balti which needs to be studied more rigorously and carefully.

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