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NON-NOMINATIVE SUBJECTS IN KANNAUJI AND HINDI-URDU: A COMPARATIVE STUDY

Zoya Fatma*

ABSTRACT

This study conducts a comparative examination of non-nominative subjects (NNSs) in Kannauji and Hindi-Urdu, questioning the traditional reliance on nominative case and verbal agreement as exclusive indicators of subject-hood across diverse languages. Utilizing data gathered through extensive fieldwork in villages around Karhal in the state of Uttar Pradesh, the research specifically delves into Kannauji, a lesser known non-scheduled Indo-Aryan language that has received very less attention in linguistic studies. The non-nominative subjects in Kannauji are scrutinized in comparison to those in Hindi-Urdu using several subject-hood tests to prove whether the nominals under study are subjects or not. Therefore, the primary objective of this research work is to show that in some languages like Kanauji and Hindi-Urdu subjects can also be formed by other non-nominative case markers and postpositions. Approaching the issue through a comparative framework, this study contributes to the broader comprehension of non-nominative subjects in languages characterized by unique syntactic structures. This approach advocates for a more nuanced and language-specific perspective in delineating the concept of subjects.

Keywords*:* Non-scheduled Languages, Kannauji, Lesser Known Languages, Non-Nominative Subjects, Hindi-Urdu.

1. Introduction

Sentences in human languages are generally made up of two parts: a subject and a predicate, where the subject is the entity the sentence is about, while the predicate indicates the action the subject is doing or the state it is in and usually contains the verb(s) and optionally other object(s). Subjects are usually associated with a nominative case and verbal agreement, i.e., the verb in the predicate agrees in features like person, number, and gender, with the subject of the sentence. For example, in English:

(1) She studies linguistics in JNU.

Here, 'she' is the subject, and the rest of the sentence 'studies linguistics in JNU' is the predicate. 'She' takes a nominative case, and

* Center for Linguistics, JNU, New Delhi

the verb 'studies' agrees with the subject, as it takes the 3S (third-person singular) marker. But this is not the only way a subject needs to be. There are several languages, like Hindi-Urdu (and several of them are found even in the South-Asian/Indian subcontinent) where the subjects have been shown to take different case markers like ergative ([Erg]), dative ([Dat]), instrumental ([Inst]), genitive ([Gen]), etc. Among these, [Dat] subjects have been often attested as a feature of South Asia (or India) as a linguistic area (Emeneau 1956; Masica 1976) and are found in languages belonging to Dravidian, Indo-Aryan, Tibeto-Burman, and Austroasiatic language families spoken in the region (Subbarao 2012). These subjects do not necessarily agree with their verbs nor are they assigned nominative cases. In this paper, we will discuss different types of these non-nominative cases using examples from Kannauji and then compare them with those of Hindi-Urdu. We will also use some prominent subject-hood tests to verify whether the nominal constructions with respective postpositional markers are indeed subjects or not.

Non-nominative subjects have been studied extensively in South Asian linguistics. Mohanan (1994) has used the term 'Indirect Case' to refer to these constructions in Hindi-Urdu. Subbarao and Bhaskararao (2004) have edited two volumes in the Typological Studies in Language series *Non-nominative Subjects* Vol 1 and 2 where several scholars have studied the phenomenon in different languages. In the volume 1, Arora and Subbarao (2004) have studied the non-nominative subjects in Dakkhini and Konkani while referring to the same in Hindi-Urdu.

Davison (2004) has studied the phenomenon in Hindi-urdu and has tried to define exactly what subject properties are present in the language and what parameter values account for these properties using Ura's (2000) extension of Chomsky's (1995) theory. She has checked the syntactic relationship to various functional heads, particularly Tense and the light verb in the vP projection in subjects having different case markers like ergative, dative, and other lexical cases. Bayer (2004) has done a comparative study of non-nominal subjects in German, Icelandic, and Bengali language among others. Montaut (2004) has studied the different sentence patterns Hindi offers to show how subject properties are distributed on more than one entity amounting to various dispositions.

Several other scholars have worked on the case system in Hindi. We are focussing on the work on Hindi as it is a very common link language for the speakers of Kannauji and other languages in the area. Spencer (2005) has argued that Hindi clitic postpositions are not case markers, and hence has classified the ergative and accusative/dative markers as postpositions. Mahajan (2017) has studied the accusative and ergative case markers in Hindi.

Kannauji as a language has not been studied except an occasional paper here and there. Kumar (2023) has studied reduplication in Kannauji verbs, Dwivedi and Kar (2016) have studied the

sociolinguistics of the phonology of the language. Other than that, the language finds reference in works on Awadhi language as they share a linguistic boundary. The present work, therefore, is aimed to fill that gap.

Kannauji/Kanauji/Kanaoji is an Indo-Aryan language spoken in areas like Mainpuri, Etawah, Auraiya, Kanpur, Farrukhabad, Kannauj, etc., all located in the western part of the Indian state, Uttar Pradesh. It is spoken by around 9 million speakers, and the language is usually classified under Western Hindi (starting from Grierson 1916) and is closely related to Braj, which is spoken in the nearby areas. Often, as the primary demographics of the language resides in what is called the 'Hindi-belt', the language variety is considered to be a dialect of Hindi-Urdu.

In the next section, we will define what a subject is and list some broad characteristics that can be used to test the subject-hood of any given nominal. In section 3, we will discuss Non-nominative subjects, and then carry forward the discussions into section4, where we will take data from both Kannauji and Hindi/Urdu and try to prove the subjecthood of differently case marked nominals; section 5 is the conclusion.

2. Subjects

The characterization of subjects in linguistic literature varies across different schools of thought, each emphasizing specific aspects to incorporate the concept into their respective language theories. Plato, credited with distinguishing *onoma* and *rhema*, was among the pioneers in highlighting the crucial nature of that part of the clause, which was later termed 'the subject' (Taverniers 2005).

This prominence of the subject recurs in diverse definitions. Langacker (2000: 27) outlines five potential grounds for defining grammatical roles, including case marking, grammatical behavior, syntactic configuration, semantic role, and discourse function. However, he asserts that only the concept of prominence aligns with a 'fully general schematic characterization' in harmony with cognitive grammar (CG) (Langacker 2000: 28). Langacker strongly opposes defining subjects and objects as syntactic notions based on grammatical features, deeming it 'doubly misguided. 'The subject, according to Langacker (1986: 12, 2000: 36), is the constituent construed as the 'primary figure' or trajector of a construction, while other constituents are either secondary figures (e.g., objects) or part of the background.'

Generative grammars, in various versions, offer different perspectives on the notion of prominence associated with the subject role. In Chomsky's transformational-generative grammar (Chomsky 1957), the subject is deemed 'prominent' in the clause model, occupying the first level below the tree diagram's top, represented as NP. Subsequent generative grammar versions, including Government and Binding and Minimalist Theory, maintain the 'external argument

position' of the subject. The subject's position becomes crucial in discussions on phenomena like control, extraction, relativization, and stranding.

Alternative proposals in more fine-grained models of the clause present divergent views on subject generation, ranging from specifier of IP (inflection) to VP, Fin (finiteness), TP (tense), or EventP.Non-transformational approaches, more functionally oriented, define the subject concerning various linguistic functions, particularly textual and ideational functions. Traditional definitions link the subject role to the 'agent' of an active clause, emphasizing the semantic functions onto which it is mapped. Multi-functional approaches involve hierarchies of functions or mappings in terms of hierarchy-to-hierarchy mapping.

Sophisticated versions of multi-functional approaches, based on hierarchies of semantic roles or hierarchy-to-hierarchy mapping, incorporate the notion of proto-typicality. These definitions focus on ideational or textual aspects, associating the subject with semantic roles.Halliday defines the subject as the second major element required to create a proposition, serving as the element 'by reference to which the proposition can be affirmed or denied' or the element 'in whom the speaker vests the success or failure of the proposition' (Halliday 1994/1985: 76).

To be called a subject, a DP usually needs to qualify some subjecthood tests, and some broad characteristics of subjects are (more of these can be found in Keenan 1976; Taverniers 2005):

(i) In languages where the predominant word structure pattern is SOV and SVO, subject occupies the first NP or spec position of an IP in the syntactic tree structure of declarative sentences.

(ii) The subject may asymmetrically c-command all the elements in the sentence.

(iii) The subject may be co-indexed with the anaphora.

(iv) The subject serves as the controller of a PRO in the sentence (except when it is controlled by the object). In this case, the subject occupies the higher position in the sentence structure.

(v) The process of conjunction/disjunction can aid in identifying the subject, where proper names are replaced with appropriate pronominals which are co-referential with the subjects of the sentence.

(vi) A finite verb in general agrees with the subject of the sentence.

(vii) The subject is the addressee of an imperative sentence.

The subject can be of two types: (a) grammatical, and (b) logical. For example, see (2) and (3).

(2) The cat killed the rat.

(3) The rat was killed by the cat.

It is easy to spot the grammatical subject as we can see that it's 'the cat' which is doing the action. However, in (3) even though 'the rat' has taken the subject position, logically we feel that even then the subject is the cat only. This prompts us to divide the concept of subject into two: (i) grammatical subject, and (ii) logical subject

The **grammatical subject** fulfils all the criteria in the traditional view of a subject. Syntactically, grammatical subjects occupy the first NP or spec position of an IP in a declarative sentence in a language where the subject occupies the initial position and asymmetrically c-commands the rest of the sentence. The subject must be co-indexable with any anaphoric element, if present. It controls the PRO and agrees with the finite verb.

In the case of **logical subject**, the finite verb may not agree with it as the subject is blocked by a case marker. They do not get the nominative case, and are given some other non-nominative cases. Other than this, logical subjects usually show similar properties as nominative subjects.

3. Non-nominative Subjects

Languages endowed with a sufficiently rich system of morphological cases often exhibit constituent orders that deviate from the typical nominative preceding non-nominative pattern. This departure is, to a large extent, predictable based on lexical and semantic considerations. Such languages are commonly referred to as those permitting non-nominative subjects.

Usually languages have subjects that are assigned a nominative case and they agree with the finite verb in person, number, and gender. However, South Asian languages like Hindi-Urdu and Kannauji only partially adhere to this pattern. In Hindi, finite verb agreement is observed only with nominative DPs. This restriction is not uncommon in languages with a single set of agreement features reflected in the verbal complex consisting of the verb, and tense and aspect inflection. Yet, languages like Hindi deviate from the common pattern found in languages where nominative case is associated with agreement. For example, in Hindi:

(4) səlmɑn-ne seb kʰɑyɑ
salman-3MS-Erg apple-3MS-Acc eat-3MS-Perf
'Salman ate (an) apple.'

(5) səlmɑn-ne roṭi kʰɑyi
salman-3MS-Erg chapati-3FS-Acc eat-3FS-Perf
'Salman ate (a) chapati.'

As can be seen in examples (4) and (5), the subject nominals are not in nominative case, and the verb agreement is happening with the direct object of the sentence. Now, compare these constructions with (6)

where the verb agrees with the subject which is in nominative case just because there is no ergative postpositional to block it:

(6) səlmɑn ɑm/roṭi kʰɑtɑ hɛ
salman-3MS-Nom mango-3MS-/chapati-3FS-Acc eat-3MS-Impf be-3S-Pres
'Salman eats mango/chapati.'

Similar instances can be seen in Kannauji as well:

(7) səlmɑn-nɛ ṭəpkɑ kʰɑo
salman-3MS-Erg mango-3MS-Acc eat-3MS-Perf
'Salman ate (a) mango.'

(8) səlmɑn-nɛ roṭi kʰɑyi
salman-3MS-Erg chapati-3FS-Acc eat-3FS-Perf
'Salman ate (a) chapati.'

4. Non-Nominative Cases in Kannauji and Hindi-Urdu

The syntax of Hindi allows the subject constructions in a sentence to be marked with any other case marker/postposition along with the nominative. However, Hindi doesn't have non-nominative constructions where the subject is marked the accusative. Almost, similar things can be seen in the case of Kannauji as well:

(9) zɛnəb ɑm kʰɑ rəhi hɛ
zainab-3FS-Nom mango-3MS-Acc eat stay-3FS-Impf be-3S-Pres
'Zainab is eating (a) mango.'

(10) zɛnəb-ne ɑm kʰɑyɑ
zainab-3FS-Erg mango-3MS-Abs eat-3MS-Perf
'Zainab ate (a) mango.'

(11) zɛnəb-ko ɑm kʰɑne-mẽ məzɑ ɑtɑ hɛ
zainab-3FS-Dat mango-3MS-Acc eat-Infv-Obl-Loc fun come-3MS-Impf be-3S-Pres
'Zainab likes eating (a) mango/mangoes.' (lit. 'Zainab has fun in eating mangoes.')

(12) zɛnəb-se ɑm nəhĩ kʰɑyɑ gəyɑ
zainab-3FS-Inst mango-3MS-Acc Neg eat-3MS-Perf go-3S-Pst
'Zainab could not eat a mango.' (lit. 'By Zainab, (a) mango could not be eaten.')

(13) zɛnəb-kɑ ɑm čori ho gəyɑ
zainab-3FS-Gen mango-3MS-Nom theft happen go-3S-Pst

'Zainab's mango was stolen.'

(14) zɛnəb-mẽ dəyɑ nehĩ hɛ
zainab-3FS-Loc mercy-3FS-Nom Neg be-3S-Pres
'Zainab has no mercy.'

In Kannauji sentences, these different subject constructions would be:

(15) jɛnəb ʈəpkɑ kʰɑy rəi ɛ
zainab-3FS-Nom mango-3MS-Acc eat stay-3FS-Impf be-3S-Pres
'Zainab is eating (a) mango.'

(16) jɛnəb-nɛ ʈəpkɑ kʰɑo
zainab-3FS-Erg mango-3MS-Abs eat-3MS-Perf
'Zainab ate (a) mango.'

(17)jɛnəb-kɔ̃ ʈəpkɑ kʰəɪbe-mɛ̃ məjɑɑtʊ ɛ
zainab-3FS-Dat mango-3MS-Acc eat-Infv-Obl-Loc fun come-3MS-Impf be-3S-Pres
'Zainab likes eating (a) mango/mangoes.' (lit. 'Zainab has fun in eating mangoes.')

(18)jɛnəb-pɛ ʈəpkɑ nɑĩ kʰɑo əo
zainab-3FS-Inst mango-3MS-Acc Neg eat-3MS-Perf go-3S-Pst
'Zainab could not eat a mango.' (lit. 'By Zainab, (a) mango could not be eaten.')

(19) jɛnəb-ko ʈəpkɑ čori hʊɪ əo
zainab-3FS-Gen mango-3MS-Nom theft happen go-3S-Pst
'Zainab's mango was stolen.'

(20) jɛnəb-mɛ̃ dəyɑ nɑĩ ɛ
zainab-3FS-Loc mercy-3FS-Nom Neg be-3S-Pres
'Zainab has no mercy.'

In sentences (10) – (14) in Hindi-Urdu and (16)-(20), even though the subjects may not be directly associated with grammatical subjecthood, as they are not assigned a nominative case as in (9) and (15), but still they are subject nevertheless, and to prove that, we will do subjecthood tests for each construction. For the purpose of this paper, the subject-hood tests we would be using are:

(i) Reflexive-antecedent test
(ii) Pronoun-coreferent test
(iii) Controller of PRO
(iv) Coordination

4.1. Dative Subjects

Dative subjects are the most studied non-nominative subject structures in South Asian languages since Emeneau (1956). They are also known as 'experiencer' subject or 'inversion' construction. Dative subject construction in Hindi has been studied in detail in Bahl (1974), Shapiro (1974), Hook (1976), Kachru (19966, 1970), and Davison (1969) among others. These subjects can occur in a variety of domains:

(a) psychological states and emotions

(b) physiological and mental ailments

(c) natural phenomena pertaining to body

(d) perceiver of visual and auditory actions

(e) to express possession and kinship

(f) subject of predicates expressing obligation

(g) to denote a recipient

(h) acquisition of knowledge/skill

Some examples of Dative subjects in Hindi-Urdu and Kanauji are:

(21) tʊm-ko səṛək-pər pɛse mɪle
you-2S-H-Datroad-3FS-Locmoney-3MPl-Accget-3MPl-Perf
'You found money on the road.'

(22) tʊmɛ̃/tʊm-kɔ̃ səṛək-pɛ rʊpəyɑ-ø mɪle
you-2S-H-Dat road-3FS-Loc money-3MPl-Acc get-3MPl-Perf
You (+H) found money on the road.

(23) bɑye/bɑ-kɔ̃ dəbɑi-ø lɛ lɛbo čəɪyɛ̃
S/he-3S-Dat medicine-3FS-Acc take-V1 take-V2-Infv want-Opt
S/he must take the medicine.

In the Hindi-Urdu sentence (21) and Kannauji sentences (22) and (23), we can see that the nominal which is the logical subject in these cases has a dative postposition, *-ko* for Hindi-Urdu and *-kɔ̃* in Kannauji. Dative subjects can also be used in experiencer constructions, as can be seen in following sentences from Hindi-Urdu (24), and from Kannauji (25) and (26):

(24) mʊjʰ-ko bəhʊt ʈʰənɖ ləg rəhi hɛ
I-1S-Dat very cold-3FS-Nom seem stay-3FS-Impf be-Pres
'I feel very cold.'

(25)bɑ-kɔ̃ dəbɑi lɛ lɛbo čəɪyɛ̃
s/he-3S-Dat medicine-3FS-Acc take-V1 take-V2-Infv want-Opt

'S/he must take the medicine.'

(26)həmɛ̃	ʈʰənɖ	ləgɪ	rəi	ɛ
I-1S-Dat	cold-3FS-Nom	seem	stay-3FS-Impf	be-Pres

'I feel cold.'

The dative subjects can be used in incapability constructions:

(27)	həm-se	nəhĩ	dekʰɑ	gəyɑ
	I-1S-Dat	Neg	see-V1	go-V2-3MS-Perf

'I could not see it.'

(28)	həm-pɛ	nɑĩ	dekʰo	əo
	I-1S-Dat	Neg	see-V1	go-V2-3MS-Perf

'I could not see it.'

(29)	həm-pɛ	nɑĩ	čəlʊ	jɑtʊ	ɛ
	I-1S-Dat	Neg	walk	go	be-Impf

'I am unable to walk.'

To account for such assignment of Dative case on subjects, there are two types of analyses found in literature (Mohanan 1994): one type treats the nominal as a grammatical subject by general principles of function assignment that assigns grammatical subjecthood to logical subjects. Here, the quirky dative case is assigned to subject by stipulation (Kachru et al 1976; Mohanan 1982) and, therefore, is not predictable. In another analysis, nominal gets dative case by usual principles of case assignment, however it can be only assigned by the indirect object (Sridhar 1976; Klaiman 1988). Both these analyses and assumption have been refuted with evidence in Mohanan (1994).

4.1.1. The Grammatical Subjecthood of Dative Subjects

The antecedent of a reflexive is always a subject, that means that the reflexive must be bound by a subject within its minimal finite clause.

(30) rɑni-ko	əpne	gʰər-ki	yɑd	ɑ	rəhi	tʰi	
rani-3FS-Dat	self-Gen	house$_j$-3MS-Gen	memory	come	stay-3FS-Impf	be-3FS-Pst	

'Rani$_i$ was missing self's$_{i/*j}$home/house.'

(31) rɑni-kɔ̃	əpəyɛ̃	gʰər-ki	yɑdɪ	ɑyɪ	rəyi	həti
rani-3FS-Dat	self-Gen	house$_j$-3MS-Gen	memory	come	stay-3FS-Impf	be-3FS-Pst

'Rani$_i$ was missing self's$_{i/*j}$home/house.'

The only eligible antecedent of the reflexives *əpəyɛ̃* and *əpne* in both the examples is Rani. Now, if Rani had not been the subject in the sentence then there must have been another possible antecedent in the sentence in order for it to be grammatical. However, the dative nominal

is the only option, and it can lead to two alternative conclusions: (i) the nominal with the dative postposition is a subject, or (ii) these sentences have no subjects. We also know that contrary to reflexives, pronouns cannot be coreferent with the subject of its minimal finite clause.

(32) rɑni$_i$-kõ bɑ-kɛ$_{i/j}$ gʰər-ki yɑdɪ ɑyɪ rəyi həti
rani-3FS-Dat s/he-3(M/F)S-Obl-Gen house$_j$-3MS-Gen memory come stay-3FS-be-3FS-Pst Impf
'Rani$_i$ was missing his/her$_j$*$_{i/j}$home/house.'

In this sentence, the pronoun cannot be coreferent with the dative nominal, and, in fact, that reading would make this sentence ungrammatical. The only way, we can make this sentence grammatical is to assume that the nominal with the dative postposition is indeed a subject. This assumption can be further confirmed by the fact that they can be the controllers of participial adjunct clauses with obligatory control sites, something which only subjects can do:

(33) rɑni$_i$-kõ [_____$_i$ kɪtɑb pɑ-kɛ] bɔt-əi kʰʊsi mɪli
rani-3FS-Dat book get-Infv-do-Infv much-Prt happy get-Perf
'$_i$ having got (a) book, Rani$_i$ was very happy.'

And even in this example, we can see that nominals with dative postposition behave like a subject. Finally, in a coordinate structure, a gapped element must be identical in case as well as function to its gapper.

(34) rɑni$_i$-kõ kɪtɑb mɪli ɔ bɑ-kɔ/___$_i$ bɔt-əi kʰʊsi bʰəyi
rani-3FS-Dat book-3FS get-Perf Conj she-3FS-Dat much-Prt happy happen-3FS-Pst
'Rani$_i$ got (a/the)book and she/$_i$ was very happy.'

Naturally, given the requirement of case identity, dative nominals can gap or be gapped only by other dative nominals, and not by any other case marked subjects.

Since, the nominals with dative postpositions satisfy all the above mentioned subjecthood tests, we can say that the dative nominals are indeed subjects.

4.2. Instrumental Subjects

Instrumental subjects have been comparatively less explored constructions in Hindi even though Hindi-Urdu and, according to our findings, even Kannauji, uses a lot of subjects that are marked with instrumental case. For example, see the sentence (35) in Hindi and (38) in Kannauji, along with other equivalent sentences using [Erg] and [Nom] case.

(35) rɑni-se šišɑ ʈuʈ gəyɑ
rani-3FS-Inst glass-3MS-Nom break-V1 go-V2-3MS-Perf
'The glass was broken by Rani.'

(36) rɑni-ne šišɑ toṛ dıyɑ
rani-3FS-Erg glass-3MS-Abs break-V1 give-V2-3MS-Perf
'Rani broke the glass.'

(37) rɑni šišɑ toṛ di
rani-3FS-Nom glass-3MS-Acc break-V1 give-V2-3FS-Perf
'?Rani broke the glass.'

(38) rɑni-pɛ sisɑ ṭuṭı -əwo
rani-3FS-Inst glass-3MS-Nom break-V1 go-V2-3MS-Perf
'The glass was broken by Rani.'

(39) rɑni-nɛ sisɑ ṭoḍ ḍɑro
rani-3FS-Erg glass-3MS-Abs break-V1 give-V2-3MS-Perf
'Rani broke the glass.'

(40) rɑni sisɑ ṭod dəyi
rani-3FS-Nom glass-3MS-Acc break-V1 give-V2-3FS-Perf
'?Rani broke the glass.'

One may find surface similarities between instrumental subject constructions and passive constructions. One, the verb forms in both constructions are identical, the auxiliary carries the tense and aspect morphology. The subjects in these constructions get the instrumental casemarking–*pɛ* (for detailed discussion in Hindi see Mohanan 1994). Therefore, initially these constructions may look like passive (Davison 1982; Pandharipande 1979; Kachru 1980). But, there are several differences between these constructions:

Consider (41), instrumental subjects are associated with the meaning of capability, while passives are not restricted in meaning:

(41) sisɑ rɑni-pɛ tʊṭı əwo
glass-3MS-Acc rani-3FS-Inst break-V1 go-V2-3FS-Perf
'Rani broke the glass.'

Usually, in passive constructions, the accusative object of the active construction becomes nominative, but in the case of instrumental postposition, it retains it. Secondly, the demoted agent in the nominative case is optional in the passive and, therefore, generally omitted. In contrast, the instrumental nominal is obligatorily expressed in instrumental subject constructions, the omission of which will make the construction lose its intended meaning. Then, the word order, in passive is free to either follow or precede the nominative argument, but in [Inst] it must obligatorily precede the accusative argument (unless it is post-verbal). Also, the *–pe* in passive constructions may be replaced

with *ke dvara* in Hindi which can't happen in a construction with a instrumental subject. Finally, a passive requires a transitive subject, while intransitive subject constructions have no such requirements.

4.2.1. The Grammatical Subjecthood of Instrumental Subjects

The antecedent of a reflexive is always a subject that means that the reflexive must be bound by a subject within its minimal finite clause:

(42) rɑni-pɛ əpəð sisɑ ʈuʈɪ -əwo
rani$_i$-3FS-Inst self$_i$-Gen glass-3MS break go-3MS-Perf
'Her own glass was broken by Rani.'

The only eligible antecedent of the reflexive in this sentence is Rani, and following the reasoning that we used (35) and (38) while testing the dative subject constructions, we will end up with two conclusions, of which only one may be true: either the nominal with the instrumental postpostions is a subject, or the sentence has none. But we can see that the sentence is completely grammatical. To further check our assertions, we can use the pronoun test:

(43) rɑni-pɛ bɑko sisɑ ʈuʈɪ -əwo
rani$_i$-3FS-Inst she$_j$-3FS-Onl-Gen glass-3MS break go-3MS-Perf
'Her glass was broken by Rani.'

The pronouns don't corefer to the subject in their own maximal projection, which as we can see holds true in (43). Because of these reasons, we can conclude that the instrumental subject construction and the passives are two syntactically distinct constructions in Kannauji (as well as in Hindi-Urdu), even though they might look similar initially.

4. 3. Genitive Subjects

Hindi and Kannauji don't have a verb of possession like English *have*, therefore, they use forms of *be* verb, like *ho* 'be/become' in Hindi-Urdu and *hʊɪbo* in Kannauji.

(44) bɑ-ki dʊɪ mɔ̃ɽɪyɑ̃ ɛ̃
he/she-3S-Obl-Gen two sister-3FPl-Nom be-3S-Pres
'He has two daughters'

(45) bɑ-ke čar ləlle ɛ̃
he/she-3S-Obl-Gen four boy-3MPl-Nom be-3S-Pres
'He has four sons.'

(46) bɑ-kɔ ek-əi jɪji ɛ
he/she-3S-Obl-Gen one-Prt sister-3FS-Nom be-3S-Pres
'His/her victory is only one.'

In above examples, the genitive nominal that refers to the possessor agrees in the number and gender with the nominal that refers to the

possessed entity. The relation of possession is one of kinship, not necessarily of ownership. The specific type of possession that does not involve ownership also extends to one's body parts. The use of non-nominative genitive is restricted to the relation of inalienable possession while nominative genitive can be used in a lot of other environments

(47) bɑ-ki jit pəkki ɛ
His/her-3S-Obl-Gen victory-3FS-Nom definite be-3S-Pres
'His/her victory is definite.'

The given instances effectively highlight the presence of genitive subjects, and attempting to substitute a nominative construction fails to convey the intended meaning. Indeed, articulating the idea in an alternative manner that excludes a genitive construction appears exceedingly challenging.

In the provided example (48), introducing a nominative subject would result in a loss of coherence when the subject is omitted. The sentence lacking the genitive subject would read as follows:

(48) jit pəkki ɛ
victory-3FS-Nom definite be-3S-Pres
?'Victory is definite.'

The sentence appears incomplete as it fails to specify whose victory is being discussed. The concept of possession is crucial for clarity, and this cannot be achieved without a genitive marker. Therefore, it can be asserted that while the genitive case is typically considered a phrasal property, instances where it constructs a subject, and the absence of which would lead to a loss of meaning or sense, can be identified as clear cases of genitive subjects.

These examples illustrate that Kannauji employs two types of genitive markers, *-ko/-ki/-ke*, and the other is where the marker is fused in the subject itself as in (49).

(49) meye/mere kɛhbe-tɛ kəčʰʊ nɑĩ bədəl jəyıyɛ
I-1S-Gen say-Infv-Obl-Inst anything Neg change go-Fut
'My saying won't change anything.'

4.3.1. The Grammatical Subjecthood of Genitive Subjects

Check the following sentences:

(50) bɑ-kɔ ek-əi jıji ɛ
His/her-3S-Obl-Gen one-Prt sister-3FS-Nom be-3S-Pres
'S/he has only one sister.'

(51) bɑ-kɔ jıji ek-əi ɛ
His/her-3S-Obl-Gen sister-3FS-Nom one-Prt be-3S-Pres
'S/he has one sister.'

Now, the difference between both sentences is not just of the order of the words but also in their meaning. In (51) the generative nominal is the modifier of sister, while in (50) it is an independent argument of the verb. We could predict that the generative nominal in (51) is in contrast to the one, and cannot be the antecedent to a reflexive. Therefore, (52) becomes ungrammatical (and even though some speakers may accept the sentence but would still not be comfortable).

(52) *bɑ-kɔ əpəyĩ jɪji ek-əi ɛ
His/her-3S-Obl-Gen self-3FS-Gen sister one-Prt be-3S-Pres
'S/he has only one sister (of herself).'

However, in the case of (50) there won't be such issue and the subject will be an antecedent to the reflexive (53), showing that the nominals with genitive postpositions are also subjects.

(53) bɑ-kɔ əpəyĩ ek-əi jɪji ɛ
His/her-3S-Obl-Gen self-3FS-Gen one-Prt sister be-3S-Pres
'S/he has only one sister (of herself).'

4.5. Locative Subjects

Kachru (1980) and Mohanan (1994) also discuss locative constructions as subjects. However, given that how locative nominals appear in a very narrow range of environments, not all the diagnostics may hold true to test their subjecthood. However, these nominals will exhibit behavior predictable of the grammatical subjects.

(54) bɑ-ke əndər əpəyĩ ləɽɑi ləɽɪbe-ki hɪmmət ɛ
S/he-3S-Obl-Geninside-Loc self-FS-Gen fight-3FS fight-Gencapacity-3MS be-Pres
'S/he has the capacity to fight.'

In this sentence, the locative subject is the only possible antecedent of the reflexive, suggesting that either the locative nominal is the subject or the sentence does not have any subject. Again, one can use pronominals to further test our assumptions.

(55) bɑ-ke əndər bɑ-ki ləɽɑi ləɽɪbe-ki hɪmmət ɛ
S/he-3S-Obl-Gen inside-Loc his/her-Gen fight-3FS fight-Gen capacity-3MS be-Pres
'S/he has the capacity to fight.'

The pronominal cannot refer to the subject in their minimal finite clause, and in sentence (55) the pronominal will always refer to someone other than the locative marked subject. Therefore, even locative subjects pass the test.

4.6. Ablative Subjects

(56) dʊkɑn-tɛ log-ø bɑer jɑyerəe te
shop-3FS-Ablpeople-3Pl-Nomoutsidego stay-3Pl-Impfbe-3Pl-Pst
'People were going out of the shop.'

(57) bij-tɛ pɔdɑ-ø nɪkəttʊ ɛ
seed-3MS-Abl plant-3MS-Nom out-3MS-Impf be-3S-Pres
'Plants grow out of seeds.'

In Kannauji sentences (56) and (57), the ablative case marker-*tɛ*, is playing a crucial role in conveying the sense of source or origin in sentences. The semantic completeness of the sentences above relies on addressing both the source and the subject of transformation or change. Consequently, nominals marked with the ablative case are semantically treated as subjects, emphasizing their significance in these constructions.

4.7. Ergative Subjects

In the nominative–accusative construction in Hindi-Urdu and Kannauji, the verb agrees with the subject in the nominative case. In the ergative–absolutive construction, the subject carries an ergative marker depending upon the transitive nature, aspect, modality and finiteness of the verb (Davison 2004; Hook and Koul 2004; Kachru 1980) and agrees with the object since the subject is not blocked with a postposition.

Ergative subjects are the only subjects where the case marker is always given to an AGENT. So just by the semantic properties, DPs marked with an ergative can be said to be a subject.

An ergative subject exhibits all the properties of the subject, for example as a local antecedent in Hindi-Urdu (58) and Kannauji (59):

(58) rɑhʊl$_i$-ne əpəni roṭi-ø bənɑyi
rahul-3MS-Erg self-Gen bread-3FS-Abs make-3FS-Perf
'Rahul cooked his own bread.'

(59) rɑhʊl$_i$-nɛ əpəyĩ roṭi-ø bənɑyi
rahul-3MS-Erg self-Gen bread-3FS-Abs make-3FS-Perf
'Rahul cooked bread.'

Or, as a long-distance antecedent to an anaphor in Kannauji (60):

(60) rɑhʊl-nɛ sɪmrən-tɛ [PRO əpəɛ ləyɛ̃ roṭi-ø bənəyibe-kɔ̃ kəo
rahul-3MS-Erg simran-3FS-Inst self-Gen for bread-3FS-Abs make-3FS-Impf say-3MS-Perf
'Rahul asked Simran to make a bread for himself.'

The subject can also be tested with a pronominal where the subject wouldn't be coreferred to by a pronoun in its own maximal projection:

(61) rɑhʊl-nɛ sɪmrən-tɛ [PRO bɑ-kɛləyɛ̃ roṭi-ø bənəyibe-kɔ̃ kəo
rahul-3MS-Erg simran-3FS-Inst his-Gen for bread-3FS-Abs make-3FS-Impf say-3MS-Perf
'Rahul asked Simran to make a bread for himself.'

In this sentence, Rahul is asking Simran to make chapati for someone else who cannot be him as the subject and the pronoun are not coreferential. These subjects also satisfy the PRO test, as in sentence

(60). Therefore, we can say that nouns marked with an ergative marker are also subjects.

5. Conclusion

The Nominative Case, traditionally considered a perfect fit for the role of a subject, is often designated for the agent. However, it is erroneous to conclude that the nominative case is universally indispensable, especially in the context of Indo-Aryan languages. Certain situations demand the use of other cases to express ideas more effectively or in a socially acceptable manner. These alternative cases, which legitimately fulfill the properties of a subject, are non-nominative in nature, and the subjects they form are called non-nominative subjects. In this study, we explored the various possibilities of subjects, particularly focusing on the data in Kanauji and Hindi-Urdu. The examples discussed illustrate that Kanauji behaves much akin to the related and neighboring languages in the area, especially Hindi-Urdu, in showing a rich system of case markings as well as having subjects with dative, instrumental, genitive, ablative, and locative case markers among others. Among these markers also, dative was found to be the most productive. Our investigation encompassed different parameters to determine the extent to which the Non-nominative subjects display the fundamental properties of a subject.

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