Uncommon patterns of core term marking and case terminology

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Abstract: In the languages of the world, two majors patterns of core term marking are found: a pattern following accusative alignment, in which P is the only core syntactic role in which nouns occur in a case form distinct from their quotation form or combined with an adposition, and a pattern following ergative alignment, in which A is the only core syntactic role in which nouns occur in a case form distinct from their quotation form or combined with an adposition. But the terminology currently used to describe case systems that consistently follow one of these two major patterns is difficult to extend to systems of core term marking characterized by alignment variations. In addition to that, at least four minor patterns are attested, characterized by a wider use of marked case forms or adpositions, and current terminology fails to provide convenient labels for case forms or adpositions occurring in such patterns. It is argued in this paper that: (a) in languages in which nouns are inflected for case, the case form coinciding with the form used in an extra-syntactic function of quotation or designation should be labeled in a uniform way, irrespective of the range of uses it may have in syntactic constructions; (b) new labels should be coined for marked case forms or adpositions used in S/A role ('antiaccusative') or in S/P role ('antiergative').

Abbreviations used in the glosses: A = agreement marker or pronominal affix referring to *A*; ACC = accusative; ANTIACC = antiaccusative; ANTIERG = antiergative; AOR = aorist; DEF = definite; DEM = demonstrative; DAT = dative; ERG = ergative; F = feminine; GEN = genitive; HAB = habitual; IPFV = imperfective; M = masculine; N = neuter; NEG = negation; OBL = oblique case (Kurmanji); P = agreement marker or pronominal affix referring to *P*; PFV = perfective; PRES = present; PST = past; S/A = agreement marker or pronominal affix referring to *S* or *A*; S/P = agreement marker or pronominal affix referring to *S* or *P*; TAM = tense-aspect-modality marker; 1S, 1P, 2S, etc. = 1st person singular, 1st person plural, 2nd person singular, etc. In languages in which nouns are inflected for case, the absence of case indication in the gloss signals a form identical with the form taken by the same noun in an extra-syntactic function of designation ('quotation form').

1. Introduction

In this paper, after recalling the basic notions of intransitive alignment typology (section 2) and the major types of core term marking attested in the languages of the world (section 3), I discuss the question of case terminology in languages showing alignment variations in core term marking (section 4). Section 5 puts forward a distinction between morphological markedness and syntactic markedness of case forms. Section 6 presents minor types of core term marking characterized by the use of a syntactically marked case form for nouns in S/A or S/P role. In section 7, I show that case terminology as recommended in recent typological works and currently used in language descriptions cannot be extended in a consistent way to the description of these minor patterns of core term marking, and I argue that a possible solution is to retake an idea that inspired ancient grammarians and is still explicitly stated in some modern grammars of Latin or Greek, according to which nominative is primarily the quotation or designation form of nouns, and the use of nominative for nouns in subject role is secondary. In section 8, I put forward a terminology for case forms used to mark NPs in core syntactic roles based on the same principle but differing from the traditional case terminology in that it is not limited to languages showing a particular type of core term marking.

2. The basic concepts of alignment typology

In this section I summarize the fundamentals of alignment typology as developed in the last decades and exposed in works such as Comrie 1978, Plank (ed.) 1979, Dixon 1994, Lazard 1994, Palmer 1994: Chapters 1-4, Manning 1996, Kibrik 1997, Lazard 1997, Mithun & Chafe 1999.

Intransitive alignment typology examines the possible relations between the properties of the terms A and P (or O) representing the agent and the patient in the basic construction of prototypical action verbs, and the sole core argument S of monovalent verbs. In languages in which prototypical action verbs have two or more possible constructions with the same denotative meaning, the prototypical transitive construction can be defined as the construction in which the terms representing the agent and the patient both show a maximum of properties typical of core arguments, and the other(s) construction(s) are analyzed as the result of a valency reduction of the passive or antipassive type.

Several authors have pointed to the problematic status of S. In particular, Andrews 2001 argues that, while A and P are 'grammatico-semantic primitives', S is not a primitive concept of syntactic structure, and Bickel To appear puts forward an alternative approach to the basic notions of alignment typology. In fact, the notion of S is not logically necessary to the definition of *accusative vs. ergative alignment*, and S alignment, which has been the main concern of alignment typology in the last decades, can be viewed as a particular case of a more general notion of *extended accusative / ergative alignment* relying on the notions of A and P only: irrespective of the semantic valency of the verb, *(extended) accusative alignment* characterizes predicative constructions involving a term with the same properties as A but no term with the same properties as P, and *(extended) ergative alignment* characterizes constructions involving a term with the same properties as P, but no term with the same properties as A. This revision of the notion of *accusative vs. ergative alignment* is however not crucial to the questions addressed in this paper.

This paper does not address the question of 'deep alignment' either. Its aim is the discussion of terminological issues concerning a particular aspect of alignment typology at the level of the coding properties of A, P, and S.

Logically, if the two core terms of the transitive construction contrast in (at least some of) their coding characteristics, an intransitive construction may be aligned on the transitive construction in three different ways with respect to the characteristics in question:

– S may be aligned on A (*accusative* alignment),
– S may be aligned on P (*ergative* alignment),
– S may be aligned neither on A nor on P (*neutral* or *tripartite* alignment).

Three types of coding properties can be taken into consideration in the recognition of types of alignment: *core term marking*, *argument indexation*, and *constituent order*.

The relevance of *constituent order* to the recognition of alignment types is limited to languages with a relatively rigid constituent order in which, in the transitive construction, the verb (or an auxiliary, in analytical verbal predication) is placed between A and P. For example, the Mande language Manding has neither core syntactic term marking nor argument indexation, and the constituent order in Manding is APVX, but verbal predication involves obligatory auxiliaries (commonly called 'predicative markers') preceding the verb, and the recognition of accusative alignment in this language relies exclusively on the fact that auxiliaries occur between A and P in the transitive construction, and follow S in intransitive constructions.

Argument indexation refers to the manifestations of the contrast between A, P and S at the level of the verb. This notion includes verb agreement with core terms and the possibility to represent arguments by means of pronominal affixes attached to the verb.

Core term marking refers to the manifestations of the contrast between A, P and S at the level of the NPs assuming these roles. Core term marking may involve case marks, i.e. morphological variations of words included in NPs assuming a core syntactic role,[1] or the presence of adpositions adjacent to NPs assuming a core syntactic role.

Ex. (1) from Russian and (2) from Godoberi (a North-Eastern Caucasian language) illustrate resp. the accusative and the ergative type of alignment, in core term marking and argument indexation. In Russian, A in the construction of *vzjat'* 'take' is in the same case form (nominative) as S in the construction of *prijti* 'come', and agrees in the same way with the verb, whereas P in the construction of *vzjat'* 'take' is in a distinct case form (accusative) and does not agree with the verb. In Godoberi, P in the construction of 'cut' is in the same case form (absolutive) as S in the construction of 'come', and agrees in the same way with the verb, whereas A in the construction of 'cut' is in a distinct case form (ergative) and does not agree with the verb.

(1) Russian

   a. quotation form of nouns: *otec* 'father', *devuška* 'girl'

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[1] Case marks attached to the last word of NPs are particularly common, but other patterns are attested (for example, 'distributed' case marks, as in Latin or in Russian). The distinction between postpositions and case marks attached to the last word of NPs is often problematic, but this has no repercussion on the matters discussed in this paper.

b. *Otec   prišel-Ø*
father   come.PST-M
'The father came'

d. *Otec   vzjal-Ø   devušku*
father   take.PST-M   girl.ACC
'The father took the girl'

(2)   Godoberi (Kibrik 1996)

a. quotation form of nouns: *ima* 'father', *λudi* 'firewood'

b. *ima   w-aʔa*
father   M-come.PFV
'The father came'

c. *imu-di   λudi   b-uq'ida*
father-ERG   firewood   N-cut.HAB
'The father used to cut the firewood'

S does not necessarily shows the same alignment for all its coding characteristics (*mixed alignment*). As noted in Anderson 1976, intransitive constructions in which S is case-marked in the same way as P, but agrees with the verb in the same way as A, are relatively common. They are found for example in the Kartvelian language Laz – Holisky 1991.

In some languages, all intransitive constructions show the same type of alignment. There are many other languages, however, where different types of intransitive alignment coexist, as variously discussed in Comrie 1973, Moravcsik 1978, or Van Valin 1981, among others. Basically, variations in intransitive alignment patterns can be of two types, commonly known as *split ergativity* and *split intransitivity*. *Split ergativity* refers to alignment variations conditioned by grammatical features of the verb (e.g. tense, aspect, etc.) or of its core arguments. *Split intransitivity* (Van Valin 1990) refers to the fact that, in the same grammatical conditions, verbs occurring in intransitive constructions may divide into two (or possibly more) classes differing in their alignment properties. Both types of alignment variations can be attested in the same language – see for instance Lazard 1995 on Georgian.

Differential marking refers to situations in which the use of a case mark or adposition with nouns fulfilling a given role is bound by certain conditions. The differential marking of P (or P/S, within the frame of ergative alignment), more known under the name of *differential object marking*) is particularly common (see in particular Bossong 1985, Lazard 2001, Aissen 2003), but the differential marking of A (or A/S, within the frame of accusative alignment) is also attested, and in some languages, differential marking concerns all of the core syntactic terms (see in particular Kwon & Zribi-Hertz 2006 on Korean). Given the questions addressed here, it is not necessary to go into more details on differential marking.

3. Major patterns of core term marking

Not all languages have contrasts in core term marking. For example, core term marking is exceptional, or even not attested at all, in most language families included in the Niger-Congo phylum. But among the languages that have contrasts in core term marking, two patterns are particularly common:

– the pattern illustrated in section 2 by Russian, in which P is the only core term in a case form distinct from the quotation form of nouns, or combined with an adposition;

– the pattern illustrated in section 2 by Godoberi, in which A is the only core term in a case form distinct from the quotation form of nouns, or combined with an adposition.

The two major patterns of core term marking have in common that the form taken by nouns and NPs in an extra-syntactic function of quotation or designation is also used, without any modification or addition, for S in intransitive constructions and for one of the core terms of the transitive construction: A in core term marking systems that follow accusative alignment, P in systems that follow ergative alignment.

In other words, in the major patterns of core term marking, the form of NPs in S role can be characterized as *syntactically unmarked* (in the sense that the same form has uses in which it need not be licensed by a syntactic construction), and the same form is used for one of the two core terms of the transitive construction.

Traditionally, in core term marking systems of the type illustrated above by Russian, the noun form used for quotation and for A / S function is called *nominative*, whereas the form used for nouns in P function (or the adposition accompanying nouns in P function) is called *accusative*.

The terminology used for describing systems of the type illustrated above by Godoberi shows more variation. However, most recent descriptions of languages having a system of this type use the terminology popularized in particular by Dixon's work on ergativity, according to which the noun form used for quotation and for P / S function is called *absolutive*, whereas the form used for nouns in A function (or the adposition accompanying nouns in A function) is called *ergative*. This terminology is therefore characterized by the use of two different terms for the form of nouns uttered in isolation with a function of quotation or designation, according to the range of its syntactic uses: this form is called *nominative* if its syntactic uses include S and A roles, but not P (the case form used for P, or the adposition used to mark P, being then called *accusative*); it is called *absolutive* if its syntactic uses include S and P roles, but not A (the case form used for A, or the adposition used to mark A, being then called *ergative*).

4. The terminological problem in core term marking systems showing alignment variations

A first difficulty in the use of the terms *nominative* and *absolutive* according to the current definition mentioned at the end of section 3 arises with split-ergative languages such as the Kurmanji variety of Kurdish: in the intransitive constructions of Kurmanji, S is invariably in the absolute form, and the verb invariably agrees with it, whereas the coding characteristics of A and P in the transitive construction depend on the tense of the verb: in some tenses, A is in the so-called 'direct case' (which is also the quotation form of nouns) and P in the so-called 'oblique case', and the verb agrees with A, whereas in other tenses, A is in the 'oblique case, P

in the 'direct case', and the verb agrees with P – ex. (4).[2] In other words, in ex. (3), the tense illustrated by the sentences to the left of the stroke triggers accusative alignment, whereas the tense illustrated in the sentences to the right of the stroke triggers ergative alignment.

(3)　Kurdish (Kurmanji) (Blau & Barak 1999)

　　a. *Ez　Sînem-ê　dibîn-im*　/　*Min　Sînem　dît-Ø*
　　　 1SG　Sinem-OBL　see.IPFV-1SG　　1SG.OBL　Sinem　see.PFV-3SG
　　　 'I see Sinem'　　　　　　　　'I saw Sinem'

　　b. *Tu　Sînem-ê　dibîn-î*　/　*Te　Sînem　dît-Ø*
　　　 2SG　Sinem-OBL　see.IPFV-2SG　　2SG.OBL　Sinem　see.PFV-3SG
　　　 'You see Sinem'　　　　　　　'You saw Sinem'

　　c. *Sînem　min　dibîn-e*　/　*Sînem-ê　ez　dît-im*
　　　 Sinem　1SG.OBL　see.IPFV-3SG　　Sinem-OBL　1SG　see.PFV-1SG
　　　 'Sinem sees me'　　　　　　　'Sinem saw me'

　　d. *Sînem　te　dibîn-e*　/　*Sînem-ê　tu　dît-î*
　　　 Sinem　2SG.OBL　see.IPFV-3SG　　Sinem-OBL　2SG　see.PFV-2SG
　　　 'Sinem sees you'　　　　　　　'Sinem saw you'

In such a system, there is no principled way to standardize the designation of noun case forms according to the definitions adopted in most recent typological works, since the form traditionally called 'direct case' meets the definition of nominative in some contexts and of absolutive in some others, and similarly, the 'oblique case' would have to be called accusative in some contexts and ergative in some others.

A possible solution in the case of Kurmanji would be to abandon *absolutive*, and to follow the terminology used in particular by Kibrik and other Russian Caucasologists. According to this terminology, *nominative* applies to case forms used for nouns in S role, irrespective of the fact that the use of these forms extends to nouns in A function (contrasting with P in the accusative case) or to nouns in P function (constrasting with A in the ergative case).

But this terminological revision does not solve the problem of languages having an intransitivity split manifested in case marking, i.e., languages in which intransitive verbs divide into two classes selecting two different case forms of their S argument. For example, Georgian has both TAM-driven variations in the case marking of the A and P arguments of transitive verbs and a division of intransitive verbs into two classes, one with invariable case marking of S and the other with variations in the case marking of S identical to those characterizing the case marking of the A argument of transitive verbs. The result is that, in Georgian, depending on the choice of an individual intransitive verb and of a particular tense value, the S argument of intransitive verbs may appear in one of the case forms traditionally labeled nominative, ergative, or dative, and there is no coherent way to standardize this terminology within the frame of any commonly accepted set of definitions.

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[2] The transitive construction is illustrated here by a verb which is not a prototypical transitive verb, but which, in the language in question, has the same construction as prototypical transitive verbs.

In addition to that, other difficulties in extending current terminology arise when one takes into consideration languages having one of the minor types of core term marking that will be dealt with in Section 6, which have in common that the form used for nouns in S role is different from that used in the extra-syntactic function of quotation / designation.

5. Syntactic markedness and morphological markedness

Nouns can be uttered in isolation in such conditions that there would be no justification to consider them as the elliptical realization of a syntactic construction whose all other terms would be understood and would have to be retrieved from the context. This extra-syntactic use of nouns may involve two kinds of function: a function of call, for which some languages have a dedicated *vocative* form of nouns, and a function of quotation or designation. The extra-syntactic use of nouns in a quotation / designation function is particularly apparent when for instance a noun is written on a box to indicate the content of this box, or when the name of a person is written on his/her passport or identity card. Interestingly, the form of nouns used in such contexts is not always identical with the form of nouns used in predicate function (as illustrated for example by the use of the instrumental case for nouns in predicate function in Slavonic languages), which shows that nouns uttered in isolation in the extra-syntactic function of designation must not be confused with the elliptic realization of predicative constructions expressing identification.

In languages in which nouns are inflected for case, case forms that can be uttered in isolation either in vocative function or as pure labels attached to some entities present in the situation, without triggering the reconstruction of a syntactic construction whose other terms would be understood, will be characterized here as *syntactically unmarked*. Case forms that ignore such uses will be characterized as *syntactically marked*. Note that syntactically unmarked case forms (e.g., the nominative case of Latin nouns) available for the function of quotation / designation have syntactic uses too: in Latin, the nominative case is not only the form of nouns available for the extra-syntactic function of quotation / designation, but also the form taken by nouns in subject role. A possible analysis is that case forms such as Latin nominative are default case forms used in contexts that do not require some syntactically marked case form. Modern grammatical theories tend to neglect the extra-syntactic use of nouns, but ancient grammarians implicitly acknowledged its theoretical significance when they chose to label one of the case forms of nouns *casus nominativus* 'the case used to designate'. We will return to this question later, since my claim is that the recognition of the contrast between syntactically marked and syntactically unmarked case forms as the most basic distinction in all case systems is a possible way to solve the terminological problem raised by the existence of uncommon patterns of core term marking.

Most of the time, in languages in which nouns are inflected for case, the syntactically unmarked form of nouns used in an extra-syntactic function of quotation / designation is also *morphologically unmarked*, in the sense that it can conveniently be taken as the input for the morphological operations (affixation or others) that give rise to the other case forms of the noun.

In the simplest cases, case inflection can be described as an affixation process, and the syntactically unmarked form of nouns used for quotation / designation is characterized by the absence of any overt case affix (in other words, it coincides with the stem to which the affixes characterizing syntactically marked case forms are added), as in the case inflection of Turkish nouns, illustrated by ex. (4) .

(4)   Turkish: case inflection of *ev* 'house' and *masa* 'table'

   a. syntactically unmarked form (nominative)   Ø   *ev*   *masa*

   b. syntactically marked forms: accusative   *-(y)I*   *ev-i*   *masa-yı*
                                     genitive   *-(n)In*   *ev-in*   *masa-nın*
                                     dative-allative *-(y)A*   *ev-e*   *masa-ya*
                                     locative   *-dA*   *ev-de*   *masa-da*
                                     ablative   *-dAn*   *ev-den*   *masa-dan*

However, the form of nouns used in the extra-syntactic function of quotation / designation does not always coincide with the stem to which case affixes are added. Russian illustrates a situation in which the quotation form of nouns (nominative case) may include a non-void ending, and conversely, syntactically marked noun forms (i.e., forms existing only as elements of syntactic constructions) may have a zero ending. For example, Russian nouns of the morphological type illustrated by *devušk-a* 'girl' have an ending *-a* in their quotation form and a zero ending in the genitive plural.

Similarly, in Icelandic, *hatt-ur* 'hat' has an overt ending *-ur* in its quotation form (nominative singular), and a zero ending in the accusative singular (*hatt*).

Outside the Indo-European family, a similar situation is found in the South-West Bantu languages having so-called 'tone cases': in those languages, nouns occur with their lexical tone contour in certain syntactic roles only; their quotation / designation form includes an additional high tone that must be analyzed as an inflectional mark (see in particular Maniacky 2002 on Ngangela).

Therefore, *morphological* markedness and *syntactic* markedness do not necessarily coincide. According to the current definitions of alignment types, morphological markedness is not relevant to the characterization of core term marking systems as accusative or ergative. However, for each type (accusative and ergative) it may prove useful to make a distinction between two subtypes:

– a more common (or canonical) subtype, consistent with the general tendency towards coincidence between syntactic and morphological markedness; in this subtype (illustrated above by Turkish), the quotation form of nouns coincides with the bare noun stem;

– a less common (or non-canonical) subtype (illustrated above by Russian, Icelandic, and Ngangela) in which, in addition to the noun stem, the quotation form of nouns includes a morphological element possibly absent from certain syntactically marked forms.

6. Uncommon types of core term marking

6.1. The 'marked-nominative' pattern: marked S/A *vs.* unmarked P

A first uncommon pattern of core term marking is the so-called 'marked-nominative' pattern. It meets the definition of accusative alignment, since S and A are treated in the same way and contrast with P, but nouns in S/A role take a 'marked' case form.

The term 'marked-nominative' originates from Dixon 1994. I reproduce it here as the most widespread label for a pattern of core term marking particularly relevant to the discussion, but I put it in quotation marks in order to express my reservations about it. The glosses in the

following examples reflect the terminology proposed in section 8 (ANTIACC = *antiaccusative* case or adposition).

As explained in section 5, 'marked' has two possible interpretations, which do not necessarily coincide. The use of 'marked-nominative' is unambiguous in the case of languages in which the quotation / designation form of nouns always coincide with the bare noun stem, that is, when there is no discrepancy between morphological and syntactic markedness. But if 'marked-nominative' is understood as referring to morphological markedness, i.e. to situations in which the form of nouns in S/A role results from the addition of an overt morphological element to the noun stem, then languages such as Latin, Russian or Icelandic must be recognized as (partially) 'marked-nominative' languages. Since such languages are generally not mentioned in discussions about this type of core term marking, one may conclude that, at least implicitly, 'marked-nominative' as used in most recent works on alignment typology refers to syntactic markedness rather than to morphological markedness, i.e., to situations in which nouns in S/A role occur in a case form distinct from the quotation / designation form, or combine with an adposition, whereas a form identical to the quotation / designation form of nouns is used for P, as in Oromo – ex. (5) – or in Kabyle – ex. (6).

(5)   Oromo (Griefenow-Mewis & Bitima 1994)

   a. quotation form of nouns: *Tulluu* (proper name), *makiinaa* 'car'

   b. *Makiinaa-n   hin   dhufu*
      voiture-ANTIACC NEG   arrive.PRES.S/A3SM
      'The car is not arriving'

   c. *Tulluu-n   gammada*
      Tulluu-ANTIACC be glad.PRES.S/A3SM
      'Tullu is glad'

   d. *Tulluu-n   makiinaa   bite*
      Tulluu-ANTIACC car   buy.PFV.S/A3SM
      'Tulluu bought a car'

(6)   Kabyle (Naït-Zerrad 2001)

   a. quotation form of nouns: *aqcic* 'boy', *argaz* 'man', *tawwurt* 'door'

   b. *Yuzzel   wergaz*
      S/A3SM.run.PFV   ANTIACC.man
      'The man ran'

   c. *Yettru   weqcic*
      S/A3SM.cry.PFV   ANTIACC.boy
      'The boy cried'

d. *Teldi   tewwurt*
   S/A3SF.open.PFV ANTIACC.door
   'The door opened'

e. *Yeldi   weqcic   tawwurt*
   S/A3SM.open.PFV   ANTIACC.boy door
   'The boy opened the door'

f. *Yewwet   weqcic   argaz*
   S/A3SM.hit.PFV   ANTIACC.boy man
   'The boy hit a man'

g. *Yewwet   wergaz   aqcic*
   S/A3SM.hit.PFV   ANTIACC.man boy
   'The man hit a boy'

Languages with contrasts between core syntactic terms following the 'marked-nominative' pattern are relatively rare at world level, but very common in Africa. Outside Africa, this type has been recognized in Mingrelian (a Kartvelian language spoken in Georgia – Harris 1991), in the Yuman languages of California (Dixon 1994), and in some Oceanian languages, in particular among those spoken in New Caledonia (Moyse-Faurie and Ozanne-Rivierre 1983). In Africa, systems of this type are found in Berber languages, in South-West Bantu languagues[3], and in East-African languages belonging to three different families: Cushitic, Omotic (both included into the Afro-Asiatic phylum) and Nilotic (included into the Nilo-Saharan phylum). König (forthcoming) provides a detailed inventory of East-African and Berber languages belonging to this type, and analyzes both their common properties and the properties that justify the recognition of different subtypes.

When they do not use idiosyncratic labels (such as the labels *état libre / état d'annexion* commonly used in Berber grammars), descriptions of such systems show a particularly high degree of confusion in the choice of labels for case forms of nouns or adpositions involved in core syntactic role marking, and this is not surprising, since current terminology is not suitable for languages with a predominant pattern of core term marking contradicting the (prevailing, but not universal) principle according to which a syntactically unmarked form of nouns (that is, a form also available for the extra-syntactic function of quotation / designation) occurs without any modification or addition at least in S role.

In descriptions of 'marked-nominative' languages, the case form or adposition used to mark nouns in S/A roles is often called *nominative*, but some authors prefer to call it *ergative,* or *extended ergative*. The first solution correctly reflects the range of its syntactic uses, but contradicts the traditional definition of nominative as being primarily the form of nouns in the function of designation. The second solution takes into account the syntactic markedness

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[3] South-West Bantu Languages such as Ngangela are not typical 'marked-nominative' languages, in the sense that they use for S and A the morphologically simplest form of nouns. However, as regards *syntactic* markedness, they belong to the 'marked-nominative' type in the sense that the form they use for nouns in S and A roles is not the quotation / designation form. In Ngangela, the noun form used in P role is *morphologically marked* in the sense that it can be described as resulting from the addition of a H tone to the lexical representation of the lexeme, but it is *syntactically unmarked* in the sense that the same additional H tone is also present in the quotation / designation form of nouns – Maniacky 2002.

of the case form or adposition marking S/A, but the use of *ergative* or *extended ergative* as a label for a case form or adposition in systems of core syntactic term marking that follow the accusative pattern of alignment can only lead to confusions.[4]

As regards the form taken by nouns in P role in 'marked-nominative' languages, at least three different terms are found in the litterature: *nominative*, *accusative*, or *absolutive*. The choice of *nominative* is motivated by the etymology of this term (the form used in an extra-syntactic function of designation), but does not reflect the second component or its meaning (the range of syntactic uses typical for a nominative case). The choice of *accusative* is consistent with the use of this form in P role, but does not reflect its availability for extra-syntactic uses. The problem with *absolutive* is more or less the same as for nominative: by virtue of its etymology, *a priori*, *absolutive* is a good label for a noun form that does not need syntactic licensing and is available for extra-syntactic uses; however, in the terminology popularized in particular by Dixon's work on ergativity, the use of *absolutive* is restricted to extra-syntactic noun forms whose range of syntactic uses include S and A, but not P, which does not fit the 'marked-nominative' pattern.

6.2. Marked S/A *vs.* marked P

Another uncommon pattern of accusative core term marking is illustrated by Japanese, which has both a marker *-o* comparable to the accusative markers traditionally recognized in systems following accusative alignment, and a marker *-ga* occurring in S and A roles, but not in the extra-syntactic use of nouns – ex. (7). This marker *-ga* is currently labelled 'nominative', which again correctly reflects the range of its syntactic uses, but contradicts an essential part of the traditional definition of 'nominative'.

(7)   Japanese

    a. quotation form of nouns: *isha* 'doctor', *hito* 'person', *shinbun* 'newspaper'

    b. *Isha-ga   kita*
       doctor-ANTIACC come.PST
       'A doctor came'

    b. *Oozei-no hito-ga   kono   shinbun-o   yomu*
       many-GEN   person-ANTIACC DEM   newspaper-ACC read.PRES
       'Many people read this newspaper'

This uncommon pattern seems to occur only in languages that have differential function marking both for S/A and P.

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[4] Moreover, *(extended) ergative* suggests a diachronic scenario according to which marked case forms or adpositions used for nouns in S/A roles result from the extension of the use of a case mark originally used for A only, or for A and S_A in a split intransitive system. Such a scenario is probably responsible for the 'marked nominative' system of Mingrelian, but there is no reason to think that it could have played a role in the emergence of 'marked-nominative' systems in Africa (and in the particular case of South West Bantu languages, there is strong evidence that 'tone cases' result from the reanalysis of a former ±*definite* distinction).

6.3. The 'marked-absolutive' pattern: marked S/P *vs.* unmarked A

Most works on ergativity do not mention the existence of core term marking patterns following ergative alignment, but with nouns fulfilling A role in the quotation / designation form (whithout the addition of any adposition), and nouns fulfilling S/P role in a case form distinct from the quotation / designation form, or combined with an adposition.[5] However, this pattern is attested by Nias (Brown 2001) and a few other Pacific languages: Moyse-Faurie 2003 mentions Waris (a Papuan language) and Roviana (Solomon Islands).

6.4. Marked S/P vs. marked A

Another uncommon pattern of ergative core term marking, in which nouns in A role are marked by an ergative preposition, and nouns in S/P role are marked (at least in certain conditions) by an 'absolutive' preposition is attested by Tongan – ex. (8) – and other Polynesian languages. In the presentation of ex. (8), in accordance with the terminology proposed in section 8, the 'absolutive' preposition is glossed ANTIERG (= antiergative).

(8)   Tongan (Churchward 1953)

    a. *Na'e lea   'a   Tolu*
       TAM   speak ANTIERG Tolu
       'Tolu spoke'

    b. *Na'e lea   'a   e   talavou*
       TAM   speak ANTIERG DEF   boy
       'The boy spoke'

    c. *Na'e taamate'i 'a   e   talavou 'e   Tolu*
       TAM   kill   ANTIERG DEF   boy   ERG   Tolu
       'Tolu killed the boy'

    d. *Na'e taamate'i 'a   Tolu 'e   he   talavou*
       TAM   kill   ANTIERG Tolu ERG   DEF   boy
       'The boy killed Tolu'

7. Discussion

The difficulties in choosing convenient labels for case forms of nouns or adpositions involved in uncommon patterns of core term marking originate in the fact that *nominative* and *absolutive*, which etymologically are equally convenient labels for noun forms used in an extra-syntactic function of quotation / designation, irrespective of the possible range of their syntactic uses, have specialized in a way that makes each of them suitable for languages with a particular type of core term marking only. Consequently, it would be useful to revise case terminology as proposed in typologically oriented works in a way that should permit a

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[5] Dixon (1994:11): "There are a few well-attested instances where accusative has zero realization, while nominative involves a positive affix, but none where ergative has zero form and absolutive is non-zero."

consistent labeling of cases or adpositions in the description of various patterns of core term marking, and not only in the description of those belonging to one of the two commonest types.

In all languages, nouns (and noun phrases) differ from other categories in that they can be uttered in isolation as labels for entities present in the context in which they are uttered, and the only contrast that can be found in all case systems is the contrast between a case form available for this function and case forms that must be licensed by a construction in which they fulfill a particular role. Consequently, this contrast deserves to be taken into account in a terminology designed to be applied to the description of typologically diverse case systems. It is interesting to observe that, in spite of the fact that typological considerations certainly played no role in this choice, this is precisely what ancient grammarians did when they coined the Greek term *onomastikê ptôsis* and its Latin equivalent *nominativus* (from *nominare* 'designate'). This conception of the nominative case has subsequently been more or less blurred by the scholastic tradition of teaching Latin, but it is still present in modern Latin grammars. For example, Collart 1966 defines the nominative case as "le cas-pancarte" ('the placard case'), and explicitly argues that the use of the nominative case for subjects is not the basic function of this case, but rather a 'natural' consequence of its more basic value of designation form. Similarly, Ernout & Thomas 1951 insist that nominative is "le cas du nom considéré en lui-même … une sorte de cas-zéro auquel se mettait tout substantif qui se trouvait isolé dans la phrase par rupture de construction" ('the case of the noun considered in itself … a kind of zero case used for every substantive isolated in the sentence by a break in the construction').

Most modern linguists tend to underestimate the (practical as well as theoretical) importance of the extra-syntactic use of nouns as pure labels for concrete entities present in the situation,[6] which has no equivalent for other categories, and to restrict the extra-syntactic functions of nouns to quotation. But the designation form of nouns is not only the form arbitrarily selected by lexicographers to represent nominal lexemes or given by speakers in answer to the question 'How do you say X (X a noun) in your language?'. More generally, it is the form speakers spontaneously utter (or write) in isolation as a pure label.

It follows from the data examined in section 6 that, in spite of the fact that two patterns are particularly common, there is no universal constraint on the range of core syntactic relations that can involve the use of case forms different from the quotation / designation form of nouns, or the presence of adpositions.

Consequently, the only way to develop a terminology not limited to languages with particular patterns of core term marking is to start from terms reflecting nothing more than the contrast between noun forms that can be uttered in isolation as pure labels, and noun forms that must be licensed by a syntactic construction, without any additional reference to the range of syntactic contexts in which the designation form can be used as a kind of default form. More precisely, the following two conditions are crucial in order to eliminate any risk of confusion:

(a) the use of labels like *accusative* or *ergative*, traditionally reserved to case forms of nouns that must be syntactically licensed, should not be extended to forms available for an extra-syntactic function of quotation / designation;

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[6] This may well be a consequence of the structuralist approach, whose principles were hardly compatible with the acknowledgement of the importance of a use of nouns that quite obviously does not lend itself to an analysis based on possibilities of commutation in identical contexts.

(b) labels whose etymology suggests the possibility of an extra-syntactic function (nominative, or absolutive) should not be used for case forms of nouns that must be syntactically licensed, or for adpositions.

8. Proposals

8.1. Absolute (or default, or designative) case *vs.* integrative cases

By virtue of their etymology, *nominative* as well as *absolutive* are possible labels for noun forms used in the extra-syntactic function of quotation / designation, irrespective of their distribution in syntactic contexts. However, in current practice, each of them has specialized to systems in which a syntactically unmarked form of nouns assumes a particular range of syntactic uses. Moreover, their use in some (relatively recent) descriptive traditions is in total contradiction with their original meaning, since they are sometimes used as labels for syntactically marked noun forms or adpositions. Therefore, the proposal to give them back their original meaning would probably meet incomprehension, and could be a source of misunderstandings.

In spite of the risk of confusion with 'absolutive', a possible solution would be to generalize *absolute form* (or *absolute case*, in languages in which nouns have morphological case) for the form taken by nouns in the extra-syntactic function of quotation / designation, without any hint at the range of syntactic roles which may trigger the use of other case forms or the presence of adpositions. Other possibilities would be *default form/case*, or *designative form/case*. *Designative form/case* would have the advantage of retaking the etymological motivation of *nominative* in quite a transparent way. One could also think of *zero form/case*, or *unmarked form/case*, but I prefer to exclude such terms because of the risk of confusion between morphological and syntactic markedness: as already commented in Section 5, syntactic markedness and morphological complexity do not always coincide.

In languages in which nouns have morphological case, it may also prove useful to have a generic term for syntactically marked case forms of nouns, that is, a general term for noun forms that must be syntactically licensed, whatever their distribution. I propose to call them *integrative cases*. This term would be particularly useful in the description of binary case systems, that is, case systems in which a unique integrative case contrasts with the absolute / default / designative form of nouns. A binary case contrast is found for example in Old French, Kurdish (Kurmanji dialect), Maasai, Berber languages, South-West Bantu languages, etc. In such systems, the syntactically marked case (the integrative case, in the terminology proposed here) often has a relatively broad (and sometimes atypical) syntactic distribution which makes it particularly difficult to choose among the terms traditionally used to label cases by reference to syntactic uses considered prototypical. For example, in the Kurmanji dialect of Kurdish (see ex. (3) above), depending on the TAM value of the verb, the case form traditionally called 'oblique case' may occur (among others) in A or P role, which excludes designating it by a term referring to a specific syntactic role.

8.2. Antiaccusative and antiergative

As regards the inventory of possible labels referring to the syntactic distribution of integrative case forms or adpositions used to mark core syntactic terms, *accusative* can be

retained for integrative case forms encountered in P role, or for adpositions accompanying nouns in P role, but not in S or A role, and similarly, *ergative* is a convenient label for integrative case forms encountered in A role, or for adpositions accompanying nouns in A role, but not in S or P role.

In core term marking systems characterized by an intransitivity split (i.e., in languages having a subclass of intransitive verbs whose S argument is marked in the same way as A, and another whose S argument is marked in the same way as P), the use of *accusative* and *ergative* can be extended in the following way: *(extended) ergative* can be used as a label for integrative case forms or adpositions used for A and S_A, but neither for P nor S_P, and *(extended) accusative* can be used as a label for integrative case forms or adpositions used for P and S_p, but neither for A nor S_A.

But new terms must be coined for integrative cases or adpositions involved in less common patterns of contrast between core syntactic terms.

No language seems to have A and P in the absolute form contrasting with S in an integrative case form. The use of the same integrative case or adposition for A, P and S seems equally unattested. The possibility to have the same integrative case for A and P but not for S has been signaled in some varieties of Kurdish, but this is a very exceptional situation. Languages attesting the systematic use of three different case forms for S, A and P are also very rare (Lake Miwok – Mithun 1999 – is a possible illustration). The remaining logical possibilities are:

– integrative case forms or adpositions used for S and A, but not for P: I propose to label them *antiaccusative*; the motivation of this term is that it applies to integrative cases that are found in core term marking systems following accusative alignment, but have a distribution complementary to that of an accusative case;

– integrative case forms or adpositions used for S and P, but not for A: I propose to label them *antiergative*; the motivation of this term is that it applies to integrative cases that are found in core term marking systems following ergative alignment, but have a distribution complementary to that of an ergative case.[7]

9. Conclusion

Starting from the definitions stated in section 8, the 6 possible patterns of core term marking that follow either accusative or ergative alignment can be characterized as follows. Types (1a), (1b) and (1c) have in common the grouping S/A *vs.* P characteristic of accusative alignment, whereas types (2a), (2b) and (2c) present the grouping S/P *vs.* A characteristic of ergative alignment. Bold print signals the two patterns most commonly encountered in the languages of the world:

(1a) **absolute S/A vs. accusative P.**
(1b) *antiaccusative S/A vs. absolute P* ('marked-nominative') – see section 6.1.
(1c) *antiaccusative S/A vs. accusative P* – see section 6.2.

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[7] A possible objection to the use of this term is that it has already been applied by Comrie to a pattern of differential object marking found in Finnish, by which accusative case is replaced by nominative case when an A argument is missing (see Comrie 1975). However, recent literature on differential function marking has not retained this use of 'antiergative', so that its introduction as a label for marked case forms used in S/P function should not be a source of confusion.

(2a) *absolute S/P vs. ergative A.*
(2b) *antiergative S/P vs. absolute A* – see section 6.3.
(2c) *antiergative S/P vs. ergative A* – see section 6.4.

The logical possibilities for core term marking systems showing an intransitivity split can be characterized as follows:

(3a) *(extended) ergative A/S_A vs. absolute P/S_P.*
(3b) *absolute A/S_A vs. (extended) accusative P/S_P.*
(3a) *(extended) ergative A/S_A vs. (extended) accusative P/S_P.*

(3a) can be illustrated by Basque, a predominantly ergative language with a minor class of intransitive verbs whose S argument is in the same integrative case as the A argument of transitive verbs. (3b) can be illustrated by Latin or Russian, if one accepts to analyze 'impersonal' constructions involving an accusative NP as an instance of split intransitivity, with a minor class of intransitive verbs whose S argument is in the same integrative case as the P argument of transitive verbs in otherwise predominantly accusative languages. I am aware of no possible illustration of type (3c).

The proposals put forward in this paper do not pretend to solve all problems of case terminology. In particular, they leave entirely open the terminological questions raised by the possible use of the same case forms in core syntactic roles and in other types of roles (oblique dependents of verbs, complements of adpositions, genitival dependents of nouns, etc.). They nevertheless could contribute to bring some clarification in a domain in which terminological inconsistencies are particularly widespread.

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