

# CASE MARKERS IN PURBIYA RAJI IN COMPARATIVE PERSPECTIVE

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*This paper presents the case markers in Purbiya Raji (PR) comparing them with its other varieties. As expected, the variations in case marking is attested across Raji varieties. The variations of the case marking is also seen among the speakers of the same variety in Naukule Raji. While the elder speakers do not use the dative-accusative case marker, younger people use it. The ergative case marker -i can be reconstructed to Raji-Raute languages.*

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## 1. The Raji language

Raji is an endangered Trans-Himalayan (Tibeto-Burman, TB) language (ISO rji, glotolog: Raji 1240) spoken in Nepal, and also in India (Krishan 2001; Rastogi, 2012). It is primarily spoken in Surkhet, Bardiya, Kailali and Kanchanpur districts of western Nepal. The three varieties of Raji spoken in Nepal are Naukule, Purbiya, and Barabandale (Epele et al., 2012) and the variety spoken in Kumaun, India is also regarded as a distinct variety. The recent census (2021) records that a total of 4696 Raji people speak this as a mother tongue. The language is described as ‘threatened’ (van Driem, 2007). In Grierson and Konow's classification (1909), Raji belongs to Jungali group within Western Subgroup of Complex Pronominalized languages within Himalayan section of TB languages.<sup>1</sup> Noonan (2008) also noted that Raji belongs to the Central group of TB language family. He groups Raji with Kham group of languages and Kaiké spoken in the far-western Nepal. Similarly, Bradley (1997) classifies Raji as a Western Tibeto-Burman language, and further mentions that it is closely

linked to Raute and Magar, and is a Central Himalayish language.

There are some studies related to the Raji varieties spoken in India (Krishan, 2001) and Nepal, and there are discussions about the link between Raji and Raute (Dhakal, 2021b). The information about the Barabandale Raji is found in Khatri (2008), and Bandhu et al. (2011). A grammatical description of Kumaun Raji is available (Rastogi, 2012).

More extensive works have been done in the Purbiya Raji. The documentation corpus is found in Dhakal (2018), the glossaries are available (Dhakal 2019, Dhakal, 2023), and a descriptive grammar in the Nepali language is also available (Dhakal, 2021a) in addition to various aspects of grammar (Dhakal 2020, 2021a, 2022a, 2022b). The research works on Naukule Raji have not been published focusing on the Naukule Raji (NR) till the date. The case markers in the Purbiya Raji has not been described in the comparative perspective in the studies mentioned above.

## 2. Methodology

The data for the Purbiya Raji were collected from Madhuwan Municipality, Bardiya mainly based on Dhakal (2018). The data were collected during 2017-18, and some data were also elicited from Govinda Raji in Kathmandu. The texts and the lexical items obtained already were from Bhim Bahadur Raji, Moti Raji, Sukmati Raji, Gopisa Raji and Khadga Raji. They mainly consist of the folk stories, personal narratives, and procedural texts comprising 1600 chunks of utterances (consisting of clauses and sentences). The examples were obtained by elicited data.

The paper is analyzed from comparative perspective. The description is mainly based on

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<sup>1</sup> Grierson and Konow (1909, p. 530) mentions that they obtained the data from Asakot, India. They also include the words from Almora, India.

dialectology, and typology (cf. Payne, 2006; Bisang, 2004; Chambers & Trudgill, 2004). Bisang (2004, p. 12) notes:

... dialectologists concentrate on social and historical motivations of variation across dialects, whereas typologists are interested in universal patterns of variation across languages and their motivation by human cognition and discourse.

The cross-dialectal variations have also been discussed taking data from four varieties of Raji.

### 3. Case marking

There are case markers in PR to code the ergative-instrumental, location, genitive, dative-accusative, and associative cases. The remaining case relations are shown by postpositions. First of all, let's look at the case marking pattern in PR.

- (1) *rukḥā dḥələka*  
 rukḥā dḥəl-e-ka  
 tree fall-NTVZ-PST.SG  
 'The tree fell.'
- (2) *ḡai bəʈʈa dzaʔka*  
 ḡai-i bəʈʈa dzaʔ-kā  
 1SG-ERG rice eat-PST.1SG  
 'I ate rice.'

As shown in (1), the subject of the intransitive clause is null-marked, but the case marker *-i* is appended to the agent of the transitive clause (2). However, the case-marking pattern in this language is not consistent. The agents of some transitive clauses (such as 3) take the ergative markers whereas others do not (6).

- (3) *tsurunʈjai rukḥā muksi*  
 tsurunʈja-i rukḥā muk-si  
 boy-ERG tree see-PST3SG.1SG  
 'The boy fell down the tree.'

As explained above, we need to take a number of factors to explain the case marking pattern in PR.

### 4. Case markers

The terms such as subject, agent, patient etc. in this section are based on Payne (2006). There are some difficulties in explaining the case marking pattern in the languages of this region at least for a couple of reasons. Firstly, although the languages seem like ergative-absolutive, the ergative case marking is not consistent. A number of semantico-pragmatic factors determine the presence of

ergative marking. Secondly, the objects are not consistently marked in these languages, and show differential object marking. There are a number of studies which reveal this pattern in Tibeto-Burman (DeLancey, 2011; Chelliah & Hyslop, 2011; Willis 2011; among others) and Indo-Aryan (Verbeke, 2013). The case markers discussed in this section are the ergative-instrumental, dative-accusative, locative, genitive, ablative and associative cases.

#### 4.1 Nominative case

The zero-marking is described as nominative case in PR. The subject of the intransitive clauses are always null-marked (4).

- (4) *ḡa boḡa swaka*  
 ḡa boḡa swa-ka  
 1SG forest go-PST.SG  
 'I went to the forest.'

By contrast, the agents of the transitive clauses generally take the ergative case. In a pair of sentences given in (5-6), the ergative marker is attached to the agent because the verb is in the past tense. By contrast, the agent in (6) does not host the ergative marker because the verb is in the present tense. The presence of ergativity is thus decided by tense and aspect of the verbs.

- (5) *ḡai kḥeʈ dzoʈekā*  
 ḡai-i kḥeʈ dzoʈ-e-kā  
 1SG-ERG field plough-NTVZ-PST.1SG  
 'I ploughed the field.'
- (6) *ḡa kḥeʈ dzoʈekū*  
 ḡa kḥeʈ dzoʈ-e-kū  
 1SG field plough-NTVZ-PRES.1SG  
 'I plough the field.'

The subjects of the transitive clauses in the past tense are generally marked (6, 8). By contrast, the subjects of the transitive clauses, if they are in the present tense, are not consistently marked (5, 7).

- (7) *ḡa bəʈʈa dzaʔkū*  
 ḡa bəʈʈa dzaʔ-kū  
 1SG rice eat-PRES.1SG  
 'I eat rice.'
- (8) *ḡai bəʈʈa dzaʔkā*  
 ḡai-i bəʈʈa dzaʔ-kā  
 1SG-ERG rice eat-PST.1SG  
 'I ate rice.'

The fact that Raji seems to be like nominative-ergative language is briefly discussed in section (1), and section (3.1). Similarly, some aspects of differential object marking is presented in section (3.3).

#### 4.2 Ergative-instrumental case

The ergative case is *-i* in PR. Some vowel ending nouns take the ergative marker *-wi*, as shown in (15, 19). The agent of the transitive and the ditransitive clauses receives the ergative case. For example, subjects of some transitive clauses receive the ergative case, whereas others do not.

- (9) *ɲa dinkəl ghās gək-kū*  
 ɲa dinkəl ghās gək-kū  
 1SG everyday grass cut-PRES.1SG  
 'I cut grass everyday.'
- (10) *ɲai kuja ghās gək-kā*  
 ɲa-i kuja ghās gək-kā  
 1SG-ERG yesterday grass cut-PST.1SG  
 'I cut grass yesterday.'
- (11) *ɲa bəʃa dzaʔ-kū*  
 ɲa bəʃa dzaʔ-kū  
 1SG rice eat-PRES.1SG  
 'I eat rice.'
- (12) *namha oŋha nariu bwawi sudhja*  
 nam-ha oŋ-ha nariu bwa-i  
 house-LOC come-PERF time father-ERG  
 sudh-ja  
 ask-2PST  
 'While coming home, (his) father asked him.'  
 [Five Brothers.21]
- (13) *ɲa pon bhərakū*  
 ɲa pon bhəra-kū  
 1SG life fill-PRES.1SG  
 'I fill in the life.' [SunkesriQueen.74]

The noun phrases without nouns also take the ergative case. It is not necessary that there is always a noun that takes the ergative marker. The head of the syntactically nominalized clause takes the ergative case as shown in (14). In this example, there is the absence of the head noun, and the nominalized verb form takes the ergative marker.

- (14) *məʃ tʊŋjaŋni tshorau məkka*  
 məʃ tʊŋ-jaŋ-i  
 brewed.liquor drink-NMLZ-ERG  
 tshorau mək-ka  
 son beat-PST.SG  
 'The person who drank the liquor beat the boy.'

The ergative determined by tense and aspect is also reported in Nepali (see Li, 2007, p. 1466), and animacy (Verbeke, 2013, p. 149). These factors are also relevant in analyzing the optional ergative marking in Tibeto-Burman languages (DeLancey, 2011).

The ergative and instrumental is the same in PR. An example follows in which the instrumental *-i* is attached to *qəŋtha* 'stick'.

- (15) *ɲai qəŋthawi mubhu təm-kā*  
 ɲa-i qəŋtha-i mubhu təm-kā  
 1SG-ERG stick-INST snake throw-PST.1SG  
 'I threw the snake with the stick.'

The examples (16-18) illustrate the instrumental case.

- (16) *tsuruntja-i pəina-i mubu saʃ-ka*  
 tsuruntja-i pəina-i mubu saʃ-ka  
 girl-ERG stick-INST snake kill-PST.SG  
 'The girl killed the snake with the stick.'
- (17) *ɲai sjaŋi sjak gakkā*  
 ɲa-i sjaŋ-i sjak gak-kā  
 I-ERG sickle-INST wild.yam cut-PST.1SG  
 'I cut the wild yam with the sickle.'
- (18) *erai bəntsəroi rukhā gakka*  
 era-i bəntsəro-i rukhā gak-ka  
 boy-ERG axe-INST tree cut-PST.SG  
 'I boy cut (fell) the tree with the axe.'
- (19) *tsawi sudhja*  
 tsau-i sudh-ja  
 son-ERG ask-2PST  
 '(His) son asked.' [FiveBrothers.22]

The instrumental case is used to show the instrument used to carry out certain functions. The inanimate objects are used as instruments to perform different actions in these examples. The case marker *-i* is also attested in other Tibeto-Burman languages (see LaPolla, 1995, p. 195).

#### 4.3 Dative-accusative case

The dative-accusative case is marked by *-kəna* in PR. The direct object (recipient) of the ditransitive clause is marked with the dative case.

- (20) *ɲai tsuruntjakəna bəntsəro bəikā*  
 ɲa-i tsuruntja-kəna bəntsəro bəi-kā  
 1SG-ERG girl-DAT axe give-PST.SG  
 'I gave the axe to the girl.'

(21) *breunaŋni in kura məŋkəkəna gara*  
 breunaŋ-i in kura məŋka-kəna gar-a  
 Tharu-ERG this matter wife-ACC say-2PST  
 'A Tharu said this to (my) wife.'

(22) *honi ŋəkəna goŋjau maneksi*  
 hon-i ŋa-kəna goŋjau  
 3SG-ERG 1SG-ACC younger.brother  
  
 man-e-ksi  
 consider-NTVZ-PST.3SG.1SG  
 'He considered me his brother.'

In the following ditransitive clauses, the dative case is also attached to the indirect object.

(23) *basuki nagkəna hon keŋikəna sopeja*  
 basuki nag-kəna hon keŋi-kəna sope-ja  
 Basuki snake-DAT that girl-DAT give-2PST  
 '(They) gave the girl to the Basuki snake.'  
 [FiveBrothers.72]

The direct object does not generally host the case marker. However, direct object *nag* 'snake god' is also case marked in the corpus. It shows that both the direct, and indirect objects take the dative case in PR. For the convenience, the case marker *-kəna* in the object in the transitive clause is glossed as accusative (ACC) whereas the case marker with the recipient object is glossed as dative (DAT).

When the human nouns occur in the object position, they generally take the accusative case. In examples (24), the objects are marked with the object (accusative) case.

(24) *bəju-i rumukəna mokka*  
 bəju-i rumu-kəna mok-ka  
 father-ERG daughter-ACC beat-PST.SG  
 'The father beat (his) daughter.'

(25) *honi moŋkaukəna nam həiŋə ʈoŋka*  
 hon-i moŋkau-kəna nam həiŋə ʈoŋ-ka  
 3SG-ERG wife-ACC house ABL drive-PST.SG  
 'He drove away his wife from home.'

The pronouns generally take the accusative case when they appear in the object position (26).

(26) *ŋai honkəna bheŋeka*  
 ŋa-i hon-kəna bheŋ-e-ka  
 1SG-ERG 3SG-ACC meet-NTV-PST.SG  
 'I met him.'

While definite nouns take the accusative marker, non-specific nouns do not. This is also an areal feature of IA languages (Masica, 1991). It is also to be noted that the indefinite suffixes *-po* and *-te* are

used to show the indefinite in PR, such as *gun* 'who', *gunpo* 'someone', *gunŋe* 'someone' etc.

(27) *honi tsaukəna mokka*  
 hon-i tsau-kəna mok-ka  
 he-ERG son-DAT beat-PST.SG  
 'He beat his son.'

(28) *honi tsau mokka*  
 hon-i tsau mok-ka  
 he-ERG son beat-PST.SG  
 'He beat his son.'

(29) *aŋte oka*  
 aŋ-te o-ka  
 what-INDEF happen-PST.SG  
 'Something happened.'

The objects are not consistently marked in PR. While animate, and specific nouns generally take the object marker, inanimate nouns do not host them.

If the noun is not specific, it is null-marked as shown in (31, 33). Similarly, the animate nouns may be marked with the dative-accusative case, or may be null-marked.

(30) *ŋai era moka*  
 ŋa-i era mok-kā  
 I-ERG boy beat-PST.1SG  
 'I beat the boy.'

(31) *ŋai erakəna moka*  
 ŋa-i era-kəna mok-kā  
 I-ERG boy-ACC beat-PST.1SG  
 'I beat the boy.'

(32) *bhəijai gromu tsumka*  
 bhəija-i gromu tsum-ka  
 young.brother-ERG girl hold-PST.SG  
 '(My) brother held the girl.'

(33) *bhəijai gromukəna tsumka*  
 bhəija-i gromu-kəna tsum-ka  
 young.brother-ERG girl-DAT hold-PST.SG  
 '(My) younger brother held the girl.'

The inanimate noun generally does not take the accusative case. However, when the inanimate objects behave like characters in narratives, they take the accusative marker. In example (34), inanimate noun *p<sup>h</sup>ulbari* 'garden' takes the accusative case.

- (34) *pʰiri pʰulbarikəna sətʃe sərəp kʰəja*  
 pʰiri pʰulbari-kəna sətʃesərəp kʰəi-ja  
 again garden-ACC curse do-2PST  
 'And again he cursed the garden.'  
 [SunkesriQueen.93]

- (35) *hon mugrakəna tsumtəna sentɲij nʰəu həitəna*  
 hon mugra-kəna tsum-təna  
 3SG wood.hammer-ACC hold-SEQ  
 sentɲij nʰəu həitəna  
 make.dance-SEQ and.then from  
 'Having hold the wooden hammer, and then,'  
 [MarriageMoti.73-74]

- (36) *honi moʃkəkəkəna nam həitə ʈəŋka*  
 hon-i moʃkəu-kəna nam həitə ʈəŋ-ka  
 he-ERG wife-ACC house from drive-PST.SG  
 'He drove away the wife from home.'

If the noun is indefinite, it does not receive the accusative case.

- (37) *thəru i khəʈha gai konka*  
 thəru-i khəʈ-ha gai kon-ka  
 Tharu-ERG field-LOC cow grze-PST.SG  
 'The Tharu grazed the cow in the field.'

Like in Indo-Aryan languages of this region, there are a number of cases in which the dative-marked subjects are used in PR. They are used to indicate various uses. To begin, they are used to indicate physical sensations or conditions (38-40).

- (38) *ɲakə tsəŋkəna sərɖi glaka*  
 ɲa-kə tsəŋ-kəna sərɖi gla-ka  
 I-GEN son-dat common.cold catch-PST.SG  
 'My son has caught the common cold.'

- (39) *ɲəikəna isa ɖukkhə heɲ*  
 ɲəi-kəna isa ɖukkhə heɲ  
 1PL-DAT like.this hardship COP.PRES  
 'I have hardships like this.'  
 [FiveBrothers.127]

- (40) *ɲakəna risəɲ səi heka*  
 ɲa-kəna risəɲ səi heka  
 I-DAT anger rise COP.PST  
 'I was angry.'

The dative subject indicates the psychological or mental states.

- (41) *ɲakəna nəmkə jad oɲka*  
 ɲa-kəna nəm-kə jad oɲ-ka  
 I-DAT house-GEN remembering come-PST.SG  
 'I remembered home.'

- (42) *ɲakəna in kura thaha həima*  
 ɲa-kəna in kura thaha həima  
 I-DAT this thing knowledge COP.NEG  
 'I do not know this thing.'

- (43) *ɲakəna na ʈa aɲ ʈha*  
 ɲa-kəna ʈa aɲ ʈha  
 I-DAT part what knowledge  
 'What do I know?' [SunkesriQueen.308]

The dative marked subjects indicate wanting or needing.

- (44) *naɲkəna aɲ tsəieka*  
 naɲ-kəna aɲ tsəi-e-ka  
 you-DAT what need-NTVZ-PST.SG  
 'What do you need?'

- (45) *naɲkəna nəmha kam briɲ*  
 naɲ-kəna nəm-ha ka-m briɲ  
 you-DAT house-LOC go-PURP should  
 'I should go home.'

The dative-marked subject shows the obligation, and compulsion in PR. Examples follow (46-47).

- (46) *ɲakəna nəmha kanəɲ heɲ*  
 naɲ-kəna nəm-ha ka-ɲjaɲ heɲ  
 you-DAT house-LOC go-NMLZ COP  
 'I have to go home.'

- (47) *ɲakəna in kam kʰəiɲjaɲ heɲ*  
 naɲ-kəna in kam kʰəi-ɲjaɲ heɲ  
 you-DAT this work do-NMLZ COP  
 'I have to do this work.'

In a typical case, the dative case marking is used with the verb meaning 'match'. An example follows.

- (48) *ɲəikəna səttəlsɲ radza dəi suhaeɲma*  
 ɲəi-kəna səttəlsɲ radza dəi  
 you-DAT Sattalsingh king with  
 suha-e-ɲ-ma  
 match-NTVZ-INF-NEG  
 'Sattalsingh King does not match you.'  
 [Sunkesri Queen.304]

The dative-marked subjects are used with the desiderative verb forms.

- (49) *honkəna tshasa glabəka*  
 hon-kəna tsha-sa glabə-ka  
 I-DAT play-DESID feel-PST.SG  
 'He wanted to play.'

- (50) *ḡakəna dindil rəksi tuḡsa glaki*  
 ḡa-kəna dindil rəksi tuḡ-sa  
 I-DAT daily liquor drink-DESID

glə-ki  
 befall-PRES  
 'I want to drink liquor everyday.'

As Willis noted in the case of Darma in India (2011, p. 107), we may assume the influence of Nepali, the influence of the medium language in eliciting the data. Although dative subjects are common across Indo-Aryan languages, this is less discussed phenomenon among Tibeto-Burman languages. It is therefore difficult to claim at this moment whether this is a feature of PR, or an approximate translation of Nepali sentences into PR.

#### 4.4 Locative

The locative marker is *-ha* in PR. The location of space is shown in (51-53).

- (51) *n<sup>h</sup>əu tukuha rumal rupka*  
 n<sup>h</sup>əu tuku-ha rumal rup-ka  
 and.then neck-LOC handkerchief tie-PST.SG  
 '(He) tied the handkerchief in the neck.'  
 [PearStory.7]

- (52) *bau oḡa emha*  
 bau oḡ-a em-ha  
 father come-2PST road-LOC  
 'The father came to the road.'  
 [FrogStory.7]

- (53) *hon namha nəika*  
 hon nam-ha nəi-ka  
 3SG house-LOC sit-PST.SG  
 'I lived (sat) at home.'

The location of time is shown in (54-57).

- (54) *āitsuha ḡəikə pərai həimani*  
 āitsu-ha ḡəi-kə pə-r-ai həimani  
 small-LOC we-gen read-NMLZ NEG.COP  
 'When we were small, (we) did not get chance to read (lit. reading was not available).'  
 [LifeStory.Gopi.4-5]

- (55) *saunha tsol djau rwāka*  
 saun-ha tsol djau rwā-ka  
 Saun-LOC much rain fall-PST.SG  
 'It rained a lot in the month of Shrawan.'

- (56) *ḡai pudzaha ts<sup>h</sup>ela bəika*  
 ḡa-i pudza-ha ts<sup>h</sup>ela bəi-ka  
 I-ERG worship-PST goat give-PST.SG  
 'I offered he-goat in the worship.'

- (57) *tshəkalha swam briḡ*  
 tshəkal-ha swa-m briḡ  
 morning-LOC walk-PURP should  
 '(We) should walk in the morning.'

It is used to refer to the state of human experience.

- (58) *ḡa hosha heḡ*  
 ḡa hos-ha heḡ  
 1SG consciousness-LOC COP.PRES.SG  
 'I am conscious.'

- (59) *ḡa ḡukhəha heḡ*  
 ḡa ḡukhə-ha heḡ  
 1SG hardship-LOC COP.PRES.SG  
 'I am in hardship.'

It is used to show the cost of things, or items.

- (60) *ḡai in ḡhajaḡri plā ruijāha ləukā*  
 ḡa-i in ḡhajaḡri plā rupijā-ha  
 I-ERG this cloth five rupee-LOC  
 ləu-kā  
 buy-PST.1SG  
 'I bought this cloth for five rupees.'

- (61) *honi ḡa rupjaha brik ləuka*  
 hon-i ḡa rupja-ha brik ləu-kā  
 he-ERG one rupee-LOC needle buy-PST.SG  
 'He bought this needle for one rupees.'

It also indicates a larger group to which an item or person belongs

- (62) *terə b<sup>h</sup>ai bəinaha barə b<sup>h</sup>ai bəina siswa*  
 terə b<sup>h</sup>ai bəina-ha barə b<sup>h</sup>ai  
 thirteen brother sister-LOC twelve brother  
 bəina si-a  
 sister die-PST  
 'Among the thirteen siblings, twelve of them already died.'  
 [LifeStory.Gopi.102]

Locative case is also used to show the human qualities, and in this case the non-finite form of the verb marked with *-jaḡ* takes the locative marker.

- (63) *ḡa namha nəima aḡ dos heḡ*  
 ḡa nam-ha nəi-m-ha aḡ dos  
 1SG house-LOC sit-PURP-LOC what fault  
 heḡ  
 COP.PRES.SG  
 'What is my fault in sitting at home?'

- (64) *ḡai rəksi tuḡəmha aḡ maməḡza oka*  
 ḡa-i rəksi tuḡ-əm-ha aḡ  
 1SG-ERG liquor drink-PURP-LOC what

ma-mədza o-ka  
 NEG-good become-PST.SG  
 'What bad thing is there in my (habit of) drinking liquor?'

In addition to the location of time and space, there are other uses of the locative case as illustrated in these examples.

#### 4.5 Genitive case

The genitive case is *-kə*, also realized as *-k*. With the first person pronoun, the genitive case ends in *-k*, but with the third person, it ends in *-kə*. Examples follow.

- (65) *mamai ɲakəna nam həiɲna ʈonkasi*  
 mama-i ɲa-kəna nam  
 maternal.uncle-ERG I-ACC house  
 həiɲna ʈon-kasi  
 ABL drive.out-PST.SG  
 'The maternal uncle drove me out of the house.'

It is used to show kinship relation (66), and other belongings (67-68).

- (66) *ɲakə sumʈhō tsəɲ hekəɲ*  
 ɲa-kə sum-ʈhō tsəɲ hekəɲ  
 I-GEN three-CLF child.1SG COP.PRES  
 'I have three children.'
- (67) *ɲakə nam*  
 ɲa-k nam  
 I-GEN house  
 'My house'
- (68) *honkə nim<sup>h</sup>il tsau siksi*  
 hon-kə nim-g<sup>h</sup>il tsau si-ksi  
 he-GEN two-CLF child die-PST.PL  
 'Both of his two children died.'

There are also the cases that where the genitive relation is obtained by different constructions. The genitive relation in PR is also shown simply by juxtaposing the possessor, and possessed items in that order as shown in (69).

- (69) *hon səttəlsinɲ radza dzeu siswa*  
 hon səttəlsinɲ radza dzeu si-swa  
 that Sattalsing king mother die-PST  
 'The mother of Sattalsing queen died.'  
 [SunkesriQueen.12]

As shown in (70), there is case compounding in PR, in which the genitive case is followed by the locative. It indicates that the person moves upto a 'person', 'near' him. Examples follow.

- (70) *ɲa gurəukəha swakā*  
 ɲa gurəu-kə-ha swa-kā  
 I priest-GEN-LOC go-PST.1SG  
 'I went to the priest.'
- (71) *ɲa bədzjakəha kakā*  
 ɲa bədzja-kə-ha ka-kā  
 I grandfather-GEN-LOC go-PST.1SG  
 'I went to (my) grandfather.'
- (72) *era ɲakəha oɲka*  
 era ɲa-kə-ha oɲ-ka  
 boy I-GEN-LOC come-PST  
 'The boy came to me.'

Locative case follows the genitive case in case compounding. In example (71), the full noun phrase may be *bədzja-kə nam-ha* 'grandfather-GEN house-LOC'. Similarly, the full noun phrase in (72) may be *ɲa-kə nam-ha* '1SG-GEN house-LOC'. There is the absence of the noun following the genitive marked nouns in these examples (71-72). The genitive case *-k* is also reported in Magar (Grunow-Hårsta, 2008).

#### 4.6 Ablative case

The ablative is shown by the postposition *həiɲə* 'from'. It shows the source or origin. The ablative postposition may follow the nouns, or adverbs. When it follows the nouns, it shows the origin or source as in (73-75).

- (73) *dħərap həiɲə khləi-ɲəna leɲa*  
 dħərap həiɲə khləi-ɲəna leɲ-a  
 trap ABL untie-SEQ leave-2PST  
 'Having been untied from the trap, (he) let (it go) free.'  
 [FiveBrothers.161]

- (74) *dəilekh həiɲə wəɲsi*  
 dəilekh həiɲə wəɲ-si  
 Dailekh ABL come-PST.PL  
 '(The people) came from Dailekh.'  
 [LifeStory.Moti.40]

- (75) *mətsa boɲa həiɲə nəmha oɲka*  
 mətsa boɲa həiɲə nəm-ha oɲ-ka  
 girl jungle ABL house-LOC come-PST  
 'The girl came from the forest.'

This can also follow adverbs that typically show time.

- (76) *tsəɲkəna kuja həiɲə dzəro ʈoɲʈhaka*  
 tsəɲ-kəna kuja həiɲə  
 son.1SG-DAT day.before.yesterday from

dzəro [ɔŋ-ʈʰa-ka  
fever come-PERF-COP  
'(My) son caught fever from the day before  
yesterday.'

- (77) *ŋa pləŋ bədze həiʈə niŋkama*  
ŋa pləŋ bədze həiʈə niŋ-ka-ma  
I five o'clock ABL sleep-PST-NEG  
'I did not sleep from five o'clock.'

It indicates the source (78-79).

- (78) *in n<sup>h</sup>əu həiʈə*  
in n<sup>h</sup>əu həiʈə  
this later ABL  
'From later on, [LifeStory.Moti.24]
- (79) *naŋi bəi həiʈə aŋ aŋ darka*  
naŋi bəi həiʈə aŋ aŋ dər-ka  
you-ERG father ABL what what find-PST.SG  
'What (PL) did you get from your father?'

The typical ablative examples are illustrated in (73-79).

#### 4.7 Associative case

The associative case is *-na* in PR. It is used to show togetherness.

- (80) *ts<sup>h</sup>oʈasiŋna gomem baŋa*  
ts<sup>h</sup>oʈasiŋ-na gome-m baŋ-a  
Chotasingh-ASS fight-INF begin-2PST  
'(He) began to fight with Chhotasingh.'  
[FiveBrothers.289]
- (81) *sunkesri ranina sjam bəŋa*  
sunkesrirani-na sja-m bəŋ-a  
Sunkesriqueen-ASS dance-PURP begin-2PST  
'(He) began to dance with Sunkesri queen.'  
[SunkesriQueen.364]

The comitative meaning is also indicated by *-dʒəi* in PR.

- (82) *meʈdʒəi wanjaŋ*  
meʈ-dʒəi wan-jaŋ  
leader-with come-NMLZ  
'One coming with the leader'
- (83) *hon ŋəidʒəi oŋka*  
hon ŋəi-dʒəi oŋ-ka  
he we-with come-PST  
'He came with me.'

The word *dʒəi* refers both 'accompaniment' relation and coordinating conjunct 'and' in PR.

#### 5. Comparison of case markers in Raji

The nominal morphology is mainly suffixing in Raji varieties. Raji nouns inflect for number, emphatic marking, indefinite marking among

others in PR Raji (Dhakal, 2021a). This is similar to the Naukule variety (Dhakal, forthcoming). This is true in the Barabandale Raji as well (Bandhu et al., 2011).

Table (1) shows the individual case markers in Raji varieties including Raute. The data are taken from various sources, such as Dhakal (2021a) for Purbiya Raji, author's own field work for Naukule Raji (Dhakal, forthcoming), Bandhu et al. (2011) for Barabandale Raji, Rastogi (2012) for Kumaun Raji, and Khadka (2006) for Raute.

Table 1: Case markers of Raji varieties and Raute

	Naukule	Barabandale	Purbiya	Kumaun	Raute
Erg- Inst	-i	-i	-i	-i	-i
Dat	-k <sup>h</sup> əlai	-ki	-kəna	-k <sup>h</sup> anu	-ke
Loc	-bə	-ha, bi	-ha	-ja	-ja
Gen	-k <sup>h</sup> əe, -bəe	-ki, bə	-kə	-ke, -e	-ke
Com	-nəŋ	-	-dʒəi, -na	-	-matae
Abl	-kəʈə	-haŋiŋ	-kəʈə	-di	-koma

The survey shows that there are gaps in obtaining the data in all of the above-mentioned languages and varieties of Raji, and they are indicated by (-). Interestingly, the ergative and instrumental case markers are similar in all varieties of Raji, including Raute. An example from Barabandale Raji follows.

- (84) *ŋai tsakhui hā gak-k-ā*  
ŋA-i tsakhui-i hā gak-k-ā  
1SG-ERG knife-INST fish cut-SD-PST1  
'I cut the fish with a knife.'  
[Bar. Raji, Bandhu et al., 2011, p.60]

A couple of examples from Naukule Raji follow.

- (85) *ŋai məbu saʈka*  
ŋa-i məbu saʈ-ka  
1SG-ERG snake kill-PST.SG  
'I killed the snake.'
- (86) *labo d<sup>h</sup>āʈilai tsau poʈka*  
labo d<sup>h</sup>āʈila-i tsau poʈ-ka  
tall boy-ERG son call-PST.SG  
'The tall boy called (his) son.'

An example from Kumaun Raji is given in (87) (Rastogi, 2012, p. 44). An example from Raute is given in (88).



- (87) *nai kuie hətəə*  
 na-i kuie hətə-ə  
 1SG-ERG dog kill-PST  
 'I killed the dog.'
- (88) *nai kəkka bədzazrē thepa*  
 na-i kəkka-ø bədzar-ē thepa  
 1SG-ERG uncle-ABS market-LOC see-PST  
 'I saw uncle at the market.'

We also find the ergative marker *-i* in Raute as given in (87-88). Despite the fact that the distribution of the ergative marker in each of the varieties including Raute may behave slightly differently, the case form is the same. The ergative marker *-i* can be reconstructed to Raji-Raute group of languages.

The dative is marked with the suffixes which do not resemble in form, but all of them begin with *-k*. As discussed above, the dative is marked with *-kəna* in PR. There is one more thing to be noted regarding the dative marking in Naukule Raji. While the people of elder generation do not make use of this, younger, and educated people use this. A couple of examples follow.

- (89) *ŋai naŋkʰəlai bəntsəi bəkəna*  
 ŋa-i naŋ-kʰəlai bəntsəi bəe-kə-na  
 1SG-ERG 2SG-DAT axe give-PST-1SG.2SG  
 'I gave you the axe.' [N. Raji]
- (90) *ŋai baleu bʰāusi bəka*  
 ŋa-i baleu bʰāusi bəe-ka  
 1SG-ERG boy spade give-PST.SG  
 'I gave boy the spade.' [N. Raji]

I worked with three Naukule Raji speakers, and obtained a few texts from other three speakers. The elder people do not make use of the dative-accusative case marker whereas younger people make use of this. This is consistent both in the elicited examples and in the corpus data.

The genitive begins with *-k* in all of these varieties. An example of the Naukule Raji is given in (91). Examples from Purbiya Raji are given in (92).

- (91) *ŋakə nam*  
 ŋa-kə nam  
 I-GEN house  
 'My house'
- (92) *honkə niʰðlə tsau siksi*  
 hon-kə ni-ʰð-lə tsau si-ksi  
 he-GEN two-CLF-EMPH child die-PST.PL  
 'His two children died.'

There are cases that the genitive case is formed merely by juxtaposing the possessor and possessed in that order at least in Purbiya, Naukule, and Kumaun Raji. In Kumaun Raji, however, although the genitive marker is *-ke*, it seems to be a borrowing from Hindi, such as *kəlawəti-ke kui* 'Kalawati's dog' etc (Rastogi, 2012, p. 47). Rastogi further mentions that the genitive *-e* also serves as a genitive marker in Kumaun Raji. In Barabandale Raji, the genitive markers are either *-ki* or *-bai* (Bandhu et al., 2011, p.62).

- (93) *in tsəŋki ʈopi*  
 in tsəŋ-ki ʈopi  
 this son-1SG-GEN cap  
 'This is my son's cap.'
- (94) *ŋabəi namha kui rɦaika*  
 ŋa-bəi nam-ha kui rɦai-k-a  
 1SG-GEN house-LOC dog be-SD-PST  
 'There was a dog in my house.'

Among the varieties mentioned above, they share the case markers that begin with *-b* and *-h*.

- (95) *ŋa kambə laekakə*  
 ŋa kəm-bə laeka-kə  
 1SG field-LOC reach-PST  
 'I reached the field.'
- (96) *ui jakubə pan hoikə*  
 ui jaku-bə pan hoi-kə  
 3SG hand-LOC rope tie-PST  
 'He tied the rope in his hand.'

Barabandale Raji contains the case marker that begins with *-b* and *-h*, such as *dzali-ha* 'in the net', and *nam-hi* 'in the net'. By contrast, the locative in Kumaun Raji is *-ja*, such as *siŋ-ja* 'in the tree', and *godji-ja* 'in the field'.

Since the postposition to show the case relation of associative is not available for all of these varieties, they are not included in this section. Similarly, the forms to show the ablative case marking also differ across these varieties, they are not discussed in this section either. The comparison shows that "dialects may differ from one another at any significant level of linguistic analysis, or, in other words, in terms of any structural unit" (Chambers & Trudgill, 2004, p. 127). The discussion also shows that the dialectal variation of the under-described variation of language like Raji may be very interesting to reveal structural differences across them. Purbiya

nd Barabandale are the closest varieties, and Kumau Raji shares least features among them.

## 6. Discussion

One of the intriguing phenomena about the case marking in Raji varieties in general, and the Purbiya Raji in particular is the optional ergative marking and the differential object marking. The issue to be further explored is how the semantic and pragmatic factors come into scene that determine the optional ergative marking and differential object marking.

In a special issue devoted to the optional case marking, Chelliah and Hyslop (2011, pp. 4-5) explained that the syntactic, semantic, pragmatic, and discourse factors that co-occur with marked agents. They also noted the field methodology in the data collection of the agentive case marking. They explained that the elements that determine the ergative marking are “agent volition, control, directed activity, creation and transformation, and personal choice”, contrastive focus, agentive focus among others (Chelliah & Hyslop, 2011, pp. 4-5). The differential subject and object marking in languages of Tibeto-Burman is a feature of this region (Bond, Hildebrandt & Dhakal, 2013). The distribution of the case markers in a large naturalistic data will show a number of factors that help determine these issues.

## 7. Conclusion

Despite the fact that Purbiya Raji is an ergative-absolutive language, the ergative marking in Purbiya Raji is not consistently ergative. The perfectivity of the verbs determines the conditions for the ergative marking. Similarly, the object marking in Purbiya Raji is not consistently marked. The animacy, and specificity determine the conditions for object marking. While comparing the case markers, the ergative-instrumental case *-i* can be reconstructed to Raji-Raute languages. All Raji varieties and Raute contain the object marking with #k. A further investigation is necessary to ensure that take account of the optional ergative marking and differential object marking in Raji.

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## Abbreviations

COND	conditional	DAT	dative
FUT	future	GEN	genitive case
NMLZ	nominalizer	NTVZ	nativizing marker
PERF	perfective	PL	plural
PRES	present	PST	past tense
SD	same day tense	SEQ	sequential converb
SG	singular		

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