Differential object marking in Mongolian and Uzbek

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1   Introduction

In this talk we present the conditions for DOM in Mongolian and Uzbek, discuss the function of DOM in these languages, and present the basic idea for an analysis of DOM in these languages.

Functions of differential object marking cross-linguistically:

- to distinguish a P argument with agent-like properties from the A argument (Comrie (1989), Bossong (1985), Aissen (2003))

- to index the high transitivity of a clause (Hopper and Thompson (1980))

- to distinguish the arguments of a high transitivity clause (Næss (2007))

2   DOM in Mongolian

2.1   DOM of pronouns, names and demonstrative/definite NPs

Differential object marking of pronouns, names and demonstrative/definite NPs is obligatory, irrespective of the animacy of the DO referent.

(1)   Chi hen*(-iig) har-san be?
        you who-ACC see-PST Q

        Who did you see?

(2)   Bi Bold*(-ig) har-san.
        I   Bold-ACC see-PST

        I have seen Bold.

(3)   Bi ene/ter   nom*(-ig) unsh-san.
        I   this/that book-ACC read-PST

        I've read this/that book (locally visible).

2.2   DOM of indefinite NPs

Questionaire on DOM and DSM (differential subject marking) in Mongolian, performed in September 2007. Around 80 judgements per sentence. Participants had to judge the well-formedness of sentences on a scale from 1 (very bad) to 6 (very good).

2.2.1   Animacy

Expectation: the higher in animacy an ACC-marked direct object of a sentence, the better it is judged.

(4)   Bold unuudur neg ohin-ig   uns-meer bai-na   ge-ne.
        Bold today   a   girl-ACC kiss-DES be-PRS say-PRS

        [I heard that] Bold wants to kiss a girl today.

(5)   Bold unuudur neg melkhii-g uns-meer bai-na   ge-ne.
       Bold today   a   frog-ACC kiss-DES be-PRS say-PRS

       [I heard that] Bold wants to kiss a frog today.

(6)   Bold neg hul bumbug-iin zom-ig   uns-meer bai-na   gene.
       Bold a   footbal-GEN trophy-ACC kiss-DES be-PRS say-PRS

       [I heard that] Bold wants to kiss a football trophy today.

Results:

	neg N	neg N-ig
girl	4.4	4.6
frog	3.8	3.4
football trophy	4.3	4.2

The difference between ACC marking of the human and animate DOs is as expected. However, the judgements for the sentences with inanimate ACC-marked DOs is surprisingly high.

2.2.2   Discourse prominence

Expectation: The sooner the referent of a DO is picked up again in the following discourse, the likelier it is that the DO will be ACC marked.

First type: referent of the DO of the first clause is picked up in a second coordinated clause.

(7)   Unuudur surguuli deer Bold neg ohin-ig   uns-sen   chin   ter Bold-ig
       today   school   at Bold a   girl-ACC kiss-PST COORD she Bold-ACC
       erguul-eed algadchih-san.
       turn-CVB slap-PST

       Today, at school, Bold kissed a girl and she slapped Bold back.

Second type: refererent of the DO of the first sentence is picked up in a second sentence.

(8)   Unuudur surguuli deer Bold neg ohin-ig   uns-sen. Ter Bold-ig   erguul-eed
       today   school   at Bold a   girl-ACC kiss-PST she Bold-ACC turn-CVB
       algadchih-san.
       slap-PST

       Today, at the school, Bold kissed a girl. She slapped Bold back.

Third type: referent of the DO of the first sentence is not picked up in a second sentence.

(9)   Bold neg ohin-ig   uns-sen. Ganaa bas dahiadl surguuli-d-aa   iree-gui.
       Bold a   girl-ACC kiss-PST Gana also again   school-LOC-POSS come-NEG

       [Today we had no maths because the teacher is ill.] Bold kissed a girl. Ganaa did
       not come to school again. . . .

Results:

	type 1	type 2	type 3
kiss a girl	4.8	4.7	4.4
stroke a dog	4.0	3.9	3.4
read a book	3.7	3.3	3.9

2.2.3   Transitivity

Expectation: The higher in transitivity a DO is, the better the ACC.

Comparison of *kill* (higher transitivity) and *invite* (lower transitivity) with specific DO:

(10)   Bold neg zagdaa(-g)   al-san.
       Bold a   policeman-ACC kill-PST

       Bold killed a policeman

(11)   Unuudur Bold-in   tur-sun   udur. Tegeed   ter ger-t-ee   neg
        today   Bold-GEN born-PST day   therefore he home-LOC-POSS a
        ohin(-ig) uri-san   ge-sen.
        girl-ACC invite-PST say-PST
        Today is Bold's birthday. And [I heard that] he invited a girl to his house.

Result:

	neg N	neg N-ACC
kill	4.0	4.1
invite	4.3	4.2

No significant difference in judgements of ACC marked objects.

Comparison of *write* (higher transitivity) and *read* (lower transitivity):

(12)   Uchigdur Bold neg zahia-g   bich-sen
        yesterday Bold a   letter-ACC write-PST
        Bold wrote a letter yesterday.

(13)   Uchigdur Bold neg nom-ig   unsh-san
        yesterday Bold a   book-ACC read-PST
        Bold read a book yesterday.

Results:

	neg N	neg N-ACC
write	4.2	4.3
read	4.1	3.6

The ACC-marked indefinite DO of write is judged significantly better than the ACC-marked indefinite DO of read.

To sum up, DOM in Mongolian depends on:

- position on definiteness scale
- animacy
- discourse prominence
- transitivity

3 Uzbek

3.1 DOM with pronouns, names and demonstrative/definite NPs

ACC marker is obligatory with pronouns, names and demonstrative/definite NPs as direct objects.

(14)   a.   U   me*(-ni) tani-ma-di.
              3SG 1SG-ACC recognise-NEG-PRF
              S/he didn't recognise me.

        b.   Biz Toschkent*(-ni) aylan-ma-dik.
              1PL Taschkent-ACC turn-NEG-1PL
              We did not walk through Tashkent.

    c.   Biz bu   hikoya*(-ni) uqi-gan-miz.
            1PL DEM stories-ACC read-PST-1PL
            We read these stories.

3.2 DOM with indefinte NPs

With indefinite NPs referring to animate beings ACC is obligatory, too:

(15)   Sen bitta muschuk*(-ni) urvor-ding-mi?
        2SG a   cat-ACC   run.over-PRF.2SG-Q
        Have you run over a cat?

The ACC marking of indefinite inanimate objects is more complex since it depends on a number of parameters.

The first parameter is partitivity: if an object is to be interpreted partitively, then the ACC marker is obligatory:

(16)   Rasta-da   besch-ta kitob bor. Bitta kitob*(-ni) kecha   uq-di-m.
        bookshelf-LOC five-CL book exist a   book-ACC yesterday read-PRF-1SG
        There are five books on the shelf. One of the books I read yesterday.

(17)   Men bitta moschina(*-ni) sot-ib   ol-di-m.
        1SG a   car-ACC   sell-PTCP get-PRF-1Sg
        I bought one of the cars.

The reverse does not hold, i.e. not every ACC marked indefinite inanimate object must be interpreted partitively.

(18)   Men kecha   bitta rus-cha   kitob-ni   u'q'i-di-m.
        1SG 3SG-DAT a   Russian-in book-ACC read-PRF-1SG
        Yesterday I read a Russian novel [not necessarily partitive].

Secondly, if a dirct object is modified by a (restricted) relative clause then the ACC marker seems obligatory.

(19)   Men hozir Ispaniya-da sot-ib   ol-gan   bitta kitob-im-ni   u'q'i-yap-man.
        I   now Spain-LOC sell-GER get-PST a   book-1SG-ACC read-PRES-1SG
        I'm reading a book I bought in Spain.

(20)   Men Farhod tavsiya   q'il-gan   bitta DVD-ni   sot-ib
        I   Farhod recommandation make-PST a   DVD-ACC sell-GER
        ol-di-m.
        get-PRF-1SG
        I bought a DVD-ACC which Farhod recommended.

Thirdly, the direct object of an explicitly perfective construction (V + *finish*) must be marked with ACC.

(21)   a.   U   kecha   bitta kitob uqi-di
            3SG yesterday a   book read-PRF:3SG
            He has read a book yesterday.

        b.   U   kecha   bitta kitob*(-ni) uqi-ib   tugat-di
            3SG yesterday a   book-ACC read-GER finish-3SG
            He finished reading a book yesterday.

Fourthly, when none of the above apply, then ACC marking depends on the type of verb and the individuation (type of modification) of the referent.

With a first class (V1) of verbs (repair, erase, break, etc.) the ACC marking is obligatory, even if the object is **not** partitive or modified by a relative clause.

(22) a. Men bitta stol*(-ni) tuzat-di-m.
          1SG a   table-ACC repair-PRF-1SG

          I have repaired a table. (not necessarily partitive).

      b. U   bitta suz*(-ni)   uchir-di.
          3SG a   word-ACC delete-PRF

          S/he deleted a word (not necessarily partitive).

The ACC is obligatory even if the speaker does not have a specific entity in mind.

(23) Farhod bitta moshina*(-ni) tuzat-ib-di.
      Farhod a   car-ACC   repair-EVID-PRF

      (I have heard that) Farhod has repaired a car.

With a second class of verbs (V2), the ACC is grammatical if the indefinite inanimate object is intended to be interpreted partitively or is modified somehow, and ungrammatical if it is not modified.

(24) U   men Ispaniya-da sot-ib   ol-gan   bitta kitob*(-ni)   u'q'i-di.
      S/he I   Spain-LOC sell-GER get-PST a   book-1SG-ACC read-PRF

      S/he has read a book I bought in Spain.

(25) Men bitta machsus kitob(-ni) u'q'i-di-m
      I   a   special book-ACC read-PRF-1SG

      I've read a special book. [not necessarily partitive]

(26) Men bitta rus-ch'a   kitob(-ni) u'q'i-di-m
      I   a   Russian-in book-ACC read-PRF-1SG

      I've read a Russian book.[not necessarily partitive]

(27) Men bitta kitob(*-ni) u'q'i-di-m.
      1SG a   novel-ACC book-PRF-1SG

      I read a book.

With a third class of verbs (V3) the ACC marker is grammatical only if the object is to be interpreted partitively or if it is modified by a relative clause. Otherwise the ACC is ungrammatical.

(28) Men Farhod tavsiya   q'il-gan   bitta DVD-ni   sot-ib
      I   Farhod recommandation make-PST a   DVD-ACC sell-GER
      ol-di-m.
      get-PRF-1SG

      I bought a DVD-ACC which Farhod recommended.

(29) Men bitta machsus kitob(*-ni) sot-ib   ol-dim
      I   a   special book-ACC sell-GER get-PRF-1SG

      I've bought a special book.

(30) Men bitta rus-ch'a   kitob(*-ni) sot-ib   ol-di-m
      I   a   Russian-in book-ACC sell-GER get-PRF-1SG
      I've bought a Russian book.

(31) Men bitta book(*-ni) sot-ib   ol-dim.
      1SG a   book-ACC sell-GER get-PRF-1SG
      I bought a book.

The differential object marking of indefinite inanimate direct objects is summed up in the following table:

	a N	a ADJ N	a special N	partitive	RC
V1: repair, delete	+	+	+	+	+
V2: read, show	−	±	±	+	+
V3: buy, eat	−	−	−	+	+

In summary: A number of transitivity factors are involved in the ACC marking of indefinite inanimate DOs.

- Perfectivity: Indefinite objects in explicitly perfective constructions are obligatorily marked with ACC.

- Affectedness: Verbs which imply a change of an independently existing object seem to require ACC marking. Verbs which do not imply such a change of an independently existing object do not allow ACC of an unmodified indefinite inanimate object.

- Individuation: (i) Partitivity of indefinite objects is expressed by means of ACC. (ii) ACC marking of indefinite inanimate objects is also sensitive to the presence (and type) of modification.

The fact that the indefinite inanimate objects of higher-transitivity verbs that are obligatorily marked, while the indefinite objects of some lower-transitivity verbs cannot be marked suggests that the arguments of higher-transitivity verbs are marked (diachronically) earlier than arguments of lower-transitivity verbs.

4   Towards a rule-based account

- DOM languages have two language-specific rules for combining transitive verbs and direct objects – call them the high- and low-transitivity rules respectively.

- The rules apply if verb and argument(s) satisfy certain language-specific syntactic and semantic conditions.

For example, the conditions of application for rule R_1 in Uzbek are:

DOM		Pro	Name	Def./Dem.	Indef (not partitive)
hum					
anim					
inanim	V1			Case:ACC	
	V2				
	V3:				N/A

Conditions of application for rule R_2 in Uzbek:

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DOM		Pro	Name	Def./Dem.	Indef. (not partitive)
hum					
anim					
inanim	V1			N/A	
	V2				Case:⋆
	V3:				

This accounts for the optional marking of indefinite inanimate DOs of verbs of the second class.

- The rules can be viewed either as adding or as requiring a certain encoding of the argument(s). E.g. the high-transitivity rule may require the P argument to be ACC-marked, while the low-transitivity rule requires the P argument to be realised as unmarked for case.

- If an argument can be combined by means of either rule, then DOM is optional.

- Development of DOM along the definiteness/animacy scales involves three stages:

  – the conditions of the high-transitivity rule are reanalysed, allowing for some arguments which could only be combined by the low-transitivity rule to be combined by the high-transitivity rule
  – for a certain type of arguments there is a the competition between the two rules, which results in preferring the high-transitivity rule, and
  – the preference for using the high-transitivity rule is grammaticalised.

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