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Abstract

The differences between Urdu and English pose many challenges for learners in Pakistan. One of them is the functioning of 'Urdu case clitics as postpositions in comparison with English prepositions'. 'Case Theory' by Chomsky and Lasnik in 1977 has been implemented to qualitatively analyze whether Urdu accusative, dative and instrumental case clitics can function as Urdu postpositions in comparison with English prepositions. The study's major findings demonstrate that Urdu accusative case clitic 'KO' as well as Urdu dative case clitic 'KO' do not have structural compatibility with the English preposition 'to', hence, cannot be determined as Urdu postpositions. However, instrumental 'se' case clitics are harmonious to English prepositions to be called Urdu postpositions, for their placement in a sentence in relation to the noun they are modifying. The study also concludes the recommendation of further research to analyze the semantic properties of Urdu case clitics in comparison with English prepositions.

Keywords: Syntactic Theory, Syntactic Analysis, Urdu Case Clitics, Urdu Postpositions, English Prepositions

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Title

Syntactic Analysis of Urdu Case Clitics as Postpositions in Comparison with English Prepositions

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Abstract

The differences between Urdu and English pose many challenges for learners in Pakistan. One of them is the functioning of 'Urdu case clitics as postpositions in comparison with English prepositions'. 'Case Theory' by Chomsky and Lasnik in 1977 has been implemented to qualitatively analyze whether Urdu accusative, dative and instrumental case clitics can function as Urdu postpositions in comparison with English prepositions. The study's major findings demonstrate that Urdu accusative case clitic 'KO' as well as Urdu dative case clitic 'KO' do not have structural compatibility with the English preposition 'to', hence, cannot be determined as Urdu postpositions. However, instrumental 'se' case clitics are harmonious to English prepositions to be called Urdu postpositions, for their placement in a sentence in relation to the noun they are modifying. The study also concludes the recommendation of further research to analyze the semantic properties of Urdu case clitics in comparison with English prepositions.

Keywords: [Syntactic Theory](#), [Syntactic Analysis](#), [Urdu case Clitics](#), [Urdu Postpositions](#), [English Prepositions](#)

Introduction

Linguistics as a scientific study of language is broadly associated with the humanistic approach; wherein, human behaviour is determined by an individual's cognition and is fulfilled when an individual uses language accurately conforming to

the function he/ she wants to perform. Language accuracy and its use are largely determined by the knowledge of that language. Radford (2004) explained that Chomsky during the 1960s distinguished between competence and performance. An individual's performance



significantly depends upon the competence of language which essentially is the function of 'Grammar'. Traditionally, Grammar is divided into two distinct yet interrelated branches: Morphology and Syntax (Radford, 2004). With the theory of 'Universal Grammar', Syntax has become the centre of attention in the field of Linguistic Study. Radford (2004) states that "Chomsky's ultimate goal has been to devise a theory of Universal Grammar / UG which generalizes from the grammars of particular I-Language to the grammars of all possible natural (i.e. human) I-Languages" (p.8). Thus the argument is that an individual can learn any natural Language by following the Universal Principles, which are alike in all natural Languages; as well as knowledge of parametric variations, which vary from language to language.

Morphology as a study of 'word formation' provides a foundation for building syntactic relations. The core function of syntax is subdivided into Lexical/ substantive categories: noun, verb, preposition, adjective and adverb; and functional categories: determiners and quantifiers, pronouns, auxiliaries, infinitival to and complementisers (Radford, 2004). The argument elucidates that 'Preposition' as part of the lexical/ substantive category, sometimes also perform functions as part of a functional category, i.e. use of 'to' as an infinitival particle as well as the preposition 'to'. However, as per UG, adpositions are considered to be expounded as parametric variations. However, in the Urdu language adpositions are placed as postpositions to the noun; whereas, in the English language, these are observed as prepositions to the noun.

In the English language, word order, inflections and prepositions are used as case markers. Hardegree (2009) defines case marking as, "which marks roles of noun phrases in respect to verbs and other function-like expressions" (p. 2). However, case marking is determined in different ways in various languages, i.e. word order, inflection, adposition, preposition and postposition (Hardegree, 2009). Thus, the present study intends to investigate the parametric variations regarding case markers; and Urdu postpositions in comparison with English prepositions.

Case Marking in the English Language

English language, like most of the inflexions, has also taken the case marking from the Latin language. According to Zeb (2019), the function of case marking is to mark a noun phrase in relation to other grammatical elements, i.e. identification of the subject and object in relation to the verb. For example, 'Ali respects Amir'. The verb 'respects' assigns the grammatical role to 'Ali' as subject and 'Amir' as object. So, the subject 'Ali' is a nominative case and 'Amir' as a direct object marks an accusative case. Palmer (1984) explained case marking as, "with the verb 'to be' the rule is that the complement must be in the same case as the subject" (p. 17). However, prepositions in English are placed before the object to which they are complementing. The identification between English case markers and prepositions is determined through their function and their place of occurrence in the sentence (Rhee, 2004).

Hardegree (2009) and Palmer (1984) like many other linguists have provided an almost similar list of English case markers:

Table 1
English Case Markers

Case	Grammatical Role	Example
Nominative	Subject	He/ She/ They/ Noun
Accusative	Direct object	Him/ Them
Dative	Indirect object	To him/ To them
Ablative	Indirect object	By/ From
Perlative	Agent in Passive Voice	By

Case	Grammatical Role	Example
Genitive	Possessive	His/ Their

Urdu Clitics and Postpositions

Being the National Language of Pakistan, Urdu has been the centre of attention for many researchers. However, English being Lingua Franca has the status of an institutional language, requiring essential command of it. But both languages vary in many ways, i.e. differences in word order, right and left theme, etc. Such variances raise many hindrances for the learners to learn and efficiently use the

English language. One of such differences ‘the Urdu clitics and postpositions’, is the main concern of the present study.

Rizvi (2007) has accredited ‘rich case-marking system’ in the Urdu language (p. 90). Butt and King (2004) & Rizvi (2007) have classified Urdu case markers into many categories which are almost similar to English case markers:

Table 2

Classifications of Urdu Case Markers

Case	Grammatical Role	Clitic
Nominative	Subject/ Object	O
Ergative	Subject	Ne
Accusative	Object	Ko
Dative	Subject/ Ind.object	Ko
Instrumental	Subject/ adjunct	Se
Genitive	Subject (Infinitives)	K-
Locative	Adjunct	me/Par/Tak/O

Background to the Problem

According to the studies done in the field, there are upheavals regarding case clitics, as neither any mutual agreement is found nor any exposed deviation has been established to determine that Urdu case clitics are different from postpositions. The dispute is acknowledged by Umar-ud-din & Bhukhari (2017) for observing different perspectives, associated with Urdu pronominal function is described with different categorical labels, i.e. “case markers, postpositions, inflections phrasal affixes, clitics, projecting and non projecting, etc”(p.3). However, Butt & King (2004) argue that case clitics are different from postpositions regarding their ‘form and distribution’, specifically genitive ‘ke’ and locative e ‘me, par, tak’, yet, they do not deny that “due to the fact that case markers attach

postnominally, case ending has been described as postpositions in many accounts of Urdu / Hindi” (p. 18). Rizvi (2007) categorizes Urdu case clitics and postpositions into five types; “noun form, core case markers, oblique case markers, possession markers and ‘pure’ postpositions” (p. 92). Although Rizvi (2007) argues that the marking system is dependent on a morphological, syntactical and functional basis, yet, case clitics can be distinguished from postpositions on the structural basis, i.e. case clitics generally mark NP, while postpositional phrases may mark NP which performs function of adjunct to VP. This argument is also reinforced by Butt & King (2004), that Urdu / Hindi case marking has not been observed to stack as postpositions do. However, Butt & King (2004) again diverge by admitting that a ‘locative’ case can be stacked, so should it be considered a ‘postposition’?

Problem Statement

The debate leads the present study to the statement of the problem, “How can Urdu case clitics perform the function of postposition in comparison with English preposition”?

Theoretical Framework

The case theory, presented by Chomsky and Lasnik in 1977 has been used as the theoretical framework of this study. Under the theory of Government and Binding framework, the theory provides useful implements, especially in rich case-marking languages, like Urdu. The case theory also includes nominative and accusative cases within the scope of the English language (DeArmond, 2004). Case theory focuses on the function of noun phrases in relation to verbs and prepositions. According to Butt and King (2004), case marking consists of morphological case systems as structural case markers, as well as Semantic effects. The case theory contains two kinds of cases: Structural and inherent cases (Chomsky 1981, as cited in Butt & King, 2004). Structural case markers focus on Subject-Object agreement, i.e. nominative and accusative cases in the English Language. Inherent case identifies all other types of morphological cases including Theta marking, i.e. dative and genitive in English (Butt & King, 2004).

Aim of the Study

The study focuses on structural and morphological marking of Urdu accusative, dative and instrumental clitics, to be considered as postpositions. The function and occurrence of Urdu postpositions in relation to English prepositions will be described on the basis of qualitative analysis.

Research Questions

- The research intends to answer the following questions:-
- How can Urdu accusative case clitics function as postpositions in comparison with English prepositions?
- How can Urdu dative case clitics function as postpositions in comparison with English prepositions?

- How can Urdu instrumental case clitics function as postpositions in comparison with English prepositions?

Research Objectives

- The study aims to achieve the following objectives:-
- To identify the Urdu case clitics and postpositions in comparison with English prepositions.
- To analyze the function of Urdu accusative, dative and instrumental cases as postpositions.
- To draw a comparison between Urdu postpositions and English prepositions.
- To provide descriptive facts to learn English prepositions even after their translation from the Urdu language.

Literature Review

For syntacticians, the principles and parameters of UG are a road map which leads researchers to the world of natural languages in order to explore the underlying syntactic parametric variations between different languages. Languages are made up of words; words are categorized in grammatical components of lexical/substantive and functional categories (Radford, 2004). Though considerable studies have been carried out comparing English and Urdu languages, however, few studies have researched the comparison between English and Urdu-specific grammatical categories. Hence the scope of the literature review encompasses different grammatical categories and specific categories of Urdu postpositions and case clitics in comparison with English.

According to Rhee (2004), English and Korean are two different languages for their topological variations and idiosyncratics. Rhee (2004) has argued that such languages exhibit variations in the selection of lexical choices as well as grammatical processes. The Korean language is a SOV language with a 'Postpositional system' (like Urdu language). Rhee (2004) has classified adpositions based on parametric variations of their grammatical function and the pattern of their occurrence in sentences. The findings have confirmed that in the English language, prepositions occupy the primary position

for spatial nouns. On the contrary, Korean postpositions have the verbs as their main source.

Butt and King (2004) have aimed to find “case alternations involving datives, accusatives and instrumental roles of the case in the Clause Structure of Urdu/ Hindi” (p. 2). Butt and King (2004) have identified seven case markers along with their grammatical function and morphological effects in Urdu/ Hindi languages which have been named nominative, ergative, accusative, dative, instrumental, genitive and locative. The study has also proved that clitics are the morphosyntactic characteristics of Urdu/ Hindi case markers. Through synchronic and diachronic facts the study has successfully distinguished “oblique affix, the case clitics and postpositions” (Butt & King, 2004, p. 30).

Rizvi’s (2007) detailed and comprehensive research of ‘Development of Algorithms and Computational Grammar for Urdu’ has been a distinctive study. Using the Lexical Functional Grammar (LFG) framework in cooperation with Head-driven Phrase Structure Grammar (HPSG), Rizvi (2007) has developed the Linguistic-Based Grammar Model of Urdu Morphology and Syntax. According to Rizvi (2007), the Urdu language possesses a rich case-marking system. Moreover, Rizvi (2007) also finds Urdu case markers and postpositions similar but difficult to define and categorizes Urdu case markers and postpositions into five categories noun form, core case markers, oblique case markers, possession markers and pure postpositions.

Libert (2008) has contributed to the study of ‘English Ambipositions’, i.e. ‘through’ and ‘over’ occur in the ‘post-NP’ position, not in the prepositional position. Such words claim to be adverbs rather than to be called ‘postpositions’. Libert (2008) has argued that this is a syntactic difference between adpositions and case markers, determined by their functional or lexical relation with other grammatical elements. However, Libert (2008) has agreed that we should differentiate languages in possession with prepositions and postpositions, but with the constraint of the relationship to which they complement.

Pervaiz and Bukhari (2016) have focused on ‘the case of articles’ to assist Urdu native speakers in acquiring the English language’s syntactic

structures. The study highlights the problem learners face when they need to learn a language like English with ‘article case’, i.e. a, an, the; with the background of L1 which is an ‘article less’ language like Urdu. The research has been carried out in a systematic procedure while applying the ‘Fluctuation Hypothesis’ (Ionin, 2004). The data has been collected through ‘a forced choice elicitation task’ and analyzed by statistical methods. Pervaiz and Bukhari (2016) through their investigation have shown that definite and specific contexts can trigger the Pakistani subjects to use English articles better than using the English articles in non-definite specific contexts. The definiteness applied to word order is associated with case markers ‘Ne’, ‘Se’, ‘Ko’, which determine the semantic element of the sentence.

In order to explore syntactic variation between Urdu and English languages, Sara (2017) has implemented the Systemic Functional Grammar approach to Urdu syntax and found many variations between Urdu and English languages; such as the difference of ‘emotional and residual location’.

In order to explore the differences in Urdu and English nominative and accusative properties, Zeb (2019) has carried out a comparative study by applying Chomsky’s ‘Case theory’ proposed in 1981. The data has been analyzed qualitatively and described through Urdu translations of English sentences. Zeb (2019) has also identified the relationship of other grammatical categories with English and Urdu nominative and accusative cases. The study shows that Urdu and English accusative cases have variations with regard to verbs and prepositions. However, both languages have similarities between accusative cases and adjectives except predicative properties of adjectives.

During the course of the literature review, it has been found that no study has been carried out to compare clitics/ case marking and postpositions of Urdu with English prepositions which substantiates the aim of the present study in doing so.

Methodology:

Research Design and Data Collection

The study follows a qualitative research design by using Urdu utterances collected through personal

observation. A purposive sampling technique is used while focusing on the utterances containing accusative and dative clitic 'ko', ergative clitic 'ne' and instrumental clitic 'se'.

The data is analyzed through a qualitative approach. After translating Urdu data into the English language, the cases are marked in order to identify accusative, dative, ergative and instrumental case clitics as postpositions in Urdu utterances. In order to analyze and compare Urdu utterances with English, Urdu utterances are represented by using the Roman alphabet and left-side theme. Identified case clitics as postpositions are then compared with English prepositions.

Data Analysis and Results:

Accusative Case as Postposition

- (1a) Ami ko bazaar jaana hai.
Ami (Nom) ko (Acc) bazaar (Nom) Janna (V) hai (Aux)
- (1b) Mother wants to go to market.
Mother (Nom) wants (V) to (Infin) go (V) to (P) market (Nom)
- (2a) Asif ko Khana Khaana hai
Asif (Nom) ko (Acc) khaana (Nom) khaana (V) hai (Aux)
- (2b) Asif has to eat food
Aif (Nom) has (Aux) to (infin) eat (V) food (Nom)
- (3a) Shagird ko sabak yad hai
Shagird (Nom) ko (Acc) sabak (Nom) yad (V) hai (Aux)
- (3b) Student has learnt the lesson
Student (Nom) has (Aux) learnt (V) the (Det) lesson (Nom)
- (4a) Ali ko cycle chalani hai
Ali (Nom) ko (acc) cycle (Nom) chalani (V) hai (Aux)
- (4b) Ali wants to ride bicycle
Ali (Nom) wants (V) to (infi) ride (V) bicycle (Nom)
- (5a) Qasim ko cricket khelni hai
Qasim (Nom) Ko (Acc) Cricket (Nom) Khelni (V) Hai (Aux)
- (5b) Qasim wants to play cricket

Qasim (Nom) Wants (V) to (Infin) Play (V) Cricket (Nom)

The analysis shows the occurrence of accusative cases in the Urdu language, while this case is missing in the English language. The place of the nominative case can also be observed; in Urdu nominative case as Object occurs in the middle of an utterance, while in English it occurs at the end. In (1b), the occurrence of preposition can be observed before the nominative (indirect object) case functioning as adjunct 'to market', while in (1a) it is postpositioned to nominative (subject) case 'ami ko' performing function as accusative case. However, the data shows the accusative case marking nouns as subjects, rather than performing a function as an adjunct.

Dative Case as Postposition

- (6a) Dadi ne bachon ko kahani sunai
Dadi (Nom) ne (Erg) bachon (Nom) ko (Dat) kahani (Nom) sunai (V)
- (6b) Grandmother narrated story to children
Grandmother (Nom) narrated (V) story (Nom) to (P) children (Nom)
- (7a) Haaniya ko sardi lag rahi hai
Haaniya (Nom) ko (Dat) sardi (Nom) lag rahi (V) hai (Aux)
- (7b) Haaniya is feeling cold
Haaniya (Nom) is (Aux) feeling (V) cold (Nom)
- (8a) Bushra ne Samina ko phone kia
Bushra (Nom) ne (Erg) samina (Nom) ko (Dat) phone (Nom) kia (V)
- (8b) Bushra made a phone call to samina
Bushra (Nom) made (V) a (Det) phone call (Nom) to (P) Samina (Nom)
- (9a) Driver ne bachon ko school chora
Driver (Nom) ne (Erg) bachon (Nom) ko (Dat) school (Nom) chora (V)
- (9b) Driver dropped the children at school
Driver (Nom) dropped (V) the (Det) children (Nom) at (P) school (Nom)
- (10a) Ami ne behen ko tohfa dia
Ami (Nom) ne (Erg) behen (Nom) ko (Dat) tohfa (Nom) dia (V)
- (10b) Ami gave a gift to sister

Ami (Nom) gave (V) a (Det) gift (Nom) to (P) sister (Nom)

Like the accusative case, the occurrence of ergative 'ne' and dative case 'ko' can be observed from the analysis above. 'ko' is identified as dative because it is postpositioned to the object and complements the indirect object. English translations of these utterances, unlike the accusative case of Urdu sentences, show the occurrence of prepositions in each utterance.

Instrumental Case as Postposition

(11a) Ali ne pencil se khat likha

Ali (Nom) ne (Erg) pencil (Nom) se (Ins) khat (Nom) likha (V)

(11b) Ali wrote a letter with pencil

Ali (Nom) wrote (V) a letter (Nom) with (P) pen (Nom)

(12a) Azmeer ne sabun se moo dhoya

Azmeer (Nom) ne (Erg) sabun (Nom) se (Ins) moo (Nom) dhoya (V)

(12b) Azmeer washed his face with soap

Azmeer (Nom) washed (V) his face (Nom) with (P) soap (Nom)

(13a) Tumhen Chamach se chawal khane chahiye

Tumhen (Nom) Chamach (Nom) se (Ins) chawal (Nom) khane (V) chahiye (Aux)

(13b) You should eat rice with spoon

You (Nom) should (Aux) eat (V) rice (Nom) with (P) spoon (Nom)

(14a) Shahmir ne chari se billi ko mara

Shahmir (Nom) ne (Erg) chari (Nom) se (Ins) billi (Nom) ko (dat) mara (V)

(14b) Shahmir hit the cat with stick.

Shahmir (Nom) hit (V) the cat (Nom) with (P) stick (Nom)

(15a) Us ne jharoo se farsh saaf kia.

Us (Nom) ne (Erg) jharoo (Nom) se (Ins) farsh (Nom) saaf kia (VP)

(15b) He cleaned the floor with broom.

He (Nom) cleaned (V) the floor (Nom) with (P) broom (Nom)

In the above-analyzed utterances, the instrumental case or clitics are observed to have a strong anaphoric relationship with the nominative cases to

whom they are complementing. However, the occurrence of the instrumental case in Urdu and prepositions in English translation is performing function as adjuncts. The occurrence of ergative case 'ne' is also observed with instrumental case clitics.

Discussion:

Accusative Case 'ko' vs Preposition 'to'

The data analyzed in 3.2.1. shows accusative case 'ko' as prenominal to direct object, but this accusative case 'ko' can be substituted with ergative 'ne' i.e.

Asif ko khana khaana hai.

Asif ne Khana Khaana hai.

In such cases, the accusative clitic is structurally obligatory to be used transitively; otherwise, it can be interpreted as an ergative case (Butt & King, 2004). The accusative interpretation of the case also shows 'intentionality'. Another reason for not considering accusative 'ko' as ergative 'ne' is that ergative occurs with an intransitive verb, i.e. "Dadi ne bachon ko kahani sunai". Thus, accusative 'ko' cannot be substituted with ergative 'ne'.

After determining the accusative case interpretation of the clitic 'Ko', we can determine its comparative English preposition 'to'. The utterance analysis presented in 3.2.1., shows two kinds of English prepositions 'to'. In (1b) both forms have been used but performing different functions. The former 'to' is marked as infinitival, while the latter 'to' is marked as a preposition. Former 'to' is the complement of the verb 'go', while later 'to' is performing the function of an adjunct.

An important point to be noticed in light of the key difference between English and Urdu adpositions is that 'English consist of prepositions while Urdu exhibits postposition word- order'. However, in our analysis both adpositions complement different nominative cases, i.e. (1a):
Ami ko bazaar jana hai.

(1b): Mother wants to go to market.

In (1a) Urdu postpositions is modifying subject, while in (1b) English preposition is modifying indirect object as adjunct. So, on the basis of analysis, it can be interpreted that the accusative case cannot be determined as a postposition in Urdu language as it is incompatible with English preposition.

Dative case 'Ko' vs Preposition

Dative clitic 'Ko' is identical form to accusative clitic 'Ko'; however, both perform different functions. The dative case has subjective or indirect grammatical functions to perform. Another difference is that the dative clitic 'Ko' can never be substituted with the ergative case 'ne', like the accusative case (Butt & King, 2004). Another characteristic to notice is in (7). Although, in (7a) 'Ko' is a dative clitic, yet its English translation does not show its comparative preposition. This characteristic is well explained by Rizvi (2007) that some Urdu verbs which express some feelings or state of being are also considered dative.

However, in the analysis dative case follows the postposition word order which can be compared with English prepositions, as both complement the same nominative case, i.e. in (10a) 'baji ko', dative 'ko' is complementing nominative 'baji' and in (10b) 'to sister', preposition 'to' is complementing nominative sister. Yet, another constraint to considering the dative case as a postposition is its function as an adjunct, which is not witnessed in 3.2.2.

Hence, it is determined that the Urdu dative case cannot function as a postposition as compared to the English preposition.

Instrumental Case 'se' vs Preposition

The instrumental clitic 'se' is the most adaptable case of Urdu, which performs multiple functions, i.e. subject and adjunct. In the analysis 3.2.3., it is perceived that instrumental 'se' possesses anaphoric properties. It is obvious in data analysis that all

instrumental 'se' utterances mark nominative cases with adjunct properties, hence performing the postposition function. Moreover, the Urdu instrumental case complements the same nominative case as exhibited in their English-translated prepositions. So, it can be claimed that Urdu instrumental clitics can be called postpositions and are compatible with English prepositions.

Conclusion & Recommendation

In Pakistan, though Urdu and English possess the same prestige, yet there are numerous differences between these two languages. Syntactic analysis aims to clarify the ambiguities by reducing the dissimilarities between these two languages. The two major differences agreed upon by almost all the researchers are: the difference in word order of these two languages and the adpositional system which brings more complications. The present research contributes while describing accusative and dative cases cannot function as postpositions in Urdu, yet instrumental cases can be taken as postpositions in Urdu language, in comparison to English prepositions.

However, the study is still partial; because of limited resources and time constraints to carry out comprehensive study including all possible Urdu clitic with all of their possible occurrences are required to be collected and analyzed syntactically and semantically. Hence, the researcher recommends it for further research. It is also recommended to carry out a comparative study of adpositions between English and other Languages spoken in Pakistan i.e. Punjabi, Pashto, Saraiki etc.

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