On the exclusively borderline case-marking in Ainu

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Ainu: Overview

• AINU (*isolate*, Northern Japan, moribund)
• Hokkaido, Sakhalin and Kuril groups of dialects.
• Hokkaido Ainu dialects: SW & NE.
• DATA: mostly from Hokkaido dialects of Saru and Chitose (SW); my fieldwork etc.

Typological properties of Ainu

- Agglutinating, incorporating, and polysynthetic.
- SOV. Head-marking.
- No cases for arguments; postpositions for adjuncts.
- Pronouns are normally omitted.
- The verb is marked for the prs. & nmb. of S/A/O; 3rd pers. is zero.
- 4th person is a common label for 1PL.INCL, 2SG/PL.HON, 1st person in oral literature or logophoric (= person of the protagonist).
- Alignment is mixed: nom-acc, neutral, tripartite, and hierarchical (2>1).
- Verbal plurality.
- The opposition of vi & vt is clear-cut, but vi can function as nouns.
- Extensive voice system: APPL, CAUS, ANTIP, REFL, REC, ACAUS affixes.
- 4-term evidential system. Aspectual and modal markers, but no tense.
- No non-finite verbal forms.
- Possessibility oppositions in nouns.
Borderline case-marking: Definition

• Arguments are unmarked for case;
• There is overt marking only for concrete or “peripheral” case relations;
• Delimiting case markers from other morphological-functional entities is difficult (= indistinguishable from other word classes). (Iggesen 2005: 202–205).
Arguments are unmarked for case

(1) \textit{kani} \textit{kosonte} \textit{ku-kor}
1SG short-sleeved.kimono 1SG.A-have
‘I have a Japanese short-sleeved kimono.’
(Tamura 1984: 62)

(2) \textit{eani} \textit{nakairi} \textit{e-kor}
you(SG) ragged.clothing 2SG.A-have
‘You have ragged wadded clothing.’
(Tamura 1984: 62)

(3) \textit{ku-yup-ihi} \textit{(kani) en-kik}
1SG.A-elder.brother-POSS 1SG 1SG.O-hit
‘My elder brother hit me.’
(Tamura 1993 (1979): 15)
Arguments are unmarked for case

(4)  
\[ \text{hinak} \quad \text{ta} \quad \text{eci-en-nukar} \quad \text{hawe} \quad \text{an?} \]  
where  LOC  2PL.A-1SG.O-see  REP.EV exist.SG  
‘Where did you said you saw me?’ (Tamura 1993 (1979): 19)

(5)  
\[ \text{numan} \quad \text{eci-nukar} \quad \text{ruwe} \quad \text{ne} \]  
yesterday  1SG.A+2SG.O-see  INFR.EV  COP  
‘I saw you yesterday.’  
(Tamura 1993 (1979): 19)

※ Not using pronominal NPs, omitting nominal NPs unless you need them for emphasis or to introduce in discourse new participants.
“Peripheral” cases only

- No closed list of cases in Ainu: cases do not enter into paradigmatic relations.
- Vary across the dialects.

- At least 12 cases in the Saru dialect of Ainu (southern Hokkaido) (Tamura 2000 [1988]: 95-103; 129-135):
  - Postpositional particles (locative *ta*, locative/allative *un*, ablative *wa*, traversal *peka* ‘over’, mutative *ne* ‘as’);
  - Postpositional adverbs (comitative *tura*(no), degree *pak*(no) ‘till, until’, instrumental *ani*, dative/allative *eun*, translative *turasi* ‘along’, *pes* ‘follow going down’, *kari* ‘through’).
Indistinguishable from other word classes

• Postpositional adverbs: can often stand alone

(6) a. ona-utar-i  eun  haw-e-an  pe  ne
   father-PL-POSS  DAT  voice-POSS-exist.SG  NMLZ  COP
   ‘Since she told her father and relatives…’
   (Nakagawa et al. 2021: K8106233UP.218)

b. iteki  eun  itak  ki  nen  ka
   PROH  DAT  speech  do  what  even
   haw-e-an  yak  pirka
   voice-POSS-exist.SG  if  be.good
   ‘It’s better not to say anything to (mother).’
   (Nakagawa et al. 2021: K8010291UP.465)

Cf. Transitive verb eun ‘to be at, on; stick to’.
Indistinguishable from other word classes

• Postpositional adverbs: can often stand alone

(7) a. menoko kar pe ani sake a-kar
   woman make thing/person INS liquor 4.A-make
   ‘We would make sake from what the woman has grown.’
   (Nakagawa et al. 2021: K8010291UP.324)

   b. ani asir-no uni-hi a-kar pe ne
      INS be.new-ADV home-POSS 4.A-make NMLZ COP
      ‘I will build a new house with (that).’
      (Nakagawa et al. 2021: K8010291UP.228)

• Cf. Transitive verb *ani* ‘to hold’.
Indistinguishable from other word classes

- Postpositional adverbs: many of them inflect (take S/A or O markers).

(8) a.  *kamuy renkayne*

god accordingly
‘by the will of the gods’/‘thanks to the gods’
(Tamura 2000: 96)

b.  *ku-renkayne k-ek*

1SG.S/A-accordingly  1SG.S-come.SG
‘I came because I wanted to.’ (at my own intention or convenience) (Tamura 2000: 96)
Indistinguishable from other word classes

- Postpositional adverbs: many of them inflect (S/A or O markers)

(9) a. *atuy noski pak-no wakka rik-i-n*

    sea middle till-ADV water upper.place-EP-INTR.SG

    *ruwe ne akusu*

    INFR.EVID COP then

    ‘The water raised to the middle of the sea.’ (Bugaeva 2004: 340)

b. *i-pak-no nitan pe isam*

    4.O-till-ADV be.fast thing/person not.exist

    ‘There is no person as fast as me.’ (Tamura 1989: 72)

(10) *e-tura an-an*

    2SG.O-COM exist.SG-4.S

    ‘I lived together with you.’ (lit. ‘I lived following you.’)

    (Nakagawa et al. 2021: K7807153KY.128)
Indistinguishable from other word classes

- In terms of Nichols (1986), postpositional adverbs in Ainu are “inflected adpositions”, which is what we expect of the head-marking language type.
Postpositional particles

- Postpositional particles:
  - locative *ta*,
  - locative/allative *un*,
  - ablative *wa*,
  - traversal *peka* ‘over’,
  - mutative *ne* ‘as’

These show more case-like behavior (cannot stand alone or inflect).

- In locative expressions they require a noun phrase to be `<location>`, i.e., a locative noun of category 2 (*kim* ‘mountains’, *pis* ‘beach’, *rep* ‘ocean’, *ya* ‘shore’, *wor* ‘water’, *uni* ‘home’, *rik* ‘high place’, *ra* ‘low place’, *pena* ‘upstream’, *pana* ‘downstream’ etc.) or an ordinary noun combined with a locative noun of category 1 (*or* ‘place’, *sam* ‘near’, *ka* ‘above’, *corpok* ‘below’, *kotca* ‘before’, *osmak* ‘behind’, *etur* ‘between’, *tum* ‘inside etc.’).
Postpositional particles

- With a **locative noun** of category 2

(11) *kim*  *ta*  *ka*  *a-ri*  *yakne*

mountains  LOC  even  4.A-skin  then

‘After I have butchered the catch in the mountains...’

(Nakagawa et al. 2021: K8010291UP.155)

(12) *a-uni*  *un*  *paye-an*  *pe*  *ne*  *na*


‘So, let’s go to my house.’

(Nakagawa et al. 2021: K8010291UP.160)
Postpositional particles

- With an ordinary noun combined with a locative noun of category 1

(13)  a-kasuy wa a-se wa sem or un a-rura
‘I helped by carrying it on my back to the porch.’
(Nakagawa et al. 2021: K8010291UP.179)

(14)  ape sam ta an a-aca ram-no kane
fire near LOC exist.SG 4.A-uncle.POSS be.low-ADV somewhat
i-e-rankarap hine
4.O-to.APPL-greet and
‘My uncle who was sitting near the hearth politely greeted me.’
(Nakagawa et al. 2021: K8010291UP.068)
Postpositional particles

- Why does `<location>` matter in Ainu?
- If both the subject and the object(s) are third person, cases in which they are difficult to identify do arise. So marking one of the arguments as `<location>` helps to track grammatical relations Nakagawa (to appear in 2022).

(15) *ora ipe-an ciki oraun e p or surku*
    then eat-4.S if then eat thing place aconite.poison
*e-oma-re wa e-anu yak pirka na*
    2SG.A-enter-CAUS and 2SG.A-put.SG if be.good SFP

‘When we finish eating, put poison in his food (= *e p* ‘eat thing’ = ‘food’).’ (not ‘put food in his poison’)
(Nakagawa et al. 2021: K7708242UP.169)
Postpositional particles

• Why does <location> matter cross-linguistically?
• It shows that some nouns have valence and some do not.
  If the noun has valence we cannot call it head *marking* because it is not overt, but valence in nouns and elaboration of valence types, e.g., nonpossessible, possessible, obligatorily possessed (Bugaeva et al. 2021), is mainly a head-marking trait (Nichols p.c.).
Adnominal phrases

• Case markers cannot occur in adnominal phrases like *Satporo wa (ABL) kur ‘a man from Sapporo’.

• Various semantic relations between two nouns can be encoded with a few existential transitive verbs which form a relative clause-like structure.
  - Locative (‘at/from’) relations: 
    un ‘live at’ (16);
  - Propriative (‘with’) relations: 
    us ‘attach to’ (17),
    o ‘be located inside of’ (18),
    ot ‘be in abundance at’, kor ‘have/rule’ (19);
  - Privative (‘without’) relations: sak ‘lack’;
  - Membership relations: ne ‘be(come)’ sb’.
Adnominal phrases

(16) [__Iskar un] kur
Ishikari live.at man
‘a man from Ishikari’, lit. ‘an [Ishikari-living] man’

(17) [__wakka us] kamuy
water attach.to god
‘Water goddess’, lit. ‘water-attached god(dess)’
Adnominal phrases

(18) \[\text{	extit{sat-cep} o pu}\]
dry-fish enter/have storehouse
‘a storehouse with dry fish’, lit. ‘dry.fish-entered storehouse’
(Tamura 1996: 547)

(19) \textit{nea} \[\text{	extit{kotan} kor} nispa\]
that village have rich.man
‘that village chief’, lit. ‘that village-having/ruling rich man’
(Nakagawa et al. 2021: K7803233UP.293)

• Is the inability of Ainu case markers to form adnominal phrases another manifestation of the exclusively borderline case-marking?
Applicatives as head-marking case markers

• In Tamura (2000: 206), applicatives are referred to as “prefixes that express case relationships”.

• Applicatives could have been a preferred case-marking strategy in the past, given the innovative and undergrammaticalized nature of most Ainu case markers.

• Also, applicatives facilitate noun incorporation because no adjunct can be incorporated into the verb as such; in order to be incorporated it should be first promoted to the direct object by an applicative prefix.
Applicatives as head-marking case markers

- Applicative: promoting an otherwise peripheral participant (comitative in (20a)) to a direct object (20b) (Peterson 2007).

(20) a. kam-ihi patek pone tura-no a-se wa iwak-an
meat-PSD only bone COM-ADV 4.A-shoulder and return-4.S
(I sent the spirits in the mountains, and) only brought back the meat on (lit. ‘with’) the bones.’ (Nakagawa et al. 2021: K8109171UP.076)

b. kim ta a-hop-pa a-e-p utar
kam utar a-ko-se hine
meat PL 4.A-with.APPL-shoulder and
‘I carried the food I had left in the mountain with the meat.’
(Nakagawa et al. 2021: K8010291UP.045)
Applicatives as head-marking case markers

• The important functions of Ainu applicatives are as follows (Bugaeva 2010: 760):
  
  - **e-** 1. Content, 2. Location, 3. Instrument, 4. Theme, 5. Cause/Purpose, 6. Other (Comitative: Co-agent, Manner, Beneficiary, Path);
  - **ko-** 1. Addressee, 2. Goal, 3. Recipient/Beneficiary, 4. Comitative: Co-patient, 5. Malefactive Source, 6. Other (Cause/Purpose);
  - **o-** 1. Goal, 2. Location.

• Allowed with all verb classes except meteorological, bodily processes, change of state, and effective action verbs (Bugaeva 2015).

• Allowed with apparent unaccusatives *ray* ‘die’ > **e-ray** ‘die at some place’ (Nakagawa 2001: 99), *rer* ‘sink’ > **o-rer** ‘sink into sth.’ (Nakagawa 1995: 427).
Applicative object incorporation

(21) onuman kotan-ko-sa-p-an ruwe ne
evening village-to.APPL-front.place-INTR.PL-4.S INFR.EVID COP
‘(We waited for it to get dark, and) in the evening we went down to the village.’ (Nakagawa et al. 2021: K8007292UP.175)

(22) ritur-o-rewsi-an hine isimne paye-an
‘We spent the night midway and left again the next morning.’
(Nakagawa et al. 2021: K8109171UP.180)

(23) hekote kamuy ekesinne e-kamuy-ko-itak
face.towards god here.and.there about.APPL-god-to.APPL-talk
‘(The elder gave the meat to the Kamui) here and there and prayed to gods about (it).’ (Nakagawa et al. 2021: K8010291UP.109)
Concluding remarks

• Ainu shows the exclusively borderline case-marking:
  - Arguments are unmarked for case;
  - Only “peripheral” cases are case-marked;
  - Case markers are almost indistinguishable from other word classes (postpositional adverbs can stand alone and inflect).

• No closed list of cases in Ainu, roughly divided into
  - Postpositional adverbs,
  - Postpositional particles.

• None of them can form adnominal phrases: a relative clause-like structure with existential transitive verbs is used instead.

• Applicatives as a head-marking alternative to case markers.

• Borderline case-marking may correlate with the head-marking language type.
Sources and references (1)


Sources and references (2)


Sources and references (3)


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Thank you!