

ERGATIVITY, OPTIONALITY AND MARKEDNESS IN NEPALI

LUKE LINDEMANN

luke.lindemann@gmail.com

(Received: 01 Sept., 2025; revised: 08 Oct., 2025; accepted: 5 Nov., 2025; published: 26 Nov., 2025)

Nepali presents with a mixed system of split-ergative case-marking where ergativity is obligatory in some domains and optional in others. Where optional, the ergative has an “effector” interpretation that distinguishes it from other optional ergative-marking languages. The mechanisms of optionality and grammaticalized opposition are discussed in the context of Markedness Theory, and Nepali OEM is compared with optional plurality and gender marking in Nepali and English.

Keywords: Nepali, Indo-Aryan, ergativity, pragmatics, semantics, markedness theory

1. The Nepali effector ergative

In previous works, I have argued for an “effector” interpretation of the Nepali ergative where it varies pragmatically with the nominative (Lindemann, 2019a; Lindemann, 2020).

This argument builds upon a prototype conception derived from Dowty’s (1991) formulation of Agent and Patient proto-roles, which relate argument realization and case assignment to the prototypical features of the transitive subject and object.

The Agent argument is associated with a cluster of core features associated with the active participant in a transitive event. In particular, I follow Fauconnier (2011) in considering there to be two fundamental properties of a transitive Agent, which I call INSTIGATOR and EFFECTOR.

An argument with the INSTIGATOR property is the initial causator and controller of the event, and has a general tendency to be human, sentient, and volitional. An argument with the EFFECTOR property is the primary enactor of the event, and is typically the argument that participates in physical actions that accomplish the event.¹

A prototypical Agent has INSTIGATOR and EFFECTOR properties. An Instrument, on the other hand, has only the EFFECTOR property. An instrument effects the accomplishment of the event, it is typically inanimate and non-controlling.

In Nepali, the *-le* postposition marks ergative subjects, as well as instrumentals and reason clauses.

(1) ram-le sita-laj b^het-eko ts^hΛ
Ram-ERG Sita-ACC meet-PRES.PERF.3.SG
‘Ram met Sita.’ (Ergative)

(2) mΛj-le tsΛmtsΛ-le k^ha-ẽ
I.OBL-ERG spoon-instr eat-PERF.1.SG
‘I ate with a spoon.’ (Instrumental)

(3) [pahuna au-nΛ]-le
[guest come-inf]-instr
mΛ timro biha-ma d̂za-na pa-ina
I your wedding-LOC go-INF get-
PERF.1.SG.NEG
‘Because of guests’ coming, I could not go to your wedding.’ (Reason Clause)²

¹ I use the term EFFECTOR rather than using Fauconnier’s AFFECTOR property in order to emphasize the role of the Agent in enacting the event rather than the affect that it has on the Patient. This cluster of Agent properties is broadly in alignment with other prototype theories of the Agent, including Næss (2004)’s CONTROLLING and UNAFFECTED properties, and Dowty (1991)’s VOLITIONALITY,

SENTIENCE/PERCEPTION, CAUSATION, and MOVEMENT properties. This usage of the term “effector” is somewhat similar to the usage of “effector” in Role and Reference Grammar, but the difference is that I do not take it to represent a rarified semantic role (Van Valin & Wilkins 1996).

² From Butt and Poudel (2007).

These three uses are unified by the EFFECTOR property. I have argued that wherever it appears, this postposition signals that the marked entity is an effector of the described event (Lindemann 2020, pp. 12-13).

In the perfective transitive domain, it is obligatory as an ergative marker of the subject. In the imperfective, ergative marking is “optional” in the sense that it may be present or absent without affecting the grammaticality of the clause.

- (4) guru-(le) gadḡi tsʌl-aun-tsʰʌ
 teacher-(ERG) car drive-CAUS-
 PRES.3.SG
 ‘The teacher drives a car.’²

Here the usage of the ergative variant is associated with a host of pragmatic associations related to the effecting of a prototypically transitive event.

This unifies the various theories and intuitions that have been given in the literature about the meaning of the optional ergative: as a disambiguator of participants (Abadie, 1974; Varma, 1976; Pokharel, 1998), a marker of emphasis or focus (Grierson, 1904, Hutt & Subedi, 1999), individual-level predication (Butt & Poudel, 2007; Poudel 2020), characterizing predicates and categorical propositions (Lindemann, 2016), and completed actions (Butt & Poudel, 2007; Verbeke 2011).

Furthermore, this analysis highlights a point of variation among languages with optional ergative marking. In many such languages, the ergative variant is associated with greater volitionality, agency, or potentiality of the subject referent (cf. Holisky, 1987; McGregor, 2010; Chelliah et al., 2011; Willis, 2011; Zeisler, 2012). In Nepali, the *-le* postposition does not signal the INSTIGATOR property, and therefore we do not find these associations (Lindemann, 2019a, pp. 196-198).

2. Domains of case-marking

Nepali is a split-ergative language with features of both a Differential Subject Marking system (in which the split is conditioned by semantic factors), and an Optional Ergative Marking system (in which the ergative marker may be present or absent without affecting the

grammaticality of the clause). This means that there is a grammatical domain in which the ergative is obligatory, a domain in which the ergative is disallowed, and a domain in which it is optional.

The ergative is obligatory on the subject of a transitive main clause when the verb is marked with perfective aspect.³

- (5) sano kʰeṭa-le āp kʰa-yo
 small boy-ERG mango eat-PERF.3.SG
 ‘The small boy ate a mango.’
- (6) maḡi-le dʌktar-lai bʰeṭ-eko tsʰu
 I.OBL-ERG doctor-ACC meet-PRES.PERF.1.SG
 ‘I have met the doctor.’
- (7) teḡ tʌ maḡi-le kʰodʒ-eko tʰiē
 there PRT I.OBL-ERG search-PST.PERF.1.SG
 ‘I had searched there.’
- (8) us-le kam gaṭ-etsʰʌ
 PRO.OBL-ERG work do-PRES.MIR.3.SG
 ‘He has apparently done the work.’
- (9) gʰam-ma maḡḡan paḡl-iyo
 sun-LOC butter melt-PERF.3.SG
 ‘The butter melted in the sun.’
- (10) dʒʌhaḡz āḡi-ma dub-iyo
 ship storm-LOC sink-PERF.3.SG
 ‘The ship sank in the storm.’
- (11) kʰana paḡk- dʌi-tsʰʌ

³ Here I limit the discussion to main clauses. For a discussion of ergativity in Nepali subordinate clauses, see Lindemann (2019a, pp. 151-154) and Lindemann (2020, pp. 54-56).

⁴ The situation is more complex with unergatives, for which the ergative may be optional or obligatory for certain verbs and with certain speakers. Pokharel (1998) and Li (2004) note ergative marking with verbs of emission/semelfactives, and Li describes a telic/atelic split in which atelic verbs allow ergative marking. I believe that such verbs are underlyingly transitive in Nepali, and therefore that ergative marking is restricted to the transitive domain (Lindemann 2019a, pp. 154-169).

food cook-CONT-PRES.3.SG
'The food is cooking.'

- (12) mā kavī ho
I poet COP.PRES.1.SG
'I am a poet.'

- (13) b^{hi}jaguta ekdam k^{hi}usi b^{hi}ayo
frog very happy COP.PERF.3.SG
'The frog became very happy.'

The ergative form varies with the nominative in transitive main clauses when the verb is marked with imperfective aspect:

- (14) us-(le) masu k^{han}-da^{ina}
PRO.OBL-(ERG) meat eat-PRES.3.SG.NEG
'(S)he does not eat meat.'

- (15) d^{an}-(le) kitab-ko antim paana
John-(ERG) book-GEN last page
lek^h-daⁱ-ts^h_A
write-CONT-PRES.3.SG
'John is writing the last page of the book.'

- (16) tsor-(le) skar^f tsor-au-thyo
thief-(ERG) scarf steal-CAUS-PST.HAB.3.SG
'Thieves would steal the scarf.'

- (17) pale-(le) d^{hi}jan di-era
guard-(ERG) attention give-CONJ
her-daⁱ-ts^h_A
watch-ARCH.PRES.3.SG
'The guard watches attentively.'

- (18) ram-(le) film her-la
Ram-(ERG) film see-HYP.FUT.3.SG
'Ram may see the film.'

The semantic feature of transitivity constrains the domain in which ergative marking may appear, and the semantic feature of perfectivity constrains the domain in which it is obligatory.

Another typologically common source of split-ergativity is the semantics of the subject referent (Silverstein 1976, Dixon 1994). A split typically falls along the Nominal Hierarchy. This is a

markedness-based hierarchy in which the ergative marks less natural agents.⁵

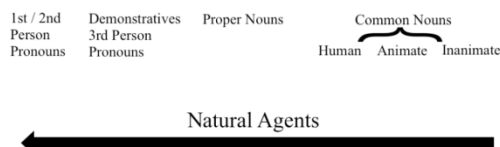


Figure (1): The Nominal Hierarchy as represented in Dixon (1994:85)

Verma (1976), Pokharel (1998), and Li (2007) argue that the ergative is obligatory on Nepali transitive subjects with inanimate reference, regardless of verbal aspect. This suggests another domain of obligatory ergative marking constrained by a third semantic feature: animacy of the referent NP.

However, this picture is complicated by the dual function of the *-le* postposition as both an ergative and instrumental. Inanimate subjects are very uncommon, and it can be difficult to distinguish between an inanimate subject and an instrumental. Verma (1976) gives examples of inanimate subjects like the following:

- (19) dud^h-le keṭa-haru-lai
milk-ERG child.OBL-PL-ACC
pos-ts^h_A
nourish-PRES.3.SG
'Milk nourishes children.'

There is potential ambiguity between an ergative reading ('*Milk nourishes children*') and an instrumental reading ('*With milk (one) nourishes children*'). Ambiguity arises because *-le* signals the EFFECTOR property in both readings. The first reading implicates the inanimate subject NP with the INSTIGATOR property, which may be awkward for nouns with inanimate reference.

Furthermore, my analysis of spoken Nepali indicates a gradient tendency of ergative marking

⁵ See Aissen (2003) and Deo and Sharma (2006) for formal implementations of ergative and accusative case-marking in Indo-Aryan.

that largely conforms with the Nominal Hierarchy (see Lindemann, 2019b; Lindemann, 2020, pp. 188-196 for details). In imperfect transitive clauses, I found the ergative to be highly frequent (but not obligatory) on subjects with inanimate reference. It is most frequent with second and third-person pronouns, and least frequent with first person pronouns. These observations align with Du Bois (1987), who argues that these tendencies are rooted in pragmatic constraints of usage.

1PRO	2PRO	3PRO	ANIMATE	INANIMATE
38.8% (n=49)	72.2% (n=18)	78.6% (n=14)	48.0% (n=25)	60.0% (n=5)

Figure (2): Percentage of Ergative Marking on Overt Transitive Subjects in the Imperfective (from Lindemann, 2019, p. 193)

In conclusion, transitivity and perfectivity constrain the domains in which ergative marking is obligatory or optional. It may be the case that inanimate subjects are obligatorily ergative for many Nepali speakers, suggesting an animacy-based split. But this is part of a larger pattern of variable ergative marking that favors less natural agents and disfavors ergative marking on first person pronouns.

3. Markedness and optionality

What are the dynamics of a system in which a marker is obligatory in some domains and optional in others?

Optional case marking systems represent a paradigmatic example of formal markedness, in which a form varies with its absence, and is associated with a more restricted meaning. In the context of optional ergativity in Nepali imperfective transitive clauses, the ergative is the marked form, and the nominative is the unmarked or zero form.

The fundamental observation of Markedness Theory is that oppositions tend to be asymmetrical. The marked form is used to signal the presence of some property, while the unmarked form may or may not signal the absence of this property (Jakobson, 1957, p. 47; Battistella; 1996).

The unmarked form therefore has two interpretations: a general meaning, which says nothing about the given property, and a narrow meaning, which specifically signals its absence.⁶

With obligatory, grammaticalized oppositions, only the narrow meaning is available. With optional marking, both may be available. To illustrate this, compare NP plural marking in English and Nepali:

(20) I ate the biscuit / the biscuits.

In English, the plural marker is obligatory for nouns with plural reference. If the marker is absent, it signals non-plurality. In other words, one cannot say “*I ate the biscuit*,” and refer to multiple biscuits. This is the narrow meaning of the unmarked form.

(21)

- a. mɔ̃l-le biskut k^ha-ẽ
 I.OBL-ERG biscuit eat-PERF.1.SG
 ‘I ate the biscuit.’
- b. mɔ̃l-le biskut-(haru) k^ha-ẽ
 I.OBL-ERG biscuit-PL eat-PERF.1.SG
 ‘I ate the biscuit-s.’

In Nepali, the plural marker is optional in the sense that its absence does not explicitly signal non-plurality. If one has eaten multiple biscuits, one can say either “*mɔ̃le biskut k^haẽ*” or “*mɔ̃le biskut-haru k^haẽ*.” The second option explicitly signals plurality, but the first signals nothing about the number of biscuits. In a particular pragmatic context, the first option may be used to imply that only one biscuit was eaten, but it is not a semantic entailment.

This is ultimately what it means for a grammatical form to be “optional”: it signals a particular meaning when it is present, but it does not strongly participate in a grammaticalized opposition with a zero form. Its usage is pragmatically conditioned. Whether or not the form is present or absent depends upon the

⁶ Jakobson (1932) refers to these interpretations as the *Gesamtbedeutung* ‘general meaning’ and the *Sonderbedeutung* (‘narrow meaning’). Waugh (1982) refers to them as the “zero-interpretation” and the “minus-interpretation” respectively.

discourse context, the conventions of conversational strategy, and the whims of the speaker in choosing which information to present.

The extent to which the narrow interpretation predominates may be a matter of degrees, making the distinction between “obligatory” and “optional” a fuzzy one. To see this, consider the English feminine derivational suffix *-ess* and its relationship with the zero form.

(22) Look, a lion / lioness!

(23) The lion / lioness nursed her cubs.

Gender marking is a commonly cited example of semantic markedness (Waugh, 1982; Battistella, 1996). In a semantic opposition between masculine and feminine, the feminine is typically the marked form and masculine the unmarked form. The word “*lion*” has a masculine, narrow interpretation, as well as a general interpretation in which it is the name for the species as a whole, and is unspecified for gender.

The feminine suffix is optional. Most speakers of English will accept the unmarked zero form “*lion*” in (22), and even when the referent is clearly female, as in (23). Depending upon the pragmatic context, the feminine suffix may be added to provide extra information. A “*lioness*” is a specific type of “*lion*.”

But this is not the case for every gendered pair:

(24) The princes / princesses were brought up in the country, far from the royal court.

(25) The #prince / princess furrowed her brow.

A “*princess*” is not a specific type of “*prince*,” and one cannot say “*prince*” when referring to a group of mixed or unspecified gender, as in (24), or with a feminine referent, as in (25). This opposition looks more like a polar opposition, in which only the narrow meaning is available.⁷

Unlike “*lion*”, the word “*prince*” semantically entails masculinity.

Some gendered pairs fall between these two extremes.

(26) The Screen Actors Guild represents thousands of film actors and other media professionals.

(27) The #actor / actress received universal acclaim for her role.

(28) Who is the greatest actor of the 1990s?

The “*actor*”/“*actress*” pair is an interesting middle case between “*lion*”/“*lioness*” and “*prince*”/“*princess*.” The unmarked form often refers to performers of unspecified gender, as in (26). However, English speakers differ in the extent to which they accept the unmarked form “*actor*” with a feminine referent in (27). And (28) is potentially ambiguous between an interpretation which includes female performers (the general interpretation) and one which excludes them (the narrow interpretation).

The difference lies in the extent to which masculinity is a salient property of the unmarked form. It is not particularly salient for “*lion*,” but it is for “*prince*.” Gender is likely to be a more culturally and cognitively salient property for human referents. English lexical items which take the *-ess* marker represent a scale based upon the extent to which the property of masculinity is salient.

This is why some English speakers have rejected the word ‘*actress*’ altogether. They wish to avoid the implication that a default, prototypical actor must be male.⁸

On one end of the scale, the unmarked form says nothing about gender, and the *-ess* marker may be pragmatically employed in a context in which it is

⁷ While unavailable in modern English, the general interpretation was possible in the past. Thus Queen Elizabeth I was able to refer to herself in this historical quotation: “Must! Is *must* a word to be addressed to princes?” (Knowles, 2014). This is an illustration of

how usage may shift over time from inclusive asymmetry to polar opposition.

⁸ See, for example, Sims (2017) on the push for gender-neutral speech in award categories.

deemed necessary to signal that the referent is feminine.

On the other end of the scale, the masculine and feminine form exist in polar opposition, and the signaling of gender is obligatory.

The “*actor*”/“*actress*” pair shows that there is variation among speakers, and these oppositions may shift over time. Markedness asymmetry drives a grammaticalization process by which an optional opposition shifts and becomes more marked over time until the opposition becomes part of an obligatory paradigm.

Lehmann (1989) describes just such a connection between markedness and grammaticalization in the historical development of definite/indefinite articles in English. Case marking of core arguments is a different domain of grammar than that of gendered derivational morphology, but the same interplay between markedness and grammaticalization leads to the patterns we find in Nepali case marking.

4. Markedness and optional ergativity

Historically, the *-le* postposition was introduced to reinforce the ergative case after much of the Old Indo-Aryan tense and case morphology eroded during the development of the Middle Indo-Aryan languages (Masica, 1993, pp. 341-345).

In the perfective transitive domain, the marked ergative form is in obligatory opposition with the unmarked nominative/absolutive. The *-le* postposition signals the EFFECTOR property, and it marks transitive subjects (which have the INSTIGATOR and EFFECTOR property) as distinct from other NPs that lack these properties, such as transitive objects and unaccusative subjects. This system is like obligatory plural marking in English, or the “*prince*”/“*princess*” opposition.

The *-le* postposition spread out of the perfective domain, where it was obligatory, to the imperfective, where it varies pragmatically with the nominative form. Here the opposition is more like plural marking in Nepali, or the “*lion*”/“*lioness*” opposition. The ergative marker may be optionally employed to signal that the subject is an effector of the described event. This

is the source of the various intuitions that have been expressed about the ergative-marked subject being emphasized, or that the predicate is interpreted as individual-level predicate, a characterizing predicate, or an inherently completed event (Lindemann, 2019).

My corpus analysis suggests that Nepali does not have a categorical split based on animacy, because I found examples of unmarked inanimate subjects. Rather, ergative mark is probabilistically less common on first person pronouns, more common with (non-human) animate, common nouns, and even more common with inanimate common nouns. Nepali speakers likely vary in the extent to which they accept unmarked inanimate subjects, and in that sense this system is more like the “*actor*”/“*actress*” opposition.

These probabilistic tendencies are based on pragmatic considerations. The speaker has a choice of marking a particular overt transitive subject with the ergative *-le* postposition, or leaving it unmarked. There are different possible motivations for usage that conform with the Nominal Hierarchy.

If the referent of the argument is inanimate, it is in a (semantically) marked position, and the speaker will be very likely to use *-le* to distinguish the argument as the effector of the event rather than an affected object.

Similarly, if the subject referent has an unexpected role in the sentence, the usage of *-le* is more likely. It is one strategy a speaker may use to disambiguate the roles of each participant.

If the referent of the argument is the speaker (i.e. a first person pronoun), then it is in a (semantically) unmarked position. The speaker will have no need to distinguish it from an affected object, and in most cases the nominative will be employed. As with the “*lion*”/ “*lioness*” opposition, the usage of the marked element simply provides extra information by signalling the effector property.

But let’s assume that ergative marking is required on inanimate subjects for at least some Nepali speakers, and for these speakers it does represent a categorical split.

This would imply the grammaticalization of the opposition between animate and inanimate common nouns. The mechanism involved would be the implicature that a transitive subject is animate, which would become semantically entailed in the nominative form. A paradigm is created in which the nominative form is in opposition with the ergative form. The variability still exists as before for subjects with animate reference, but the only form available to subjects with inanimate reference is the ergative.

This illustrates the complexity of case-marking in a split-ergative system like Nepali, in which the expression of a case marker depends upon the properties it signals and the extent to which it is incorporated into an oppositional paradigm, and the mechanisms by which these domains of expression may shift over time.

References

- Abadie, P. (1974). Nepali as an ergative language. *Linguistics of the Tibeto-Burman Area*, 1(1), 156-177.
- Aissen, J. (2003). Differential object marking: Iconicity vs. economy. *Natural Language and Linguistic Theory*, 21(3), 435-483.
- Battistella, E. L. (1996). *The logic of markedness*. Oxford University Press.
- Butt, M. and Poudel, T. (2007). *Distribution of the ergative in Nepali*. Manuscript. University of Konstanz.
- Chelliah, S. L. & Hyslop, G. (2011). Introduction to special issue on case marking in Tibeto-Burman. *Linguistics of the Tibeto-Burman Area*, 34(2), 1-7.
- DeLancey, S. (2004). The blue bird of ergativity. *Ergativity in Amazonia iii*, 1-15. ms.
- Deo, A., & Sharma, D. (2006). Typological variation in the ergative morphology of Indo-Aryan languages. *Linguistic Typology*, 10(3), 369-418.
- Dixon, R. M. (1994). *Ergativity*. Cambridge University Press.
- Dowty, D. (1991). Thematic proto-roles and argument selection. *Language*, 67(3), 547-619.
- Du Bois, J. W. (1987). The discourse basis of ergativity. *Language*, 63(4), 805-855.
- Fauconnier, S. (2011). Differential agent marking and animacy. *Lingua*, 121(3):533-547.
- Grierson, G. A. (1904). Pahari. Specimens of Pahari languages and Gujuri. *Linguistic Survey of India*, 9(4), 1-915.
- Holisky, D. A. (1987). The case of the intransitive subject in Tsova-Tush (Batsbi). *Lingua*, 71(1-4), 103-132.
- Hutt, M. and Subedi, A. (1999). *Teach yourself Nepali. A complete course in understanding, speaking and writing Nepali*. Hodder Headline.
- Jakobson, R. (1957). *Shifters, verbal categories and the Russian verb*. Harvard University.
- Knowles, E. M., (Ed.) (2014). *Oxford dictionary of quotations* (8th ed.). Oxford University Press.
- Lehmann, C. (1989). Markedness and grammaticalization. In *Markedness in synchrony and diachrony* (pp.175-190). De Gruyter Mouton
- Li, C. (2007). Split ergativity and split intransitivity in Nepali. *Lingua*, 117(8), 1462-1482.
- Lindemann, L. (2016). Nepali le as a marker of categorical subjecthood. In M. Menon & S. Syed (Eds.), *Proceedings of FASAL (Formal Approaches to South Asian Languages 6)* (pp. 87-95).
- Lindemann, L. (2019a). *A jewel inlaid: Ergativity and markedness in Nepali*. [Unpublished doctoral dissertation] Yale University. https://elischolar.library.yale.edu/ling_graduate/4
- Lindemann, L. (2019b, 5 January). *Rigidity and flexibility in the ergative splits of Nepali*. [Paper presentation]. The Annual Meeting of the Linguistic Society of America, New York.
- Lindemann, L. (2020). The Nepali effector ergative and variation in optional ergativity. In C. Coons, Z. Guo, S. Park & E. Wood (Eds.), *Proceedings of the 19th Meeting of the Texas Linguistics Society* (pp. 27-42). Texas Linguistics Society. http://tls.ling.utexas.edu/2020tls/TLS19_Conference_Proceedings.pdf
- Masica, C.P. (1993). *The Indo-Aryan languages*. Cambridge University Press.

- McGregor, W. B. (2010). Optional ergative case marking systems in a typological-semiotic perspective. *Lingua*, 120(7), 1610–1636.
- Næss, Å. (2004). What markedness marks: the markedness problem with direct objects. *Lingua*, 114(9), 1186–1212.
- Pokharel, M. P. (1998). Categorical splits in the use of -le in nepali. *Nepalese Linguistics*, 15, 42–50.
- Poudel, T. (2020). Ergativity and stage/individual level predications in Nepali and Manipuri. *Journal of South Asian Linguistics*, 11 (1), 1–22.
- Silverstein, M. (1976). Hierarchy of features and ergativity. In R.M.W. Dixon (Ed.), *Grammatical categories in Australian languages* (pp.112-143). Australian Institute of Aboriginal Studies, Canberra.
- Sims, D. (2017). Should acting prizes be gender-neutral? *The Atlantic*. 12, Apr.
- Van Valin, R. D., & Wilkins, D. (1996). The case for ‘effector’: case roles, agents, and agency revisited. In M. Shibatani & S. A. Thompson (Ed.), *Grammatical constructions: Their form and meaning* (pp. 289–322). Oxford University Press.
- Verbeke, S. (2011). *Ergativity and alignment in Indo-Aryan*. [Unpublished doctoral dissertation]. Ghent University.
- Verma, M. K. (1976). *The notion of subject in South Asian languages*. University of Wisconsin-Madison,
- Waugh, L. R. (1982). Marked and unmarked: A choice between unequals in semiotic structure. *Semiotica*, 38(3-4), 299–318.
- Willis, C. M. (2011). Optional case marking in Darma (Tibeto-Burman). *Linguistics of the Tibeto-Burman Area*, 34(2), 101-131.
- Zeisler, B. (2012). Practical issues of pragmatic case marking issues in the Kenhat varieties of Ladakh. *Linguistics of the Tibeto-Burman Area*, 35(1), 75-106.