The Fluctuation of Split-Ergativity in Apabhramśa

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Most of the New Indo-Aryan languages have the split-ergative construction which is conditioned by tenses and aspects. But the Old Indo-Aryan languages, like Classical Sanskrit, don't show such construction clearly. Apabhramśa, the one of the Middle Indo-Aryan languages, first shows split-ergative construction historically. Therefore the analysis of the Apabhramśa morphology and syntax is importance for examining the origin of ergativity of Indo-Aryan languages.

This paper argues that the conditions on which the case-marking of Apabhramśa behaves. The typical ergativity is a typological character which treats the subject of an intransitive verb and the object of a transitive verb in the same morphological or syntactical way, while treats the subject of a transitive verb differently. This character often appears on ergative languages partly. Therefore we call it 'split'-ergativity. Hindi has sprit-ergativity, this means that the ergative case appears on the subjects only in the perfective aspect for transitive verbs.

Apabhramśa also has the ergative case only in the perfective aspect, and for transitive verbs normally. But Apabhramśa shows the more complicated construction. That is, the subject of an intrasitive verb can make form both as the form of subject of transitive verb and as the form of object. The uses of these cases conditioned by the semantic nature of the noun phrases. The author considers this character as the 'fluid-S' mentioned by Dixon (1979). This phenomenon can also be called the 'Active construction'. This construction is the subject of an intransitive verb is sometimes marked as the subject of a transitive verb, and sometimes as the object of a transitive verb. Dixon says that the uses are conditioned by whether 'human participant to whom is ascribed volition and conscious control with respect to the situation denoted by verbs' or not.

The author suggested before that the active construction is observed in Apabhramśa morphology and syntax (2006). There however were some problems in this suggest. It is difficult to offer a semantic account of the split in terms of a semantic factor clearly, so the paper introduced a notion of the 'modality' for the analysis of the Active construction, and inspected some Apabhramśa texts again. By this, the author attempted the extract of 'volition' from the morphology and the syntax of Apabhramśa.