TO THE TYPOLOGY OF ARGUMENT STRUCTURE IN THE IRANIAN LANGUAGES

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The paper focuses on the typological study of argument structure within the language group belonging to the Iranian languages.

In the modern Iranian languages (both in the East-Iranian (EI) and the West-Iranian (WI) groups) several grammatical elements convey the meaning of the definiteness that is simultaneously used for distinguishing the direct and indirect objects.

As a result of analyzing the following rule became apparent that applies equally to several Iranian languages.

The direct object is obligatorily marked by the grammatical markers like the indirect case markers (WI and IE) and/or the particle rā (WI). These markers usually convey the meaning of definiteness.

1. In the Iranian languages where the secondary innovation case paradigm was developed the particle -rā > radiy transformed in case markers (Balochi, Tati, Gilyani).
2. In the languages where the old category of case was eliminated *radiy transformed in particle (postposition) and in this status became a part of the category definiteness that is closely tied with the category of case.
3. Designation of definiteness is not the essential function of case markers. The agglutinative case paradigm was developed in Gilyani, Balochi and some other Modern Iranian languages, after reducing the Old Iranian multifunctional inflectional case system. MI innovation agglutinative case category is not directly connected and correlated with the category of definiteness, but is deeply interrelated/interdependent. First, the direct case extends its sphere of usage to denote the direct and indirect objects. Afterwards the opposition of definite direct object vs. indefinite direct object became relevant. Thus, the definite nouns are marked by direct case markers as Balochi -rā and Gilyani -a, while the indefinite nouns are represented by the nominative unmarked case. The purpose of designating actants by case markers is to distinguish the subject and the direct object of a transitive verb and avoid the possible polysemy. Thus case markers and the particle -rā in Modern Iranian languages reflect the topic – focus/subject – object relations. Marking actants is the result of changed sentence structure from Old Iranian SVO into Modern Iranian SOV.