ACCUSATIVE CASE OR DIFFERENTIAL OBJECT MARKING? THE PARTICLE *və* IN YADGHA

This presentation provides a preliminary investigation of the particle *və* in Yadgha ([ydg] ISO 639-3), an endangered Eastern Iranian language spoken in the Lutkoh Valley of north-western Pakistan. The analysis draws on the corpus of data previously collected by Forum for Language Initiatives (FLI) in 2008 and published in 2016, data I collected during my fieldwork between August and September 2025 and, later from remote.

Morgenstierne (1938:139-140) reports that *və* functions as a preposition marking the accusative case, but it is also sensitive to definiteness. When the object is indefinite, the preposition is omitted and, when definite, the preposition is present. However, this distribution is found only when the object is a singular noun. When the object is plural or a personal pronoun it is always in the oblique case and preceded by *və*.

In my data, this is generally true, though there are some 'exceptions.' First, the singular definite object is sometimes found in the oblique case. See example 1:

(1) […]	**ʊə**	**rusə**		ruso	uʂəʊdo.		
	ʊə	rus	-ə	ruso	uʂəʊd	-o	
	DO	fox	-OBL.SG	fox	call.PST	-3SG	

'The fox called the [other] fox.'

Second, third singular pronouns are sometimes found in the nominative case (see example 2):

(2) […]	d͡ʒahan	də	wəχʃigari	**ʊə**	**jo**	waχʂəʊdo.		
	d͡ʒahan	də	wəχʃigari	ʊə	jo	waχʂəʊd	-o	
	very	in	wildness	DO	3SG	grow.PST	-3SG	

'She raised her in much wildness.'

The principles of object marking in Yadgha according to Morgenstierne and my data are summarised in the following tables:

	INDEF nouns	DEF nouns	PERS PRON
SG	Ø - NOM	*və* - NOM	*və* - OBL
PL	*və* - OBL	*və* - OBL	*və* - OBL

Table 1: Object marking according to Morgenstierne

	INDEF nouns	DEF nouns	PERS PRON
SG	Ø - NOM	*və* - NOM	*və* - OBL
		***və* - OBL**	***və* - NOM**
PL	*və* - OBL	*və* - OBL	*və* - OBL

Table 2: Object marking according to my data (exceptions marked in bold)

In the presentation, I will investigate the distribution between the "*və* - NOM" and "*və* - OBL" types of marking on definite nouns. My preliminary hypothesis is that there is a specific semantic class of nouns that requires the exceptional "*və* - OBL" marking type.

Another interesting phenomenon that I will discuss in my presentation concerns uses of ʊə as indirect object marker. The reasons for this variation are likely to be influenced by contact with Persian.

To conclude, the principles of object marking according to Morgenstierne can be described in terms of differential object marking (Aissen 2003; Bossong 1985). However, my data reveal that it appears to be a more complex phenomenon showing more variation than previously assumed.

Keywords: Direct Object, Particles, Yadgha, Lutkho Valley

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