Grammatical Relations in Tariana

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This article deals with the marking of grammatical relations in Tariana, North-Arawakan, and how this marking interrelates with topicality, definiteness and other discourse characteristics of nominal constituents. The following four case-marking systems are distinguished in Tariana: (i) a subject vs object case system, used with personal pronouns with animates and reference; (ii) a case system characterized by an enclitic -nu, for marking topicalized and referential non-subjects, used with all types of nominal constituents; (iii) an ergative case-marking used with all types of nominal constituents under emphasis in A function, the ergative case marker being the same as instrumental; (iv) a system of peripheral cases – locative and instrumental, used with all types of nominal constituents, but obligatory only with pronouns. The overt case-marking in Tariana is related to such parameters as topicality, definiteness and emphasis, and consequently is dependent on the structure of discourse. I will argue that the unusual case-marking patterns in Tariana corroborate cross-linguistic generalizations on a dependency between case-marking and topical properties of NPs in languages with an opposition between marked and unmarked case forms.

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1. INTRODUCTION

This article deals with the marking of grammatical relations in Tariana, North-Arawakan, and how this marking interrelates with topicality, definiteness and other discourse characteristics of nominal constituents.

I will use the following conventions for core grammatical relations (see Dixon 1994): A – subject of a transitive verb; S – subject of an intransitive verb; Sa – subject of an active intransitive verb; So – subject of a stative intransitive verb; O – direct object.

In Tariana there are four distinct case-marking systems: one used for marking peripheral constituents and three used for core grammatical relations; two of them (discussed under §3.1 and §3.2.1.) can be considered as basically nominative, and one (discussed under §3.2.2.) as ergative. The dependency between the nominative vs ergative case-marking and pragmatic properties of constituents in Tariana will be discussed. The unusual case-marking properties of Tariana will be viewed in the light of cross-linguistic generalizations concerning the dependency between case-marking and topical properties of NPs. Some problems concerning the status of some case-marking morphemes in Tariana as
cases at all will also be considered. Finally, I will put forward a hypothesis about the origin of the marking of grammatical relations in Tariana.

2. GENERAL OBSERVATIONS

Tariana belongs to the Ícana-Uaupes subgroup of the North-Arawakan group of Arawakan languages, and is spoken by about 86 adults in two communities on the Uaupes river (Upper Rio Negro, Northwest Amazon, Brazil) – Santa Rosa and Periquitos. There appear to be some minor dialectal differences between the two communities. Though Tariana belongs genetically to the Arawakan family, it shares a number of characteristic phonological, grammatical and lexical features with East Tukanoan languages of the Uaupes region, due to prolonged contact and a peculiar linguistic situation of obligatory multilingualism (see Sorensen 1967). The whole Uaupes region can be characterized as a linguistic area (Sprachbund) (for some useful comments see Brütsch 1977, 1967).¹

Like most Arawakan languages, Tariana uses cross-referencing affixes to mark grammatical relations. As I have shown elsewhere (Aikhenvald, in press), most Arawakan languages (including Baniwa of Ícana, Tariana's closest relative) mark grammatical relations following roughly the scheme below:

A = Sa – cross-referencing prefixes  
O = So – cross-referencing suffixes or enclitics

Tariana has no cross-referencing suffixes or enclitics. Cross-referencing prefixes mark A and Sa, whereas O-marking is used for So and O, and also for A and S of loan verbs (e.g. le- “read”, from Portuguese ler “read”, grava- “record”, from Portuguese gravar “record”).

Cross-referencing prefixes distinguish two numbers and feminine vs non-feminine gender in the third person singular (as in most Arawakan languages).

The cross-referencing prefixes are:

1. sg \(pl\)
   - nu- wa-
   2. pi- i-
   3. non-fem di- na-
   3. fem du- na-

Unlike the overwhelming majority of Arawakan languages (with the possible exception of Apurina – Fagundes, mss.), Tariana uses surface case-marking for core grammatical relations (i.e. A, S, O) and NPs in peripheral functions. The constituent order in Tariana is free.
Section 3 of this paper deals with the different systems of core case-marking for pronominal and non-pronominal constituents, and the interesting connection between case-marking and discourse parameters. In §4 I will show how the peripheral cases function in the language, and what conditions are necessary for the peripheral functions to acquire a surface marking. In §5 some tentative conclusions will be drawn concerning the typological perspective and the possible origin of unusual patterns of the marking of grammatical relations in Tariana.

3. CORE CASES

As has already been mentioned, Tariana has three different (though overlapping) systems of core case-marking, one applying to pronominal constituents and the other two to all types of constituents (including pronominal ones).

3.1. Core Case-Marking for Pronominal Constituents

Pronominal constituents (i.e. personal pronouns with animate referents) distinguish two obligatory core cases: subject case used to mark A and S, and object case used to mark direct and dative objects. Pronominal constituents with inanimate referents and demonstratives use the same case-marking principles as nominal constituents (see §3.2). Interrogative pronouns have no core case-marking whatsoever.

The independent pronouns are used for subject case; unlike in other Arawakan languages (including the closely related Baniwa of Içana), they are used fairly often to express subject. Independent subject pronouns are formed with the help of personal cross-referencing prefixes and emphatic particle -ha. It should be noted that this is a fairly common way of forming subject pronouns in Arawakan languages.2

Object case is formed with the help of personal cross-referencing prefixes and the suffix -na (always stressed). It is used for marking direct objects, dative complements and directionals. In the examples below relevant examples are underlined.

(1) illustrates the use of subject case in A function.

(1) du-na-pidana du-yeka duha-misini wa-yarupe-nuku
    3sgf-want-PART 3sgf-know she-too 1pl-language-NUKU
    "She, too, wants to know our language"
(2) illustrates the use of object case in O function:

(2) mha'ida pi-ka nu-na!
     PROHIB 2sg-look 1sg-OBJ
     "Do not look at me!"

(3) illustrates the use of object case to mark an obligatory dative complement of a ditransitive verb.

(3) du-a-sina du-sita-pita asi du-a du-hyä
     3sgf-give-REM 3sgf-AUX-again pepper 3sgf-give 3sgf-eat
     du-sita du-na
     3sgf-AUX 3sgf-OBJ
     "She used to give pepper to her to eat (long ago)"

Object case usually marks a dative complement of a transitive verb, as in (4). The basic difference between (3) and (4) is that in (4) a dative complement is not a valency.

(4) wa-na hi nu-dakine matši
     1pl-OBJ DEM 1sg-grandson bad
     na-ni-kha-pu-mha-na
     3pl-do-MOT-AUG-PROGR-PAST
     "Would they do anything bad to us, my grandson?"

Object case also marks dative complements in possessive constructions, both positive, as in (5), and negative, as in (6).

(5) nu-na mha'iskii ali-mha
     1sg-OBJ hunger EXIST-PROGR
     "I am hungry" (lit. "to me/with me there is hunger")

(6) di-pumi di-na pa-hyä-ni-pe se-de-pidana
     3sgnf-after 3sgfn-OBJ imp-eat-PASS-NOM NEG-have-PART
     "After that he had no food" (lit. after was no food to him)

Object case is also used to mark a dative complement of a few impersonal and stative predicates, as illustrated in (7)–(9).

(7) nu-na ira-mha pa-ni patši yaphini ha-echkwapi-nuku
     1sg-OBJ need-PROGR imp-do other thing DEM-world-NUKU
“I need to create (lit. to me needs to create) other things for the world”

(8) dai-mha nu-na
    sleep-PROGR 1sg-OBJ
    “I am sleepy” (lit. sleep to me)

(9) dai alia-mha nu-na
    sleep to-be-PROGR 1sg-OBJ
    “I am sleepy” (lit. sleepy is to me)

Sentences like (8) can be alternatively phrased as (9), where the existential copula *alia* is used, if the state described by the predicate is in focus. The possibility of such variants suggests that the object case in a sentence like (8) is better interpreted as marking the dative complement, rather than a “dative” subject of a stative predicate.

(10) ne-se ṅiau-wika-se di-ka di-na adaita
    then-LOC spring over-LOC 3sgn-inf-decl 3sgn-inf-OBJ Jararaca
    a:pi
    snake
    “Then, on a spring, a Jararaca snake came to him”

(11) deki-na di-uka-ka di-na adaki
    day-ADV 3sgn-inf-arive-decl 3sgn-inf-OBJ fever
    di-nu-pidana
    3sgn-inf-come-PART
    “He arrived (home) in the afternoon, and fever came over him”

3.2. Core Case-Marking for Nominal Constituents

3.2.1. A “Nominitive” System: -Nuku Case

Nominal constituents – which include nouns, demonstratives and third person pronouns – display a typologically interesting core case-marking system which is based upon pragmatic characteristics of the constituent.

There is a frequently occurring enclitic *-nuku* which can be used to mark a non-subject constituent if one or more of the following conditions apply:

(a) it requires a special emphasis, or
(b) the constituent is the future topic of the narrative, or
(c) it is definite.
If none of these conditions is met, an unmarked form is used, and no case distinctions appear. Subject constituents are unmarked (except for the cases considered in §3.2.2).

Examples of how the nuku form is used are given below (underlined).

(a) special emphasis of direct object.

In (12), -nuku marks a direct object which requires special emphasis. The example comes from a story about a jaguar and a turtle. The jaguar tried to catch the turtle, and when he succeeded, the turtle pointed out to him that it was a root of a tree and not the turtle’s foot that the jaguar had grabbed. The constituent -pali “root” has to be emphasized due to its importance for the outcome of the story (the jaguar released the turtle).

(12) awiña i-pali-nuki phipa-naka di-a-pidana waku-tree POSS-root-NUKU 2sg + take-IIMM 3sgf-say-PART
    “It is the root of a waku tree that you took”

(b) dative object of a ditransitive verb as a future topic of the narrative

In (13), -nuku marks the dative object of a ditransitive verb, which is to be a future topic of the narrative. This example comes from the story of the Little Red Riding Hood.

(13) duha hiku-tu-nuku hekudamapâ dhuta di-a-pidana she-GRANNY-OLD-NUKU fruit honey 3sgf+bring 3sgf-go-PART
    “She (Red Riding Hood) went to take fruit and honey for her old granny”

(c): dative complement with a definite referent

(14) illustrates the use of -nuku for marking a dative complement with a definite and specific referent. The example comes from a conversation.

(14) nu-yah-dapana-nuku na-itu-nihka thu-niki patji yaphini 1sg-POS-CL-NUKU 3pl-steal-PERF all-COMPL other thing
    “They stole everything from/of my house”

(c): comitative constituent with a definite referent

In (15), -nuku marks a comitative constituent which requires specific emphasis. This example comes from a story about how a turtle succeeded
in killing a jaguar; it is important that the turtle ate the jaguar together with his friends.

(15) nihyā di-kesi-pe-nuku di-yapi nihyā thui 3sgnf+eat 3sgnf-friend-PL-NUKU 3sgnf-bone 3sgnf+eat all
    “He (i.e. turtle) ate with his friends, he ate the bones, everything”

(c) definite dative complement of a stative impersonal verb.

(16) adaki (afia-naka) emitê-nuku fever (to-be-IMM) child-NUKU
    “The child is feverish”

(a), (b): special emphasis of direct objects and instrumental constituent as future topic of the narrative

(17) comes from a story about a turtle who was teasing a jaguar by playing a flute made of another jaguar’s bone and calling the jaguar by his name. (17) introduces both the name of the jaguar and the jaguar’s bone as future topics around which the story will evolve.

(17) yawi i-pitana-nuku di-a di-wana-pidana diha jaguar POSS-name-NUKU 3sgnf-go 3sgnf-call-PART he
    ŋâpi-nuku bone-NUKU
    “It was the name of the jaguar that he called with the help of the bone”

(a), (c): special emphasis of an instrumental constituent with a definite referent:

(18) comes from a story about an Indian from the Maku tribe who managed to overcome the evil spirit with the help of a parrot who belonged to the evil spirit, but decided to betray him, tired of his stinking mouth.

(18) ekwpâpi-pe hi-da-pada nu-na na-hyâ-ni-pe day-PL DEM-DER-DER 1sg-OBJ 3spl-eat-PASS-NOM
    na-hyâ na-ya-ka nu-hyâ-ka di-numa
    3pl-eat 3pl-give-DECL 1sg-eat-DECL 3sgnf-mouth

iperi-nuku
stinking-NUKU

“Every day they give the food chewed with their stinking mouth for me to eat”
-Nuku can also be used to mark direction, as in (19), and time, as in (20), on constituents which require special emphasis.

(19) di-hwida-nuku di-hwa di-swa
3sgnf-head-NUKU 3sgnf-fall 3sgnf-stay

di: nu-pidana di-na
3sgnf+kill-PART 3sgnf-OBJ
“He (the turtle) fell on his very head (of the jaguar) and killed him”

(20) diha depi-ta-nuku diha maku-ne mema-kade-pidana
he night-ADV-NUKU he maku-PLNEG+sleep-NEG-PART

“This very night (the whole of it) the Makus did not sleep”

The enclitic -nuku is attached to the root of a noun or a demonstrative, or a subject case form of a third person pronoun with inanimate reference:

(21) nuha nu-waye-ka diha-nuku di-na
1sg-buy-DECL this-NUKU 3sg-OBJ
“I buy this from him”

If the conditions (a)–(c) above are met, the -nuku morpheme can occur on third person pronouns with animate reference. Then -nuku is attached to the object form of the personal pronoun as in (22). This happens fairly rarely.

(22) na-wa-pidana di-na-nuku di-a neri-nuku na-hyā-kasu
3pl-try-PART 3sgnf-OBJ-nuku 3sgnf-go-deer-NUKU 3pl-eat-PURP
na-waka
3pl-meet
“They tasted him (i.e. this particular deer), they (turtles) came together to eat the deer”

A third person pronoun with animate reference can appear with a derivational affix, to emphasize a particular property of the person. Object case in -nu cannot then be formed. The -nuku marker is attached to the subject form of the pronoun, if the conditions (a)–(c) are met:

(23) di-wapa-pidana duha-tiki-nuku
3sgnf-wait-PART she-DIM-NUKU
"He (the wolf) waited for this very small one (i.e. Little Red Riding Hood)"

As far as its morphological properties are concerned, -nuku is an enclitic; it is attached to the last member of the noun phrase (noun phrases are marked with brackets):

(24) [puwe dhétʃi wika-se ka-hwa-nuku] [dhétʃi monkey3sgnf+bundle over-LOC REL-sit-NUKU 3sgnf+bundle

ka-hña ka-hwa-nuku] ítʃida di-sata-pidana
REL-eat REL-sit-NUKU turtle 3sgnf-ask-PART

“The turtle asked the monkey sitting on the bundle (of fruit), eating the bundle and sitting”

If every constituent of an NP requires emphasis or is a topic, however, -nuku may go on every constituent of the noun phrase, as in (25). (25) comes from a story about how a Maku Indian overcame an evil spirit. The Maku man is the topic of the narrative; the fact that he managed to climb a tree is particularly important for the story.

(25) duha ŋamu i-sadu diha-na-ne-pidana du-ka
she “demon” POSS-wife he-CL-INS-PART 3sgf-throw

diha maku-nuku kesa-nuku
he maku-NUKU REL+climb-NUKU

“The she-“demon” threw this (long stick) (lit. “with this”) at the Maku man who was climbing up the tree”

Nuku can be used with more than one constituent in a clause, especially when only one of these is in a core function (cf. (17)):

(26) nuha pi-na nu-kalita-de kali-si-nuku
I 2sg-OBJ 1sg-tell-CAUS-FUT tell-NOM-NUKU

ke:ri yarup-e-nuku
moon thing-NUKU

“I shall tell you the story (i.e. which you are asking of) about the things of the moon”

In the case of ditransitive verbs, the marking of the two arguments, object and dative, in one clause, with the help of -nuku is rarely accepted. (27) is one of the few examples in the corpus.
There are other means of marking oblique constituents for which the three conditions mentioned above do not apply (see §4 on peripheral cases). For instance, postposition -siu “for” is used to mark beneficiary (but not the dative object of a ditransitive verb). It is generally preferred to -nuku if other constituents marked with -nuku are already present in the clause, cf. (28).

(28) pi-sata phima kali-si-nuku pihha hadu-nuku
    2sg-ask 2sg+hear tell-NOM-NUKU you mother-NUKU
    sasa i-siu
    Sasha POSS-for

    “Ask your mother for a story for Sasha!”

Nuku is always preferred on a topic constituent of the discourse. In (29), the beneficiary constituent is the topic of the discourse, and so it is marked with -nuku. In (30), it is not a topic, and so the postposition -siu “for” is used.

(29) Rafael-nuku kuphe:-nuku ma-na-kade du-yana
    Rafael-NUKU fish-NUKU NEG-want-NEG 3sg-f-cook
    di-pe-hna-niki du-na
    3sgnf-leave-PROB-COMPL 3sgf-OBJ

    “For Rafael she did not want to cook the fish (he brought for her), so he is leaving her for good”

(30) ma-na-kade du-yana kuphe: Rafaeli-siu
    NEG-want-NEG 3sgf-cook-NEG fish Rafael POSS-for

    “She does not want to cook fish for Rafael.”

Statistically, -nuku is used mainly on direct objects, less frequently with datives, direction and time, and least of all with other oblique constituents.
When none of the conditions (a)–(c) above applies, -nuku is not used. In (31), for instance, the direct object has a generic reference and thus cannot be marked with -nuku. Unmarked forms most often precede the verb.

(31) nuha hekuda nu-a nu-ma fruit 1sg-go 1sg-look-for
    “I am going to look for fruit”

In (32), both direct and indirect object have generic meaning and are not topical, and so neither of them is marked with -nuku:

(32) kasina-nuku-hna di-weni ina: nheta-ka
    then-NUKU-PROB 3sgnf-pay woman+PL 3pl+bring-DECL
    “They might bring payment for women”

Unmarked noun forms are also used in idiomatic collocations, as in (33) and (34).

(33) itifiri di: nu
    animal 3sgnf+kill
    “He hunts”, lit. “He kills animals”

(34) di-thaku-tiki di-kale dhita-tiki
    3sgnf-nose-DIM 3sgnf-wind 3sgnf+draw-DIM
    “His noise breathed a little” (lit. his nose was a little drawing wind)

3.2.2. “Ergative” System

The ergative case marker -ne appears on a nominal constituent in A function, if the constituent is focalized. Examples of ergative case are rare. So far no instances of ergative case on personal or interrogative pronouns have been attested. The ergative case marker -ne coincides with the instrumental -ne, which is a fairly widespread polisemy (see Dixon 1994). Ergative case markers and -nuku never co-occur in one clause.

(35) comes from a story about two men who went fishing and came across an evil spirit. (35) describes a sudden appearance of the evil spirit which changed the course of events:

(35) diha namu-ne ikuli di-aphua-ka
    he evil-spirit-ERG Crab 3sgnf-immense after-DECL
ne-hyu-kade-pidana
NEG-aparecer-NEG-PART
“The evil spirit immersed after a crab and didn’t reappear”

(36) comes from the story about Maku Indians and an evil spirit. After a
description of the evil spirit and his wife, the Maku man is in focus again:

(36) diha nawiki-ne hanipa-pidana di-awada
he man-ERG much-PART 3sgnf-think
“He (the Maku Indian) thought about many things”

4. PERIPHERAL CASES
Tariana has two peripheral cases: instrumental -ne and locative -se, which are obligatory only on personal pronouns. The case markers can
be used on nouns, demonstratives and interrogatives; they can be omitted
under special conditions (see below).

4.1. Instrumental Case
Instrumental case -ne is used to indicate accompaniment, as in (37);
various kinds of instrument, as in (25), (38)–(40), and agents, as in (41),
(42).

(37) kay di-ni di-sadu-ne na-ma-pidana hinipu-nuku
so 3sgnf-do 3sgnf-wife-INS 3pl-look-for-PART road-NUKU
“So they went to look for the road with his wife”

(38) ha-amaku sawali-ne nu-phuni di-ni-ni-ku
DEM-hammock thread-INS 1sg-friend 3sgnf-make-PASS-CL
“This hammock is made of thread by my friend”

(39) kwa-ne yarupe-ne pi-sape piha haniri-ne
INT-INS language-INS 2sg-talk you father-INS
“What language (lit. with what language) do you speak with your
father?”

(40) ne itawhya-ne di-uka di-rahta
then canoe-INS 3sgnf-arrive 3sgnf-sail
“Then he went on a canoe”

(41) mhaida pi-musu te nu-ine inaru-nuku
PROHIB 2sg-go-out until 1sg-INS woman-NUKU
pi-keta-ka
2sg-meet-DECL
"Do not go out until you meet a woman with my assistance"
(lit. by me)

(42) di-hwya-nite di-tape-na-nikha duturu-ne
3sgnf-poison-PASS-DER 3sgnf-remedy-VB-PERF doctor-INS
"The poisoned person was treated by a doctor"
-Ne can also mark the nominal predicate, which means of a transitional state, as in (43).

(43) dai-ne-mha nuha
sleep-INS-PROGR I
"I am getting sleepy" (lit. I am with sleep)

-Ne is an enclitic, and it usually goes on the last word of the noun phrase, as in (44) and (46).

(44) di-wapa-hma mawipi-ne [diha pupawa
3sgnf-wait-PROB stick-INS he poison
   di-sueta-ni-pe-ne]
3sgnf-lay+CAUS-PASS-NOM-INS
"He (the Maku) was waiting (for the "demon") with the stick (and) with the poison which he had prepared"

The -ne case marker can be omitted if the nominal constituent does not have a definite referent and is not in focus, and no other core constituents are present in the surface structure. In (45), the instrument -fish-net - is unmarked, since it is indefinite and there are no other nominal constituents expressed in the surface structure. In contrast, the comitative constituent in (46) is marked with -ne case, because the referents are much more specific in this context.

(45) maypuku-ke na-wapeta-sina
fish-net-PL 3pl-wait+CAUS-REM
"They wait for them (fish) with fish-net"

(46) nu-wapeta nu-kesini-nuku [pa-ira-ni-pe
1sg-wait+CAUS 1sg-friend-NUKU 4p-drink-PASS-NOM
   pumeni-peri-ne]
sweet-COLL-INS
"I was waiting for my friend with drinks and sweet things"
4.2. Locative Case
The meanings of the *se*-case include locative ("at, in"), as in (47), allative ("to"), as in (48), and elative ("from"), as in (49).

(47) kayu di-a-ka diha dhe-ka
    so 3sgnf-go-DECL he 3sgnf+enter-DECL
        di-a-pidana maka-yawa-se
        3sgnf-go-PART big-hole-LOC
    "While it (jaguar) did so, he (turtle) came into a hole" (and stayed there)

(48) di-siwa-pidana di-koloka di-ruku di-a üi-se
    3sgnf-self-PART 3sgnf-roll 3sgnf-go down 3sgnf-go port-LOC
    "It (the dish) rolled, went down and went to the port by itself"

(49) hi wya-ka-se ka-nu-ka-lu dhuma-naka
    DEM far-DECL-LOC REL-come-DECL REL 3sgf+hear-IMM
    waku-nuku
    1pl-speech-NUKU
    "She who came from far away understands our speech"

The *se*-marker can be omitted if the meaning is clear from the context and the constituent is not in focus. In (50), the *se* is omitted from the second occurrence of the locative constituent within the same clause.

(50) kayu di-a-ka diha dhe-ka di-a-pidana
    so 3sgnf-go-DECL he 3sgnf+enter-DECL 3sgnf-go-PART
        maka-yawa-se maka-yawadhe-ka di-a-pidana
        big-hole-LOC big-hole 3sgnf+enter-DECL 3sgnf-go-PART
    "So he (the turtle) entered the hole, the hole he entered"

Unmarked noun forms in peripheral functions are most frequently placed before the verb. They are also used in compounds, as *episi* "iron" in (51).

(51) episi-na-ni-ni-ma
    iron-3pl-do-PASS-CL:FEM
    "(a woman) made of iron"

5. CASE-MARKING IN TARIANA: CONCLUSIONS
The existence of a subject vs object case system, used with personal pronouns with animate reference in Tariana is accounted for by Nominal
Hierarchy (see Dixon 1994), according to which personal pronouns show more case distinctions than other nominal constituents; these case distinctions in most cases follow a nominative pattern.

A nominative type case system characterized by a "portmanteau" enclitic -nuku which marks topical and definite non-subjects important for the forthcoming discourse, and is used with all types of nominal constituents, partly overlaps with the subject vs object case system. As has been shown above, the enclitic -nuku goes on the object case form of a personal pronoun, if it satisfies the conditions necessary for the use of -nuku (e.g. (22)).

The use of unmarked case forms in opposition to marked ones is, in fact, attested in a considerable variety of languages. A well-known example is that of the so-called affixless case forms in Turkish languages (see, for instance, Nilsson 1985). Affixless case forms are opposed to affixed ones by their referential properties: affixless forms usually indicate generic reference and indefiniteness of the object, and affixed forms are used for individualized and definite objects, and also for objects "of relevance to the ensuing discourse" (Nilsson 1985:66). Affixless forms even tend to form a grammatical unity with the verb, and thus come close to incorporation. Another example of a morpheme which combines case-marking and pragmatic properties is that of particle 'et in Hebrew. 'et is used to mark O and some So (particularly in existential and possessive constructions), when these constituents indicate "definite theme" (for an interesting discussion, see Kirtchuk 1993); similar examples can be found in Burmese, Dogon (Plungian p.c.) and Tucanoan languages. The use of unmarked forms for generic, unspecified, indefinite or otherwise pragmatically unmarked constituents is a well attested linguistic mechanism.

Another problem is whether -nuku is to be considered as case-marking at all. The main reason why I consider it a case morpheme is the fact that it indicates grammatical relations, since it appears exclusively on non-subject topicaized and definite constituents, and can thus be interpreted as a special token of a non-subject constituent. Ergative case markers and -nuku never co-occur in one clause, and this may be another argument in favour of the relevance of -nuku for the marking of grammatical relations in Tariana. However, since topicality and definiteness can be seen as one of the basic properties of subject (see, for instance, Keenan 1976), the status of -nuku as a case marker par excellence remains problematic.

The ergative marking of transitive subjects in Tariana is associated with focality of a corresponding constituent. If -nuku were to be considered a case marker, Tariana would be a rare example of a complementary distribution of ergative vs nominative patterns in accordance with dis-
course properties; another example of this type, however different, is Paumari (cf. Chapman & Derbyshire 1991).

The system of peripheral cases, locative and instrumental, used with all types of nominal constituents, but obligatory only with pronouns, is independent of the case-marking of core constituents. As is the case of -nuku, the case-marking of peripheral constituents depends on discourse parameters. Again, personal pronouns show more obligatory case distinctions than other nominal constituents, in agreement with Nominal Hierarchy.

The relative independence of the peripheral cases and -nuku is corroborated by a possibility of double case-marking. Thus, the peripheral case forms can also be followed by the -nuku marker, if the necessary conditions are met. Example (52) illustrates the use of -nuku with a locative case form of a constituent under special emphasis and (53) shows how -nuku can be used on an instrumental with a specific referent.

(52) aqia-tha-mha     hane-se-nuku
    TOBE-FRUSR-PROGR  there-LOC-NUKU
     ma-nu-kade-peni
     NEG-come-NEG-PL:AN
     “There are other (people) (in that place) over there who did not come”

(53) di-kesini-pu-pidana     diha-ne-nuku
     3sgnf-friend-AUG-PART  he-INS-NUKU
     “He (deer) was a big friend with this one (i.e. another deer whom
a jaguar had just killed)”

Concerning the problems of the origins of the unusual patterns of grammatical relations marking in Tariana, the areal phenomena may offer a partial clue. East Tukanoan languages such as Pirapatua, Tukano, Desano and Guanano (cf. Brüzzi 1967, Welch 1977, West 1977, Waltz 1977, and my own field data) use affixed and affixless case forms (marked by an enclitic -re) depending on whether the nominal constituent is in focus or not. The Tariana case-marking system shows a number of structural similarities with that of East Tukanoan languages. Among them are: (a) the use of the same case morpheme for direct objects and datives (objective case and -nuku in Tariana, -re case in East Tukanoan); and (b) the interdependence of the topicality of a constituent and its case-marking (locative and accusative/dative, in the case of Tukanoan; locative, comitative and -nuku in the case of Tariana).
Unlike Tariana, however, Tukanoan languages do not have a separate case-marking system for personal pronouns or a special instrumental-ergative case.

The unusual case-marking properties of Tariana may be partly due to a diffusion pattern in the Uaupes linguistic area in the Northwest Amazon region.

NOTES

1 The present study is based on the materials collected during two field trips to the Upper Rio Negro region (in 1991 and 1994). The dialect described is that of Santa Ross. I am extremely grateful to my patient teachers of Tariana – Candido, Orçiliano, Juvino, José and Rafael Brito – and to my teachers of East Tukanoan languages – Ilgso Cardoso (Piratapuya, Desana) and José Reis (Tukano). I am grateful to R. M. W. Dixon and Masha Koptjevskaya-Tamm, for useful comments and discussion. The abbreviations used are: ADV – adverb; AN – animate; AUG – augmentative; AUX – auxiliary; CAUS – causative; CL – classifier; COLL – collective; COMPL – completed action; DECL – declarative; DEM – demonstrative; DER – derivational affix; DIM – diminutive; FEM – feminine; ERG – ergative; FRUSTR – frustrative; FUT – future; IMM – immediate action; IMP – impersonal; INS – instrumental; INT – interrogative; LOC – locative; MOT = motion; NEG = negative; nF = non-feminine; NOM = nominalization; OBJ – object; PART – discourse particle; p. – person; PASS – passive; PERF – perfective; PL – plural; POSS – possessive; PROB – probability; PROGR – progressive; PROHIB – prohibitive; PURP – purposive; REL – relative; REM = remote past; sg = singular; VB = verbalizing affix.

2 Different Arawakan languages use different emphatic particles to form independent pronouns; e.g., Wurekana of Xíe:-ya(hê), Barê -ni, Poori -to, Waurá -nu, etc.

REFERENCES


