Lenguas, lenguaje y lingüística

Contribuciones desde la Lingüística General

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(Eds.)

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ÍNDICE

SOME OBSERVATIONS ON MORPHOLOGICAL CASE IN OLD SAXON

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Introduction

1. Previous claims on case

This article is aimed at providing a definition of the morphosyntactic function of case in Old Saxon (henceforth os) based on a descriptive analysis of the data. With this aim in mind, the investigation made by Barðdal (2001) on the function of morphological case in Icelandic is used as a theoretical basis. More specifically, the aim of this paper is to confirm or refute three of the main claims made by Barðdal in her 2001 work:

a) Morphological case is a multifunctional category (2001:17).

b) Morphological case correlates with both syntactic and semantic factors (2001:104).

c) The internal order of the changes within the Germanic case system is the same for the Germanic languages (2001:1).

Moreover, a further aim of this paper is to contrast whatever findings are made on the morphological case of os against the following claims of "Classical" Generative Grammar (Zaenen, Maling and Thráinsson 1985, Holmberg 1986, Falk 1997, Allen 1995, Lightfoot 1999, Jónsson 1997-98 and Sigurðsson 1989, all cited in Barðdal, 2001):

Morphological case is divided into *structural* and *lexical* case.

Structural case: nom case is assigned to subjects; acc case is assigned to direct objects.

Lexical case: Every exception to the previous rule, including any instance of assignment to an np of any case other than nom or acc, as well as any instance of assignment to subjects of a case other than nom and to direct objects of a case other than acc.

Even if these claims made by authors working within Generative Grammar may seem to be quite intuitive at first glance, a superficial overview of morphological case in os already casts doubt on them, in that instances of case assignment appear in the Genesis fragment that are not predicted by the above claims:

(1) *habda im sundea giuuaraht bittra an is bruoðar* (II, 27b-28a)
have.pt he.dat sin. acc commit.pcpt bitter.nom on he.gen brother.dat
'He had committed a bitter sin against his brother'.

In this example we can observe an exception to the above rules: DAT case is assigned to the subject of the clause, *im* 'him'. This does not concur with the second rule of Generative Grammar, which states that subjects should be assigned structural NOM case. Now, if lexical case constitutes an exception to the first and second rules provided by Generative Grammar on case assignment, this means that lexical case can not be productive. Yet, as will be shown below, subjects receiving not only DAT but also ACC and GEN are quite frequent in OS, suggesting that such instances of case assignment are productive, in contrast to generative claims. A more thorough analysis of the matter is therefore necessary.

2. The sources

The text that will be analysed for instances of morphological case is the anonymous 9th century CE OS translation of the Genesis fragment of the Bible. The edition of this text used in this paper is the one by Behaghel (1922), in addition to an OS glossary by Tiefenbach (2010) for the translations. This text has been considered appropriate for the present analysis due to its moderate length and in order to contrast the occurrence of case in this text to the findings about the case in the *Heliand* made by Arnett & Dewey (2013).

1. METHODOLOGY AND THEORETICAL GROUNDING

The OS language, in the stage documented in the Genesis fragment, presents five instances of morphological case: NOM, ACC, DAT, GEN and traces of INSTR. The criteria used to judge the number and kind of case-marking instances in this paper is that used by Weerman, Olson & Cloutier (2013), by which "an NP is considered to be case-marked [...] if this is visible on any determiner, adjective or noun in the phrase" (2013: 366). In any case, due to the literary style of the text, by which, for example, discontinuous (e.g. interjected) NPs are very common, it is sometimes difficult to determine whether a given noun, adjective or determiner belongs to one or other NP. Therefore, the count of 1033 NPs made in this paper is not absolute, in that alternative analyses may yield diverging counts.

Within the discussion about the function of morphological case in the Germanic languages −including OS−, the role of oblique subjects has been a much debated issue. Some authors have proposed (Grimm 1870: 23-52) that the oblique argument appearing with motion verbs in OS belongs to the middle voice, whereas others (Bünting 1879: 9) claim that verbs that take such oblique arguments have either lost previous reflexive objects or are similar to the Greek middle voice. Pratje (1880: 37-38) claims dative arguments to be reflexive in nature, in that the action denoted by the verb has both the source and the goal in those arguments. Such arguments have been considered to be reflexive pronouns (Scholtissek 1980, Purdy 1986, Clopton 1994), as in example (1) above, although more recent approaches, based mostly on Construction Grammar, have considered them to be proper oblique subjects (Arnett & Dewey 2013).

Oblique subjects can be case-marked either ACC or DAT in OS, which sets this language apart from other Germanic languages in which oblique cases can be case-marked GEN as well, such as Old Icelandic (Barðdal 2001) or Old Norse (Faarlund 2004). Regarding the syntactic behavior of these kind of subjects in OS, it has been noticed that they occur together with three kinds of predicates: motion verbs (e.g. *gangan* 'go', *fâran* 'go', *giuuîtan* 'go, direct (oneself)', *cuman* 'come', etc.), anticausative verbs (e.g. *gangan* 'go', *fâran*

'go', etc.) and mental-state verbs (e.g. *belgan* 'be angry', *uureð hugi uuesan* 'to be in an angry mood', *thurstian* 'to be thirsty', etc.) (Arnett & Dewey 2013). Motion verbs can be defined as verbs denoting a change of location (Crystal 2008), whereas anticausative verbs are considered to be instances of verbs that take more arguments than usual (Arnett & Dewey 2013), and mental-state verbs are defined as verbs denoting the psychological state of an animate entity (Barðdal 2001). Regarding the semantic behavior of such verbs, a correlation has been found between oblique subjects and a lack of control or volition on the part of the subject over the action denoted by the predicate (Arnett & Dewey 2013), an idea previously proposed by Barðdal (2004) as well as by other authors. Such claims will be contrasted against any findings made in this paper and corresponding conclusions will be drawn. Oblique subjects are present in every other attested old Germanic language (Arnett & Dewey 2013). This means that any findings made here could relate to the rest of the Germanic family as well.

Whenever an oblique subject appears in a clause which contains no NOM case-marked argument of the predicate, the finite verb switches its agreement to the standard person-agreement in the Germanic languages, which has been argued to be 3rd person singular (Barðdal 2001, Arnett & Dewey 2013). On the other hand, oblique case-marked subjects are frequently co-referential with a NOM case-marked argument. These two scenarios can be observed in the two following examples:

> (2) *Nu **thuingit mi** giu **hungar endi thurst*** (I, 12b)
>
> now oppress.3PSSG me. ACC already hunger.NOM and thirst.NOM
>
> 'Already now hunger and thirst oppress me'.

> (3) ***Sîðoda im** thuo te seliðon* (II, 27a)
>
> go.PT he.DAT then to house.DAT
>
> 'He then went into the house'.

On the other hand, one of the aims of this paper, as mentioned above, is to find out whether morphological case is a multifunctional category in OS like it is in Icelandic, as shown by Barðdal (2001). This means that it will be tested whether morphological case is used to convey a) the syntactic function of the case-marked NP, b) the semantic role of the case-marked NP, c) both the syntactic function and the semantic role of the case-marked NP or d) none of the above. In order to do that, the following procedure will be followed:

a) Make a list of the NPS occurring in the text;

b) Analyse the case, semantic role and syntactic function of each NP;

c) Draw statistics and correlations between these factors;

d) Draw conclusions and outlines based on the statistics;

e) Contrast these conclusions against Barðdal's and "Classical" Generative Grammar claims on the nature of morphological case.

For the sake of comparability, the same theoretical definitions that Barðdal makes of both the syntactic functions and semantic roles that NPS can take will be employed in this paper, with minor changes due to the different nature of OS writing with respect to that

of Old Icelandic. The following are the possible syntactic functions and semantic roles assumed in this work, the first list referring to the syntactic functions, the second to the semantic roles that a NP can carry ((Barðdal 2001: 52-57, 63, Arnett & Dewey 2013) (*=added by the author of this paper)):

a) Subject   h) Predicate

b) Direct Object   i) (*As*-predicate)

c) Indirect Object   j) Adverbial use (Adverb, lexical case)

d) Attribute (Possession)   k) Apposition

e) Prepositional object (Lexical case) l) Nominative objects

f) Extra-sentential phrases (Vocatives, proper names)

g) Relative   m) Postposition

a) **Agent**: the person that initiates or volitionally performs the action expressed by the predicate.

b) **Theme/Patient**: the person or thing undergoing or moved by the event expressed by the predicate.

c) **Station**: the person or thing located somewhere in space or time.

d) **Experiencer**: the person who experiences the psychological effect expressed by the predicate.

e) **Perceiver**: the person who perceives the effect expressed by the predicate.

f) **Cognizer**: the person who has the cognitive skills denoted by the predicate.

g) **Beneficiary/Recipient**: the entity that benefits from the event expressed by the predicate.

h) **Content**: the entity that has attention directed towards it, or is the content of the predicate.

i) **Goal**: the entity towards which the event expressed by the predicate is directed.

j) **Source**: the entity from which something is moved/moves as a result of the event expressed by the predicate.

k) **Instrument**: the entity used to perform the event expressed by the predicate.

l) **Path**: the path something moves on during the event expressed by the predicate.

m) **Location**: the place in which the event expressed by the predicate is situated.

n) **Time**: the entity denoting time of reference.

o) **Manner**: the entity denoting the manner in which the event expressed by the predicate is carried out.

p) **Measure**: the entity denoting a measurement, which is a part of the event expressed by the verb.

q) **Reason**: the purpose given for the event denoted by the predicate. The original 'cause' role is included here as well.

r) **Comitative**: the entity being together with another entity participating in the event expressed by the predicate.

s) ***Possessor**: indicates a semantic relationship of possession between two NPs.

t) ***Vocative**: indicates that the entity in question is being called upon by the author or by a character in the narrative. The reason why this semantic role was added is that proper names and calls for the attention of the listener or of other characters are quite common in the text. For example:

> (4) *'Uuela, that thu nu, **Êua**, haƀas', quað Adam, 'uƀilo gimarakot unkaro selƀaro sîð'.* (I, 1-2a)
>
> Good.NOM that you.NOM now Eva.NOM have.PS say.PT Adam.NOM bad.NOM direct.PCPT our.GEN self.GEN path. ACC
>
> "Good, **Eva**, that you have now', said Adam, 'wronged our own path".

w) ***Adjectival**: indicates that the entity in question is being used as an adjective. Adjectival elements are commonly found in non-adjacent positions to the noun they modify in OS. For example:

> (5) *habda im sundea giuuaraht **bittra** an is bruoðar* (II, 28b-29a)
>
> have.PT he.DAT sin. ACC carry out.PCPT bitter.NOM on his.GEN brother.DAT
>
> 'He had carried out the **bitter** sin on his brother'.

u) ***Partitive**: indicates that the entity in question belongs to an uncountable or numerous body. This semantic role has been added to the ones proposed by Barðal because it is very common for NPs to carry a partitive meaning in OS.

x) ***Maleficiary**: indicates that the entity in question malefits from the event described by the predicate.

2. DISCUSSION: CASE FREQUENCIES

2.1. Nominative

A total of 430 NOM case-marked NPs were identified in the text. These constitute 42% of the total 1033 NPs that were accounted for, which makes NOM the most frequent case in OS. If we tend to the claims of "Classical" GG cited above, we would expect for these 430 NOM NPs to mark mostly syntactic subjects and semantic agents. This is, indeed, the case: 297 of the NOM NPs are subjects (69%), and 213 of the NOM NPs are agents (50%). This means that there is a clear correlation between NOM case and the function of syntactic subject and the role of semantic agent in OS. However, the claims made by Generative Grammar do not account for the rest of uses of NOM case: out of the 430 NOM NPs, 54 are syntactic direct objects (henceforth DO) (13%), including passive constructions and copula objects. Moreover, 35 NOM NPs have adverbial uses (8%), 22 constitute extra-sentential phrases (5%, including vocatives and proper names), in addition to 13 relatives (3%) and a few other minor uses. Even if these percentages are not very high, there is a 31% percentage of NOM NPs that do not stick to the rule that "subjects are assigned NOM structural case". If we tend to the rule that "lexical case constitutes any exception to the previous rule", then one is forced to consider a 31% of all case-marking instances an exception, which might be considered to be quite a high number for an exception. If one tends to the

semantic roles that the NOM NPs carry in the text, then one will find that, in addition to the mentioned 213 (50%) agents, there are 71 cognizers (16%), 66 adjectival uses (15%), 28 experiencers (7%), 21 vocative uses (5%), 12 patients (3%), 10 themes (2%), and many other minor uses. These constitute a total of 50% of uses that Generative Grammar would label as exceptions.

2.2. Accusative

A total of 236 ACC case-marked NPs were identified in the text. These constitute 23% of the total of 1033 NPs that were accounted in the text, which means that ACC is the second most frequent case in OS. If one pays attention to the claims of Generative Grammar, one would expect most of these NPs to be syntactic DOs and semantic themes or patients. This is indeed the case: 150 (64%) of the ACC NPs are DOs, and 170 (72%) of the ACC NPs are either themes or patients. However, 7 ACC case-marked NPs in the text (3%) do not fit into the predictions made by Generative Grammar in that they fulfil the syntactic function of subject. Among these 7 oblique ACC case-marked subjects, one finds subjects of mental-state predicates (*uuardon* 'to take care', *thuingan* 'to oppress', *belgan* 'to be angry'), anti-causative predicates (*geduan* 'to do, cause', *stervan* 'to die') or motion predicates (*firrian* 'to draw back'). Regarding the semantic roles of the ACC case-marked NPs, 28% of these do not fulfil the function of theme or patient. This, coupled with the fact that 36% of all ACC case-marked NPs are not DOs clearly contradicts the claims of Generative Grammar that "structural ACC case is assigned to DOs"; again, 36% of the cases seems quite a high percentage for an exception. Moreover, these percentages also show that there is a clear correlation between ACC case, the syntactic function of DO and the semantic role of theme/patient, and that ACC case-marked oblique subjects stand close to motion, mental-state and anticausative predicates.

2.3. Dative

A total of 228 DAT case-marked NPs were found in the text, out of the total of 1033. This means that a 22% of the total NPs found in said text are DAT case-marked, making DAT the third most frequent case in OS and very close to the frequency of ACC case. If one tends to the claims by Generative Grammar, in which DAT case is considered to belong to 'lexical' case and therefore to be a non-productive exception, one might consider that a 22% of the total case-markings is far from being an exception, in addition to giving no indication as to lack of productivity. Furthermore, if one tends to the syntactic functions of the DAT case-marked NPs, one will see that although most, 70 (36%), are prepositional objects, there also exist 44 (19%) oblique DAT case-marked subjects. Among these oblique subjects, subjects of mental-state predicates are found (such as *kald uuesan* 'to be cold', *hreuuan* 'to hurt', *uureð uuesan* 'to be excited', *gibolgan uuesan* 'to be angry at', *hriuuig uuesan* 'to be sad', *thunkian* 'seem', etc.), subjects of anticausative predicates (e.g. *bi-uoran uuesan* 'to be available', *gimarcot uuesan* 'to be available', *hebbian* 'to have'), in addition to subjects of motion predicates (f.e. *bitengi* 'to get close', *sîðon* 'to go', *gangan* 'to go'). If one tends to the semantic roles of DAT case-marked NPs, then one will find that there are 73 (32%) patients, 34 (15%) locations, 31 (14%) experiencers, 21 (9%) goals, 12 (5%) instrumental uses, 12 (5%) contents, 11 (5%) manners, and many other minor semantic roles. Again, this wide variety of roles suggests not a loss of productivity, but

rather quite the contrary. In fact, DAT case is the case that correlates with the highest number of semantic roles (15), but not of syntactic functions (6 vs. 8 of NOM case).

2.4. Genitive

A total of 131 GEN case-marked NPs were found in the text. This means that only 13% of the total of 1033 NPs that were found in the text are GEN case-marked, which indicates that GEN is a considerably more marked and less productive case than NOM or ACC, for example. This lower productiveness may concur with the claim by Generative Grammar that GEN case assignment is lexical case assignment and should therefore constitute an exception; however, if we tend to the diachronic dimension of case, e.g. if we consider later stages of this language, we might conclude that the lower productivity of GEN case is not a synchronic factor, but is rather related to the fact that this case is losing productivity over time in OS. With regard to the syntactic functions of GEN case-marked NPs, 68 (52%) of all GEN NPs are attributes, 31 (24%) are DOs, 15 (11%) are predicates, 7 (5%) function as subjects, and 6 (5%) have adverbial uses, in addition to other minor functions. If one tends to the semantic roles fulfilled by GEN case-marked NPs, it will become clear that among them are 61 (47%) possessors, 40 (31%) partitive uses, 9 (7%) maleficiaries, in addition to many other minor uses. This is, as happens with ACC and DAT case, quite a wide variety of semantic roles, which again speak against the Generative Grammar-predicted exceptionality of GEN case.

2.5. Instrumental

A total of 8 NPs marked by INSTR case were found out of the 1033 total. This constitutes a mere 0'8% of the whole and clearly indicates that INSTR was well on its way towards extinction by the time the Genesis was translated into the language. With regard to the syntactic functions of INSTR NPs, 6 (75%) prepositional objects, 1 (12'5%) adverbial use and 1 (12'5%) predicate were identified. With respect to the semantic roles fulfilled by these NPs, 3 (37'5%) comitatives, 2 (25%) instrumental uses, 1 (12'5%) manner, 1 (12'5%) maleficiary and 1 (12'5%) contents were found.

3. CONCLUSIONS

There follow the outlines for each of the morphological cases of OS that were drawn based on the statistics outlined in section (2) above. Examples of some of the main uses of each case are furthermore provided. Finally, the findings of this paper are compared to the claims made by Barðdal (2001) and Generative Grammar on morphological case:

a) Nominative: In OS, NOM mostly indicates that the NP is a subject and an agent (49% of all NOM NPs):

> (6) **Suart** *furður skrêd,* **narouua naht** *an skion* (III, 285b-286a)
>
> darkness.NOM further slipped.PT, impressive.NOM night.NOM into sky.DAT
>
> '**The darkness** came forth, **the impressive night**, into the sky'.

However, NOM case has also many adjectival uses (15% of all NOM NPs, example #7), as well as signaling experiencers (7%) and vocatives (5%, ex. #8):

(7) *sô ik thes nu **uuirðig** ni bium* (II, 64a)

therefore I.NOM that.GEN now worthy.NOM NEG be.PS

'Therefore, now I am not **worthy** of it'.

(8) *Uuilthu mînas uuiht, **drohtin**, hebbian?* (III, 171b-172a)

want.PS-you.NOM my.GEN soul.GEN Lord.NOM have.INF

'Do you want to have my soul, **Lord**?'

b) Accusative: In OS, ACC is the case used to mark DOs and themes/patients (64% of the total ACC NPs):

(9) *thie unk **thesan haram** giried* (I, 7b)

who.NOM us.DAT this. ACC evil deed. ACC do.PS

'(...) who do us **such evil deeds**'.

Nonetheless, ACC case also marks locations, manners and goals (ex. #10), especially after prepositions (11% of the total ACC NPs), in addition to other minor uses (25% in their sum):

(10) ***an is ârundi**, sîðon **te Sodoma*** (III, 157b-158a)

in his. ACC errand. ACC go.INF to Sodoma. ACC

'**In his errand**, to go **to Sodoma**'.

Finally, subjects in OS can be case-marked ACC by motion, mental-state (ex. #11) and anticausative predicates (ex. #12) (3% of all instances):

(11) *that thu **thi** ni **belges** ti mi* (III, 226b)

so that you.NOM you.NOM NEG be angry.PS at me.DAT

'So that you will not be angry at me'.

(12) *that uuit **hunk** sulic uuîti **uuardon** scoldun* (I, 11)

that we.NOM us. ACC such. ACC punishment beware.INF should.PS

'That we should beware of such a punishment'.

c) Dative: In OS, DAT is the case to mark IOs and patients (24% and 32% of the total DAT NPs respectively):

(13) *quâðun, that sia uuissin, that **im** that iro sundia gidedin* (II, 98b)

said.PT that they.NOM know.SUBJ that them.DAT that. ACC their.NOM sins.NOM do.SUBJ

'(they) said, that they knew it was their sins which did this **to them**'.

After prepositions, however, DAT case marks various semantic roles, such as location (ex. #14), goal, time, manner, content, instrument, etc.:

(14) *thuo fundun sia Abrahama **bi ênum ala** standan* (III, 160)

    there found.PT they.NOM Abraham. ACC by one.DAT temple.DAT stand.INF

    'There they found Abraham, standing **next to a temple**'.

Finally, subjects in OS can also be case-marked DAT in order to indicate motion (ex. #15), a mental state (ex. #16) or lack of volition, as claimed by Barðal (2004) and Arnett & Dewey (2013):

(15) *geng **im** thuo tigegnes* (III, 165a)

    go.PT he.DAT then towards

    'He then went towards (God)'.

(16) *habdun **im** hugi strangan* (II, 120b)

    have.PT they.DAT mind. ACC violent. ACC

    'They had violent intentions'.

d) Genitive: In OS, GEN marks possession relationships, since 43% of all GEN case-marked NPS take an attribute syntactic function and a possessor semantic role:

(17) *that uuit **uualdandas** uuord farbrâkun* (I, 8)

    that we.NOM lord.GEN word. ACC break.PT

    'That we disobeyed **the Lord's** command'.

Nevertheless, subjects and DOs can be GEN case-marked in OS, but only when conveying a semantic partitive meaning (ex. #18), which is the case of 31% of the GEN NPS identified in the text. GEN case can also identify maleficiaries (7%):

(18) *unk nis hier **scattas** uuiht te meti gimarcot* (I, 22a-23b)

    us.DAT NEG-be.PS here food.GEN being.NOM to dine.INF fixed.PCPT

    'There is no **food** at all here for us to eat'.

e) Instrumental: In addition to the instrumental use, which is fulfilled by 2 out of 8 INSTR case-marked NPS, this case denotes other semantic roles (namely manner and maleficiary), although almost exclusively after prepositions:

(19) *Thô geng im thanan mið **grimmo hugi*** (II, 80a)

    then go.PT REFL from-there with grim.INSTR mind.INSTR

    'After that he went away **ill-minded**'.

Moreover, as was shown above instrumental uses are expressed not only by INSTR case, but also by GEN and DAT case. This means that there existed variability in OS when assigning any of INSTR, DAT or GEN case to an NP at the time in which the Genesis was translated into the language, which clearly indicates syncretism.

    The data analysed here have clearly shown that despite the claims made by "Classical" GG, this is clearly not the whole picture of case-marking in OS. Not only do NOM NPS have other syntactic functions apart from subject and other semantic roles apart from agent,

not only are ACC NPS DOS and themes or patients, but it is very often the case as well that subjects and DOS are case-marked with either ACC, DAT or GEN. In general terms, however, in OS ACC case is used to mark DOS, DAT case is used to mark IOs and GEN is used to mark attributes. This division of labor can be observed in other Germanic languages, like Icelandic or High German, and we therefore get in OS a very similar picture of case-marking to these languages. We could therefore claim that the predictions made by "Classical" GG with respect to morphological case-marking in OS are only partially borne out. Clearly, more investigation on the phenomenon is necessary to explain this matter fully.

Finally, regarding the claims made by Barðdal in her 2001 work, it has been shown that in OS a correlation between the morphological case, the syntactic function and the semantic role of each and every NP can be observed. It is true that OS presents uses of morphological case that are divergent from other Germanic languages (such as the partitive use of GEN or the manner/maleficiary use of INSTR), but always in connection to the syntactic function and the semantic role of the case-marked NP. Morphological case can therefore be claimed to be a multifunctional category, as predicted by Barðdal for Icelandic (2001: 17):

	NOM	ACC	DAT	GEN	INSTR
Subject	x	x	x	x	
DO	x	x	x	x	
IO		x	x	x	
Attribute				x	
Prep. Obj.		x	x		x
Extra-s. ph.	x				
Relative	x	x		x	
Predicate	x	x	x	x	x
As-pred.	x		x		
Adverbial	x	x	x	x	x
Postposition	x			x	

Figure #1.1. Distribution of morphological case across syntactic functions in OS.

	NOM	ACC	DAT	GEN	INSTR
Agent	x		x	x	
Reason	x		x	x	
Theme/Pat.	x	x	x	x	
Experiencer	x		x		
Cognizer	x				
Beneficiary			x	x	
Maleficiary	x		x	x	x
Content			x	x	x
Goal		x	x		
Source			x	x	
Instrument		x	x		x
Path		x			
Location		x	x	x	
Time	x	x	x		
Manner	x	x	x	x	x
Measure	x	x	x		
Comitative			x	x	x

Possessor			x	x
Vocative	x	x		
Partitive				x
Adjectival	x	x		

Figure #1.2. Distribution of morphological case across semantic roles in OS.

With respect to the last claim by Barðdal on the diachronic evolution of case, it has been shown how, in addition to the already well-known fact that INSTR was falling together with other cases (mainly DAT) in OS, GEN is the least productive case in this language, and NOM the most productive one, with ACC and DAT standing somehow in between. This situation parallels the evolution of case in other Germanic languages, such as Frisian (Bremmer 2009), Swedish (Delsing 1991, 1995, cited in Barðdal 2001: 204) English (Allen 1995: 211-220, cited in Barðdal 2001: 205) or both Old and Modern Icelandic (Barðdal 2001: 200-202), where morphological GEN case has either begun to lose productivity or has fallen out of use altogether, either by falling together with DAT case or by being replaced by periphrastic constructions (like prepositional phrases of the kind *of* + NP) or both, except a few fossilized constructions that belong to specific pragmatic environments.

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