

## Morphemic Analysis Of Case Markers In Shahmukhi Punjabi Nouns

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### Abstract

Case denotes the grammatical category reflecting a noun's (or pronoun's) relationship with other sentence elements, signifying the role that a noun plays in sentence structure, such as subject, object, or possessor. In Punjabi and other languages, noun case significantly influences grammatical function within sentences. Punjabi employs numerous cases to indicate a noun's role and relationship with other words. Traditionally, Punjabi recognizes eight cases, demonstrating grammatical ties between nouns and verbs, elucidating noun roles in diverse contexts. This study aims to identify Punjabi noun cases through morphological analysis. The analysis of noun case involves recognizing form changes, especially endings, and determining grammatical roles. Each Punjabi noun case bears distinct morphemes or post-positions in Shahmukhi Punjabi, facilitating case identification for educational and research purposes in understanding first language acquisition errors.

**Keywords:** Morphology, Case system, noun, Shahmukhi Punjabi

### 1. Introduction

The case system functions to indicate the dependent noun's specific relationship with its head (Blake, 2001), thereby conveying noun function within a sentence. Characterized by morphological inflections in Indo-European languages, case is exemplified by Sanskrit's eight cases: nominative, accusative, dative, ablative, genitive, instrumental, locative, and vocative (Iqbal, Mangrio, & Mustafa, n.d).

Richards and Schmidt (2013) classify global language cases into two main systems: nominative-accusative and ergative-absolutive. English, Urdu, and Punjabi belong to the nominative-accusative group. The historical evolution of Indo-European languages, comprising ancient, middle, and new Indo-Aryan stages, has influenced changes in noun cases (Qizi, 2020). This study proposes eight cases in Hindu-Aryan languages: accusative, common, collaborative, dative, instrumental, genitive, ablative, locative, and appeal cases.

Nouns undergo changes for number and case, featuring two numbers (singular and plural) and five cases. Direct and oblique cases apply to all nouns, while the vocative is exclusive to living nouns and infrequently used with others. Ablative and locative cases are singular and plural attributes of a specific noun class.

Akhtar and Bukhari (2009) outline three forms of case representation in Urdu and Punjabi nouns: nominative, oblique, and vocative. Nominative is a direct, clitic-free form at subject and object positions. The oblique form is accompanied by a case marker (clitic), and the vocative is employed for addressing individuals.

### 1.1 Urdu and Punjabi Case markers

Case markers, crucial for case formation, are specific prepositions and postpositions (Ahmed, 2007; Spencer, 2005). These markers, serving as indicators, facilitate the identification of various noun cases. The following are the case markers.

**Table 1. Kinds of Case Markers of Punjabi Language**

Case	Punjabi case markers	Urdu case markers
Nominative	Nen نین	Ny نَے
Accusative	Nuun نوں	Ko کو
Ergative	Nen نین	Ny نَے
Dative	Nuun نوں	Ko کو
Ablative	Ton توں، وں	Sy سے
Instrumental	Naal نال	Sy سے
Locative	Wich, ixh, utay (وچ، اچ، ائے)	Main, par (میں، پر)
Vocative	oo یو	Oo یو

The mentioned case markers above offer a means to analyze and explore Punjabi language cases. Punjabi possesses distinct characteristics in noun existence and subject-verb agreement. Nouns in Punjabi exhibit variations across three dimensions: case, gender, and number. Conversely, English nouns display variations solely based on case and number. Below, a section presents examples to illustrate these differences:

**Nominative Case:**

Boy eats apple. - منڈا سیب کھاندا وا۔

Girl eats apple. - کڑی سیب کھاندى وا۔

**Plural Case:**

Boys eat apple. - منڈے سیب کھاندے نیں۔

Girls eat apple. - کڑیاں سیب کھاندىاں نیں۔

The provided examples highlight that while English varies based on number and case, Punjabi exhibits variations in number, gender, and case, showcasing the greater complexity of Punjabi's case system compared to English. Spencer (2005) asserted that Indo-European languages develop cases that depend on inflectional class and grammatical number.

This study aims to analyze Punjabi's case system and identify diverse case markers and their positions within sentences. This endeavor will greatly aid in comprehending Punjabi noun systems, their designated placements and roles within sentences, as well as their agreement with verbs. By delving into these aspects, the study offers valuable insights into the intricacies of Punjabi grammar and language structure.

## 2. Literature Review

The term "case" is defined as a marking scheme for nouns based on their inherent features (Blake, 2001). It functions as a system that designates the dependent noun's specific relationship with a head element. In alternative phrasing, case is a morphological characteristic linked to grammatical functions (Andrew, 2001). This sets case apart from thematic roles, which are semantically related, as case pertains to morphological aspects.

Thematic roles primarily address meaning, while case concerns the grammatical role a noun plays in a sentence. Nouns typically appear as subjects or objects and carry nominative and accusative cases respectively. For instance, in the sentences '**Boy** played well' (کھیڈیا چنگا منڈا), both "boy" and منڈا bear the nominative case. Likewise, in sentences like 'I met the **boy**' (ملیا نوں منڈے میں), "boy" and منڈے assume the accusative case as objects, with نوں serving as an accusative case marker (Zeb, 2019).

Mirza (2014) illustrated both nominative and accusative cases by explicitly positioning nouns as subjects and objects within sentences.

**Table 2. Usage of Nominative and Accusative Case**

Nominative case	Accusative case
Amjad called me.	Hira helped me.
I went there.	Ali hit ali.
It rains.	I called usman.

Chomsky (1981) proposed that the nominative case exclusively appears in the subject position of a tensed sentence, as illustrated in the aforementioned examples. The theory of case was introduced to encapsulate the distinct properties inherent to nouns within a sentence. Failure to exhibit the specific required feature renders a noun ungrammatical. In English, two frequently encountered cases are the nominative (subjective) and accusative (objective) cases. This theory stipulates that the nominative case always functions as the subject, while the accusative case serves as the object in a sentence.

A noun is defined by the Oxford English Dictionary as a "word used as a name, designation, thing, or place." WordNet classifies nouns into two categories: functional and semantic. The functional category pertains to words functioning as subjects or objects in sentences, while the semantic category pertains to content words referring to people, things, and places.

Butt and King (2001) proposed the presence of six noun cases in Urdu: nominative, accusative, ergative, instrumental, locative, and vocative. Masica (1993) delineated three distinct layers of case markers in New-Indo-Aryan languages: inflections, clitics, and postpositions. In Punjabi, the

ablative case is marked by the inflection "oN," the accusative and dative cases employ the clitic "nuuN," and the instrumental case employs the postposition "naal" (Zograf, 1960).

**Table 3. Inflected Forms of Noun (Zograf, 1960) Layer 1**

	Singular	Plural	Singular	Plural
Direct	منڊا Munda	منڊے Munday	مکان Makan	مکاناں Makana n
Oblique	منڊے Munday	منڊیاں Mundaya n		
Vocative	منڊیا Mundaya	منڊیو Mundyo		
	Boy (Masculine )		House (Masculine )	

	Singular	Plural	Singular	Plural
Direct	کڑی Kurri	کڑیاں Kurrian	کرسی Kursi	کرسیاں Kursian
Oblique	کڑی Kurri	کڑیاں Kurrian		
Vocative	کڑے Kurriye	کڑیو Kurrio		
	Girl (Feminine)		Chair (Feminine)	

The tables provided above clearly illustrate the variations in cases based on number and gender. Animate entities, such as girls and boys, exhibit differences across all cases. Conversely, inanimate objects do not demonstrate variations in cases based on number. Additionally, inanimate objects lack variations in vocative cases, as they cannot be called or addressed. This distinction arises from the inherent characteristics and limitations of animate and inanimate elements within the language's case system.

**Table 4. Inflections of Adjectives**

		Masculine	Feminine
Singular	Direct	چنگا Changa	چنگی Changi
	Oblique	چنگے	چنگی

		Changay	Changi
	Vocative	چنگیا Changya	چنگیے Changye
<b>Plural</b>	Direct	چنگ changay	چنگیاں Changian
	Oblique	چنگیاں Changian	چنگیاں Changian
	Vocative	چنگیو Changyo	چنگیو Changio
	Good		

The table presented above demonstrates the variations in adjective cases based on number, case, and gender.

**Table 5. Adjective Agreement**

<b>Direct</b>	Singular	منڈا Munda	چنگ Change	کڑی Kurri	چنگی Changi
	Plural	منڈے Munday	چنگ Changay	کڑیاں Kurrian	چنگیاں Changian
<b>Vocative</b>	Singular	منڈیا Mundaya	چنگیا Changya	کڑیے Kurriye	چنگیے Changiy
	Plural	منڈیو Mundayo	چنگیو changyo	کڑیو Kurrio	چنگیو Changio
	Good				

Ahmed (2007) classified the inflectional case marker *و* /on/ in Punjabi as a spatial marker, indicating the starting location of motion, as seen in examples like *آیا۔ گھروں میں*. However, this marker is restricted to physical entities such as "school" or "house." In Urdu, the equivalent of the first layer is absent, and the clitic *سے* /se/ is used for the same purpose. In specific contexts, Punjabi also employs the clitic *توں* /ton/ to denote the source of movement.

Iqbal, Mangrio, and Mustafa (n.d) conducted a comparative study on the use of *نو* (نو) in Punjabi and *کو* (کو) in Urdu. The study found equivalence between these two case markers. Data from speakers of both languages was utilized to challenge the claim made by Islam, Akhtar, and Bukhari (2009) that the case marker *کو* (کو) cannot be applied to inanimate entities.

Zeb (2019) carried out a comparative study of nominative and accusative cases in Urdu and English using Chomsky's (1981) case theory. The study utilized qualitative, descriptive, and content analysis methods, analyzing English sentences and their translations to highlight the similarities and differences in the nominative and accusative cases of both languages.

Based on a review of previous literature and the cases of nouns presented by Qizi (2020), the following list of cases and their markers will be utilized for further analysis of Punjabi noun cases.

**Table 6. Instances of Case Markers in Punjabi Language**

Sr. No.	Cases	Examples
1	Nominative/ Direct case	منڈے نیں ماریا Mundyan nen marya.
2	Accusative/ Oblique case	منڈے نوں ماریا Mundyan nun marya.
3	Genitive case	منڈے دی کتاب Munday di kitab
4	Dative	منڈا منوں کتاب دے گیا Munda minu kitab day gya
5	Instrumental	میں منڈے نال آیا Main munday nal aya.
6	Ablative	منڈا گھروں آیا Munda gharon aya
7	Locative	منڈا کار وچ آ Munda kar wich aa
8	Vocative	منڈیا ارے آ Mundya uray aa

### 2.1 Research Questions

1. What are the morphemic and post-position case markers of nouns in Punjabi language?

### 3. Methodology

For the purpose of analysis, the corpus of 9 million words was collected. After tagging the corpus through Parts Of Speech

tagger, the list of noun was extracted from the corpus. All nouns were analysed using the morphemes at suffix position, the post-positions added at the end of the words and the role words were performing in the sentences.

Sentences of the corpus were also analysed to find out the case markers of the nouns at different positions in the sentences. In this way the cases of nouns were analysed and further analysis is given in the next section.

#### 4. Analysis

The primary objective of this study is to thoroughly analyze the case system of nouns utilized within the Punjabi language. The researcher focused on a morphological analysis of Punjabi nouns to uncover the distinct morphemes employed to create specific noun cases in the language.

As elucidated in the review section, Punjabi features a total of eight noun cases. The subsequent analysis is presented in the table below.

**Table 7. Instances of Inflections as Case Markers in Punjabi Language**

Case	Inflection	Post position as case marker	Explanation	Sentence
Direct/nominative case	، اے، ی، ان		When a noun is used at subject position	منڈا سکول گیا۔ منڈے سکول گئے۔ کڑی سکول گئی۔ کڑیاں سکول گیاں۔ پنسل گواچ گئی۔ پنسلان گواچ گیاں۔



Oblique/ accusative case	اے، ی، ان		When a noun is used as a direct object at object position	منڈیے نوں کھانا دے۔ غریب دی مددکر۔
Vocative case	یا، یو، بے		Used to address or call some one	منڈیا کتھے گیا سی؟ کڑے ادھر آجا۔ منڈیو گل سنو۔ کڑیو نماز پڑھیا کرو۔
Dative case		نون	When two objects are used (indirect) object serves this purpose	میں منڈیے نون کتاب دتی۔
Locative case		وچ، اے، انے	Indicates the location	اسلم کمرے وچ سی۔ منڈا سکولے گیا سی۔ گڈی بچے دے انے سی۔
Genitive case		دا، دی، دے، دیاں	Used to show the possession	منڈیے دا پرس گواچ گیا۔ بچے دی امی رون لگ پئی سی۔ سب بچیاں دے لیپ ٹاپ خراب نیں۔ سب بچیاں دیاں

				کتاباں پرانیاں نیں۔
Instrumental case		نال	Used to refer to things used as instrument to do some action	قاتل نے چھری نال عورت دا قتل کیتا سی۔ میں ابو نال لاہور گیا سی۔
Ablative case	ون		Used to refer to the source of location where action began and from which point thing moved away	میں اسلم نون گھروں بلایا۔ ایہنوں میرے مغروں لا۔

### 1. Direct/ nominative case

This case primarily appears when a noun functions as the subject of a sentence. In Punjabi, nouns inflect for number and gender. The main inflectional morphemes found are اے، ی، ا، and ان. When a noun occupies a subject position, it adheres to a specific inflectional pattern. Some nouns deviate from the mentioned patterns, like پنسل and ککڑ, but when derived in feminine or plural forms, they adhere to the inflectional patterns provided. Examples:

منڈا سکول گیا۔

Munda school gya.

Boy went to school.

منڈے سکول گئے۔

Munday school gaye.

Boys went to school.

کڑی سکول گئی۔

Kurri school gai.

Girl went to school.

کڑیاں سکول گیاں۔

Kurrian school gaian.

Girls went to school.

پنسل گواچ گئی۔

Pensal gwach gai.

Pencil got lost.

پنسلان گواچ گیاں۔

Penslan gawach gaian.

Pencils got lost.

All the above sentences follow the morphemic pattern of nouns in the nominative case. Nouns ending with اے، ی، ا، and ان act as indicators and case markers for the nominative case. An exception is seen in the sentence گواچ پنسل گئی۔ Here, the subject deviates from the given morphological pattern.

## 2. Oblique/ accusative case

The accusative case pertains to nouns in object positions. This case is associated with direct objects, often inanimate entities. Similar to the nominative case, the accusative case follows the same morphological patterns. Morphemes for the accusative case include اے، ی، ا، and ان. However, the position of the noun varies. Examples:

منڈے نون کھانا دے۔

Munday nu khana day.

Give food to the boy.

غریب دی مددکر۔

Ghareeb di madad kar.

Help the poor.

میں چھے کتاباں پڑھیاں۔

Main chay kitaban parhian.

In the sentences above, کھانا /khana/ (food), مدد /madad/ (help), and کتاباں /kitaban/ (books) exemplify the

accusative case as direct objects. Most examples adhere to the accusative case markers, except مدد /madad/ (help). In its singular form, it does not follow the pattern; however, in its plural form مددان /madadan/ (helps), the same pattern emerges.

### 3. Vocative case

The vocative case involves addressing or calling someone. Nouns are used in object positions to address or call a person. Morphological aspects of this case include یا, ے, and یو. These morphemes aid in forming words like منڈیا /mundya/, منڈیو /mundyo/, and کڑیے /kurriye/. Gender also plays a role in this case's formation. The morphemes یا and یو are used in both genders. یا represents masculine singular, ے represents feminine singular, and یو represents the plural form for both genders. Examples:

منڈیا کتھے گیا سی؟

Mundy kithy gya si?

O boy where did you go?

کڑیے ادھر آجا۔

Kurriye idhar aja.

O girl come here.

منڈیو گل سنو۔

Mundy gal suno.

Boys listen.

کڑیو نماز پڑھیا کرو۔

Kurriyo offer prayer.

The examples provided above demonstrate nouns used for addressing or calling individuals. The morphemes یا, ے, and یو are used to form the vocative cases.

### 4. Dative case

This particular noun case functions in the object position, specifically utilized to establish the indirect object. The case is indicated by the post-position "نوں". Notably, this post-position is neutral in gender and number, making it applicable to all

noun genders and numbers within the Punjabi language. Presented below are examples of sentences for clarification:

میں منڈے نون کتاب دتی۔

Main munday nun kitab diti.

I gave book to the boy.

میں منڈیاں نون کتاباں دتیاں۔

Main mundian nun kitabab ditian.

I gave book to the boy.

میں کڑی نون کتاب دتی۔

I gave book to the girl.

میں کڑیاں نون کتاباں دتیاں۔

Main kurrian nun kitabab ditian.

I gave books to the boys.

The analysis of the above given sentences show that the post-position نون /nun/ is used to refer indirect object which forms dative case of nouns. This post-position نون /nun/ worked as neutral gender and number. It remained as it is with all numbers and genders of nouns in all sentences.

##### 5. Locative case

Locative case of nouns is used in the context in which the location of something is told with relation to nouns. Two nouns are used in this situation. One noun is the thing or the person who is located somewhere else. The place where a noun is located that place is marked with the help of this case marker. This case is also marked with the help of post positions. Post-positions of the locative case marker are وچ and لے۔ The morpheme ے is also used as case marker of locative case in nouns in Punjabi language.

اسلم کمرے وچ سی۔

Aslam kamray wich si.

Aslam was in the room.

منڈا سکولے گیا سی۔

Munda skolay gya si.

Boy went to school.

بچے گڈی دے لے سی۔

Bachay gaddi dy utay si.

Children were over the car.

Examples of the sentences given above show that the post position وچ /wich/ and لے /utay/ are used as the case markers of the locative case. These two post positions are neutral regarding gender and number. The other case marker of locative case was لے. It is joined at the end of the words which are usually the indicators of some location like گھر، سکول and دفتر.

## 6. Genitive case

The Genitive case of noun is used to show the possession of something. This case is marked with the help of post-position دے، دی، دا and دیاں. Following case markers are used to show the nouns and these case markers vary according to number and gender of the nouns. دا is used for singular masculine noun, دی is used for singular feminine noun, دے is used with masculine plural noun and دیاں is used with feminine plural nouns. All these post-positions are used to mark the genitive case examples of the sentences are given below:

منڈے دا پرس گواچ گیا۔

Munday da purse gawach gya.

Boy lost his purse.

بچے دی امی رون لگ پئی سی۔

Bachay di am iron lag pai si.

Mother of the child began to weep.

سب بچیاں دے لیپ ٹاپ خراب نیں۔

Sab bachyan day laptop kharab nen.

All the laptops of the children are faulty.

سب بچیاں دیاں کتاباں پرانیاں نیں۔

Sab bachyan dian kitaban puranian nen.

Books of all the boys are old.

The analysis of the above sentences showed that دا، دی، دے and دیاں were used as genitive case markers of nouns in Punjabi language. The changes in the form of post-positions occur with relation to the object of the sentence. The post-

position دا is used with masculine singular noun found at object position, in the same way دی is used with feminine singular noun, ے is used with masculine plural and دیں is used with feminine plurals.

### 7. Instrumental case

The instrumental case of noun is used to refer to the thing through which some action is performed. This case is formed with the help of post-position نال. This case marker remains neutral with relation to number and gender. This form is used with all numbers and genders and also with animate and inanimate nouns. Examples of the sentences are given below;

قاتل نے چھری نال عورت دا قتل کیتا سی۔

Qatil ny churi nal aurat da qatal kita si.

Murderer killed the lady with knife.

میں ابو نال لاہور گیا سی۔

Main abu nal lahor gya si.

I went to Lahore with my father.

The examples of the sentences showed that the post-position نال is used as a case marker of the noun. This case marker is used with the noun. It remained neutral with all numbers and genders. It is also used as it is with both animate and inanimate nouns.

### 8. Ablative case

The ablative case is used to refer to the source from which the action began and the source or location from which one thing moved to other. The morpheme used in this case is وں. This case marker remains neutral with all numbers and cases. Examples of the sentences are given below;

میں اسلم نوں گھروں بلایا۔

Main aslam nun gharon bulaya.

I called aslam from home.

ایہنوں میرے مغروں لا۔

Ehnu mery magharon la.

Get rid him off me.

The examples of the sentences showed that the morpheme وں is used as a case marker of Punjabi nouns. This

morpheme is joined with the noun to form ablative case. It remained neutral with all numbers and genders.

## 5. Conclusion

The analysis conducted in this study has revealed that morphemes within the Punjabi language function as specific case markers for nouns. The investigation has illuminated that both the direct/nominative case and the oblique/accusative case are distinguished by the presence of morphemes اے، ی، اے /aa, I, ay/, and ان /an/ positioned at their respective locations, such as the subject and object positions within a sentence. The vocative case is identified through the inclusion of morphemes یا، یو /ya, yo/, and اے /iay/ at the end of the word. The genitive case is marked by the morphemes دے، دی، دا /da, di, day/, and دیان /dian/, which signal possession. This case structure serves to indicate the possessor of the noun. The ablative case is designated by the morpheme ون /on/, conveying the point from which an action originates. The dative case is formed through the use of the postposition نوں, attached to the indirect object of the verb. The locative case is constructed using postposition markers اے وچ، اے /wich, ay/, and اے /utay/, illustrating the noun's location. The instrumental case is marked by the postposition نال /nal/, which highlights the noun through which an action is carried out. These morphemes hold the potential to be valuable tools for teaching and further research in the context of Punjabi language. Furthermore, these morphemes and postpositions offer opportunities for the analysis and development of case markers and case analyzers in the future.

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