THE CASE SYSTEM OF *YERUKALA*

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ABSTRACT

The present paper is an attempt to study the case markers of *Yerukala* language. *Yerukala* is a Dravidian Language mainly spoken by the *Yerukala* tribes. This language is also called as *kurru basha* or *kula vaatha*. *Yerukala* is Linguistically close to South Dravidian Languages such as *Irula*, *Ravula* and *Tamil*. These tribes largely found in southern Indian states of Andhra Pradesh, Telangana, Tamilnadu and Karnataka. The population of *Yerukala* is 5,59,000 (according to 2011 census) and has a literacy rate of 25.74% (according to 2011 census). They call themselves as "*kurru*". They are called *Yerukala* after their women's traditional profession of fortune telling (*eruka chepputa*, Telugu term). This tribe has a dialect of its own which is called "*Yerukala basha*" or "*kurru basha*" or "*kula vātha*". Most of its words borrowed from Telugu and some are borrowed from Tamil and Kannada. The tribe is concentrated in the Kurnool, Chittoor, Kadapa and Ananthapur districts of Andhra Pradesh and also in some other adjoining areas. An attempt is made to study case markers in *Yerukala*. Eight types of cases are found in *Yerukala* language and they are marked with suffixes. The eight types of cases are Nominative, Accusative, Instrumental, Dative, Ablative, Genitive, Locative and Associative. In Yerukala Nominative case is unmarked as in many other Dravidian Languages.

Keywords: *Yerukala*, methodology, case system, suffix.

Abbreviation: 1-First Person; 2- Second Person; 3- Third Person; NOM- Nominative; ACC- Accusative; INST- Instrumental; DAT- Dative; ABL- Ablative; GEN- Genitive; LOC- Locative; ASS- Associative; Sg. Singular; Pl- Plural; M- Masculine; NM- Non-Masculine; PST- Past Tense;

1. Introduction

Yerukula is an Endangered South Dravidian Language (cf. George Van Driem.2007 and Venkata Gouri. S. Aruna. Y. 2020) mainly spoken by the *Yerukula* tribe. This language is also called *Kurru basha* or *Kulavatha*. *Yerukula* is linguistically close to South Dravidian languages such as *Ravula, Irula* and *Tamil*. This language tribe (*Yerukala* or *Erukala* or *Erukula*) is a caste or social group found largely in the Southern Indian states of Telangana, Andhra Pradesh, Tamilnadu and Karnataka. *Yerukulas* are indigenous people of South India who mostly follow *Hindu* religion. The Population of *Yerukula's* is 5,49,000 (according to 2011 Census) and has a literacy rate of 25.74% (according to 2011 Census). This tribe is divided into a number of functional and endogamous sub-divisions and each such sub-division is named after the commodity, which they traded in and the occupation they adopted. Linguistically *Yerukula* has not been grouped into Dravidian Languages, and its subgrouping is pending. Even though most of the *Yerukala* Lexical elements are similar to *Irula, Ravula* and *Tamil*. The script used to record *Yerukala* Literature is Telugu. In the following steps a detail report is presented about the case system of Yerukala. This report is a part of morphological study of Yerukala language.

1.1. Yerukala

The *Yerukalas* are a wondering tribe, settled in plains in the states of Andhra Pradesh, Tamilnadu, Kerala, Karnataka, Maharastra, West Bengal (Calcutta) and Orissa (Thurston: 1909). The *Yerukalas* are Dravidian tribe. They have different nomenclature in different states. They are called *Yerukalas* in Andhra Pradesh, koravas or koragas in Tamilnadu, korachas in Karnataka and kaikaḍi's in narmada region of Maharastra. They are known as korava from the extreme South to the North of the North Arcot district of Tamilnadu, where they are korcha or koracha, and in the ceded district of Andhra Pradesh they become *Yerukala* or *Yerakala*. According to Balfour, "The koravas, or a certain section of them, i.e., the kunchi koravas, were known as *Yerukal koravar*, and they called the language they speak as *yerkal*. The same authority, writing of *yerkalwadu*, alludes to them as *kurshiwanloo*, and goes onto say that they style themselves Y*eraka*, and give the same appellation to the language in which they hold communication. The word *yerkal* here undoubtedly stands for *Yerukala*, and kurshi for korcha. It is contended that the koravas and *Yerukalas* do not intermarry or eat together. But according to one extracted note, dated 1895, marriages took place between the southern koravas from Madurai district (Tamilnadu) and the *Yerukalas* of the Cuddapah district (Andhra Pradesh). In Nellore (Andhra Pradesh) and other districts, *Yerukalas* also purchase their wives. The price varying from thirty to seventy rupees, but money rarely passed on to the party on such occasions, the consideration being paid in asses or cattle.

2. Methodology

The *Yerukala* language is used limited to their social gathering and mode of communication among the elder people. Apart from elder people, the younger generation the language finds narrow. The study on *Yerukala* language is undertaken with extensive interaction among the *Yerukala* speakers, asking informants (both younger and elder) to gather and validate the data. The work is done on the basis of traditional tools such as Swadish questionnaire and SAP (UGC Special Assistance Programme) questionnaire which is prepared for our Department project on Language Documentation of Endangered Dravidian Languages etc., which are used for descriptive linguistics documentation. The data is collected from Rayalaseema region (Kurnool, Ananthpur, Kadapa and Chittoor districts) of Andhra Pradesh.

The present article attempts to present the case system of *Yerukala*. There are eight cases found in *Yerukala* language.

3. Case Grammar

Case grammar theory was proposed by the American linguist Charles J. Fillmore in 1968 for representing linguistic knowledge in the context of transformational grammar that focused the link between subject, object and verb.

3.1. Case System

The case and case marker plays a crucial role especially in relation to Nouns and Pronouns. Case is considered to be an inflectional category, basically of Nouns and Pronouns, which specifically marks their function in relation to other parts of the sentence. Case is used in the analysis of word classes (of their association phrases) to identify the systematic relationship between the words in a sentence. There are eight cases in *Yerukala* in which nominative case is unmarked.

Case is marked primarily with the help of suffix markers in Yerukala. There are eight cases in *Yerukala* language. Out of eight, nominative case is unmarked and other seven cases occur with the oblique form of the Noun and Pronoun. They are enlisted in the below table:

SI.No.	Case	*Yerukala* Case marker
1.	Nominative	-
2.	Accusative	/na/
3.	Dative	/ki/, /ku/
4.	Instrumental	/ōṭi/, /tō/, iṭṭe/
5.	Locative	/kōku/, /kōru/
6.	Associative	/nōṭe/, /ōṭi gūḍa/,
7.	Ablative	/uṇḍi/
8.	Genitive	/u/, /a/

3.1.1. Nominative Case

A nominative case is unmarked. A noun is said to be a nominative case, when it is used as the subject of a sentence, or a nominative has no case suffix of its own (or has a zero suffix). The nominative case denotes the subject of a sentence and it is unmarked as in many other Dravidian Languages.

	kōmala	*araṭi paṇga*	*tiru-s-u*
[1]	komala-NOM-3.Sg.	Banana	eat-PST-3.Sg.NM
	Komala ate a banana.		

	naṇga	*kāpi*	*kur-s-o*
[2]	we-NOM-1.Pl.	coffee	drink-PST-1.Pl.
	We drank coffee.		

	adu	*bukku*	*rā-s-idu*
[3]	he-NOM-3.Sg.	book	write-PST-3.Sg.M
	He wrote a book.		

3.1.2. Accusative Case

Like many other Dravidian languages *Yerukala* also defines the direct object with its accusative case marker. In simple words, accusative case shows the direct object represented by a nominal class of word. A direct object is one which receives an action. Accusative suffix is primarily used for denoting the direct object of a transitive verb. In *Yerukala* language Accusative case is overtly shown by the case suffixe /**-na/**. But in some cases they are inherent.

	nānu	*nāy-**na***	*mot-i-rē*
[4]	i-NOM-1.Sg.M/NM	dog-ACC	beat-PST-1.Sg.M/NM.
	I beat the dog.		

[5]
adu	*kiṭiki-na*	*vāṅg-i-du*
he-NOM-3.Sg.	window-ACC	open-PST-3.Sg.M

He opened the window.

[6]
sinkeruvu	*kuṇḍ-na*	*pagalamot-i-du*
boy-NOM-.Sg.	pot-ACC	break-PST-3Sg.M

The boy broke the pot.

[7]
rāmu	*ceḍi-na*	*artōṭ-i-du*
ram-NOM-3.Sg.	tree-ACC	cut-PST-3 Sg.M

Ramu cut the tree.

There is no explicit case marker we find in the below example. As we can say that the case marker is implicit. This is an ontological inflection

[8]
rāji	*vāsal-θ*	*vāṇg-i-du*
raji-NOM-3.Sg.	door-absent	open-PST-3.Sg.NM

Raji opened the door.

3.1.3. Dative Case

Dative case marker mainly used to indicate indirect object of a sentence. Semantically it denotes beneficiary of the action in a sentence. In some cases it also used to define directional case and also possession case. In *Yerukala* language Dative case is overtly shown by the case suffixes **/-ku/** and **/-ki/**.

[9]
ayya	*bajār-ku*	*ō-s-u*
They-NOM-3.Pl.	market-DAT	go-PST.3Pl.

They went to market.

[10]
naŋ amma-ku	*esur*	*van-s-u*
My mother-DAT	angry	come-PST

My mother got angry.

[11]
nā-ku	*akka*	*edu*
i-DAT-1.Sg.M/NM	sister	have

I have a sister.

[12]
mari-ki	*mobbuṇḍike*	*bītu*
mari-DAT-3.Sg.M	darkness	fear

Mari is afraid of fear.

[13]
nānu	*ravi-ki*	*kāpi*	*kuḍ-t-e*
I-NOM-1.Sg	Ravi-DAT	coffee	give-PST-1P.Sg

I gave coffee to ravi.

[14]
naṭu	*keti-ki*	*padunu*	*akuva*
my	knife-DAT	sharp	more

My knife is more sharp.

Two variants are available for the Dative Case marking. They are **/-ki/** and **/-ku/** and here /ki/ and /ku/ suffixes are common as we find in some Dravidian Languages like Koya, Kui, Telugu etc.

3.1.4 Instrumental Case

The Instrumental case is used to indicate how something is done or the nominals which are used to complete the action. The nominals which has this case marker is used as instrument or means by or with which subject achieves or accomplished an action. The noun may be either a physical object or an abstract concept. In *Yerukala* the case markers which define Instrumental case are /-**ōṭi**/, /-**iṭṭe**/, /**-tō**/ and /- **ōṭi gūḍa**/. These markers are overtly present in a sentence

[15]
mari	*kell-ōṭi*	*nannu*	*motu-s-u*
mari-NOM-3.Sg.	stone-INST	me	hit-PST-3.Sg.M

He hit me with a stone.

[16]
adu	*kāram-ōṭi*	*sōru*	*tiṇgi-s-u*
he-NOM-3.Sg.	spicy-INST	rice	eat-PST-3Sg.M

He ate rice with pickle.

nānu	*goḍel-iṭṭe*	*ceḍi*	*boṭi-r-e*

	I-Nom-1.Sg.	axe-INST	tree	cut-PST-1Sg.M/NM

[17]   I cut the tree with an axe.

	ayya	*kol-**iṭṭe***	*atta*	*mocu*
	They-3.Pl.	stick-INST	him	beat-PST-3PL M/NM

[18]   They beat him with a stick

	malar	*pen-**tō***	*exam*	*rasidu*
	Malar-3.Sg.NM	pen-INST	exam	write-PST.3.Sg.NM

[19]   Malar wrote an exam with a pen.

	nāgamma	*pāmu-na*	*kollu-**tō***	*mocu*
	nagamma-3.Sg.	snake-ACC	stick-INST	hit-PST.3.Sg.NM

[20]   Nagamma hit the snake with a stick.

Here /tō/ 'with, along with, is used in Telugu which is a local dominant language.

3.1.5. Locative Case

Locative case shows where the action or events takes place. Locative case is expressed by the marker **/-kōru/** and **/-kōku/** in *Yerukala*. The postposition /vadda/ also occur in the meaning "near" denoting locative sense.

	nānu	*atta-na*	*koḷḷa-**kōru***	*pātire*
[21]	I-NOM -1.Sg	him-ACC	field-LOC	see-PST-1Sg.M.

I saw him in the field.

	adu	*dēvur-na*	*gudi-**kōru***	*pātidu*
[22]	he-NOM-3.Sg	god-ACC	temple-LOC	see-PST-3Sg.M

He saw the god in the temple.

	mīnu	*tanni-**kōku***	*pokēdu*
[23]	fish-NOM	water-LOC	live-Non-PST

Fish lives in the water.

	nānu	*pūna-na*	*ūtu-**kōku***	*pātire*
[24]	I-NOM -3.Sg.	cat-ACC	home-LOC	see-PST.3SG.M/NM

I saw the cat in the home.

3.1.6. Associative Case

The Associative case is a grammatical case which expresses associativity which is nothing but social accompaniment. This is mainly with animate nouns. In *Yerukala* we can find **/-nōṭe/** and **/ōṭi gūḍa/** markers which denote association with the noun.

	malar	*att-**ōṭi gūḍa***	*ōsu*
[25]	malar-NOM-3.Sg.	he-ASS	go-PST-3.Sg.NM

malar went with him.

	nāgamma	*nan-**ōṭi gūḍa***	*vansu*
[26]	nagamma-NOM-3.Sg.	me-ASS	come-PST-3.Sg.NM

Nagamma came with me.

In *Yerukala*, when a noun phrase refers to controllable psychosomatic states, such as, anger, hunger, suspicion, pregnancy, sickness etc. it takes the suffix **/-nōṭe/** as shown below.

	kōmala	*pesi-**nōṭe***	*idu*
[27]	komala-NOM-3.Sg.	hungry-ASS	

Komala is hungry.

	premīla	*varugu-**nōṭe***	*idu*
[28]	premila-NOM-3.Sg.	pregnant-ASS	

Premila is pregnant.

3.1.7. Ablative Case

The Ablative case shows the motion away from something. *Yerukala* nouns in the ablative often refer to a subject "out of" which or "from" whom something (an action, an object) has arisen or occur. /**-uṇḍi**/ is used to denote Ablative case in *Yerukala* language.

[29]
adu	*kuppam-**uṇḍi***	*vārāku*
he-NOM-3.Sg.	kuppam-ABL	come-PST-3 Sg.M

He will come from kuppam.

[30]
adu	*ceḍi- **uṇḍi***	*panga*	*pecikoṇḍire*
he-NOM-3.Sg.	tree-ABL	fruit-Pl	pluck-PST-3.Sg.M

He plucked the fruit from the tree

[31]
nānu	*karnūl -**uṇḍi***	*vārāri*
I-NOM -1Sg.	Kurnool-ABL	come-NST-1Sg.M/NM

I am coming from kurnool.

3.1.8. Genitive Case

The genitive case expresses the meaning of 'belonging to or origin or possession or similar relation'. The genitive case is expressed by the use of suffix
/-a/ and **/-u/**.

[32]
idu	*nāṭ-**u***	*ūḍu*
this-NOM	my-GEN	house

This is my house.

[33]
adu	*ask-**u***	*ūḍu*
that-NOM	their-GEN	house

That is their house.

[34]
idu	*kāru*	*nīṭ-**a**-du*
this-NOM	car	your-Sg.Obj.

This car is yours.

Genitive case is also expressed without any marker. The noun construction gives the genitive meaning.

[35]
naṇga amma	My mother
naṇga āva	My father

Conclusion

An attempt is made to study the case system of *Yerukala*, a South Dravidian Language. We have distinguished the case markers of *Yerukala* language which is located in the Rayalaseema region of Andhra Pradesh. As we found most of the words are borrowed from local dominant language Telugu and some are from other south Dravidian languages like Tamil and Kannada. It is observed that there are eight cases in *Yerukala* language. The eight case system have been explained with proper examples and glossing. The eight cases are Nominative, Accusative, Dative, Instrumental, Locative, Associative and Ablative. Nominative Case marker is unmarked as in many Dravidian Languages.

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