

Oblique case in Talishi: Evidence from case syncretism, polysemi and grammaticalization

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Syncretism is a common process among inflectional languages. This happens when different grammatical cases are encoded through a single phonological unit. Although some linguists have consensus on its being accidental, from a diachronic viewpoint, the related phonological form is the remnant of a multi-member case system which according to the authors, despite the formal and functional distinctions, they may have a common semantic nucleus. This contribution bears an attempt to investigate the various semantic roles represented by oblique case in Talishi. We try to ascribe the present syncretism to polysemi and introduce the genitive case as the nucleus meaning which has undergone metaphorical extension. Following the lines of Heine et al (1991) and Malchukov and Narrog's (2009) semantic map, we argue that the process of metaphorical extension and therefore polysemi of cases emerge within grammaticalization process.

Key words: Syncretism, Oblique, North-western Iranian Dialects, Talishi, Genitive

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