ON THE ORIGIN OF THE DIRECTIVE CASE IN TURKIC*

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This paper investigates the origin of suffixes in Turkic languages with forms similar to *-γaru ~ -gärü* and *-ra ~ -rä, -ru ~ -rü, -rï ~ -ri*, referred to in grammars as markers of a "directive case". There has been considerable uncertainty about the historical development of these suffixes as case markers, leading to a number of attempts to reconstruct their original form and function in both Proto-Turkic and Proto-Altaic, all of which have proven inconclusive. This study examines the problem from a new perspective. It begins with a reassessment of attempts at reconstruction, considering the various benefits and shortcomings of each approach. Then, based on morphological and syntactic data from Old Turkic, it offers a reconstruction of the original form and function of the directive case in pre-Old Turkic.

Key words: Turkic languages, Old Turkic, directive case, historical linguistics, morphosyntactic change.

Many Turkic languages have suffixes similar to *-γaru ~ -gärü* and *-ra ~ -rä, -ru ~ -rü, -rï ~ -ri* 'to, toward; in, at' that are commonly referred to in grammars as markers of a "directive case". Despite general agreement among scholars on which suffixes make up this directive case, there has been considerable uncertainty about their historical development as case markers.[1] This situation has been largely due to the irregular distribution of the directive case, which seems to occur primarily in frozen adverbial and postpositional forms, as in (1a)–(1d); but such adverbs may also be inflected as nouns for other case markers, as in (1e).[2]

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[1] See Erickson (2001) for discussion of equivalent analytical expressions of direction in modern Turkic languages.
[2] The following grammatical abbreviations are used: 1 = first person; 3 = third person; ABL = ablative case; ACC = accusative case; CS = causative suffix; DC = directive case; DL = dative–

(1a) **ilgäri**   šantuŋ   yazï-qa   tägi   sülä-dim   (Old Turkic)
      eastward   Šantuŋ plain-DL   up.to   campaign-PST.1SG
      'I campaigned eastward up to the Shantung Plain' (KT S3)

(1b) Masa-yı   **ileri**   çek-ti   (Turkish)
      table-ACC   forward   pull-PST.3
      'He pulled the table forward' (Underhill 1976, p. 250)

(1c) Bir nečä adäm **ilgäri**   yur-di   (Uzbek)
      a   few   man   forward go-PST.3
      'A few men went forward' (Mä"rufov 1981, vol. 1, p. 320)

(1d) bäyräm-dän   **ilgäri**   (Uzbek)
      holiday-ABL   before
      'before the holiday' (Mä"rufov 1981, vol. 1, p. 320)

(1e) Biz-diŋ   awïl   äli   **ilgeri**-de   (Kazak)
      we-GEN   village still front-LOC
      'Our village is still ahead' (Maxmudov−Musabaev 1954, p. 413)

Moreover, in Old Turkic the directive case is also suffixed to nouns, as in (2).[3]

(2)   öŋdün   qaɣan-**ɣaru**   sü   yorï-lïm   te-mis   (Old Turkic)
      east   kagan-DC   army march-OPT.1PL   say-PRT
      'He said, "Let us campaign toward the kagan of the East" ' (T I N5)

   The discrepancy in distribution between the directive case and other case markers has been so great that many scholars have questioned the etymology of forms inflected in this marker, leading to a number of attempts to reconstruct its original form and function in both Proto-Turkic and Proto-Altaic.
   The most comprehensive treatment of this problem to date can be found in Ščerbak (1970, 1977, pp. 40−43), who outlines many of the earlier works describing

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locative case; GEN = genitive case; GER = gerundial suffix; LOC = locative case; OPT = optative; PL = plural; PRT = participle; PST = past tense; SG = singular; VN = verbal noun.
   [3] Examples of Old Turkic in this paper are taken from the texts of Orkhon Turkic provided in Tekin (1968) and accompanied by standard textual citations. These texts contain the following examples of words inflected in the directive case: *ilgärü* 'forward, eastward'; *kisrä* 'backward, westward; after'; *qurïɣaru* 'backward, westward'; *öŋrä* 'forward, eastward'; *ičrä* 'in, inside'; *biri-gärü* 'southward'; *asra* 'below, in a lower place'; *yirïɣaru* 'northward'; *ortusïŋaru* 'toward its middle'; *yüggärü* 'up, upward'; *kirü* 'backward, westward'; *qaɣanɣaru* 'to, toward the kagan'; *subi-ŋaru* 'to, toward its water, river'; *ašru* 'through, beyond'; *bir-tük-gärü* < *bir-* 'give' + VN + DC; *ötrü* 'after'; *tašra* 'outward, outside'; *tabɣačɣaru* 'to, toward the Chinese'; *yergärü* 'toward the place'; *aŋaru* 'toward him'; *äbgärü* 'toward the house'; *baŋaru* 'toward me'; *oɣuzɣaru* 'to, toward the Oghuz'; *qïtańɣaru* 'to, toward the Kitan'; *šadra* 'šad (a title) DC'; *tarqanɣaru* 'to, toward the Tarqan'; *yeriŋärü* 'to, toward its place'; *yišɣaru* 'to, toward the forest'; *yoqqaru* 'up, upward'; *bärü* 'to this side, hither' (see Tekin 1968).

the nature of the directive case and its reconstruction in Proto-Turkic and Proto-Altaic. In his works, and in other literature on the subject, one can essentially find three hypotheses about the original form and function of the directive case.

The first hypothesis contends that directive case markers had a nominal origin. Ramstedt (1952, p. 42), the main proponent of this hypothesis, claims that the directive case marker *-ru* is derived from the Chinese word **lu* 'way, road', which was borrowed into Turkic languages. However, the absence of this particular word in Old Turkic texts would probably preclude this possibility.

The second hypothesis assumes that markers currently known as the "directive case" are simply reflexes of a case suffix that existed at an earlier point in time. Proponents of this hypothesis, such as Lewicki (1938) and Kotwicz (1953), postulate that Turkic directive markers originated from a case suffix that occurred in Proto-Turkic, if not also in Proto-Altaic. Some scholars, such as Radloff (1897, p. 31), Menges (1968, p. 111), Arat (1964, p. 1), and Kononov (1980, p. 139), believe that the directive case form in *-ɣaru ~ -gärü* represents a combination of two case suffixes, i.e., the dative–locative case in *-ɣa ~ -gä* and a directive case in *-ru ~ -rü*.[4]

The third, and perhaps most widely accepted, hypothesis claims that the directive case had a verbal origin, such that in early Turkic languages many of the words bearing the directive case were originally formed from a verb stem ending in *-r*, inflected with a gerundial suffix consisting of a single vowel. Proponents of this hypothesis include Bang-Kaup (1917, p. 53), Samojlovič (1925, p. 91), Zajączkowski (1932, p. 195), Räsänen (1938, p. 8), von Gabain (1950b), Karimov (1962, p. 8), and, more recently, Ščerbak (1970, 1977). Moreover, from these works, two different views emerge. For the sake of convenience, let us call the first "the causative hypothesis" and the second "the independent verb hypothesis".

The causative hypothesis is based on the premise that the *r* in the directive case is derived from the same sound encountered in most causative suffixes. Bang-Kaup (1917, p. 53) proposed this idea early on when he noted a relationship between the directive case suffix in *-ru ~ -rü* and the *u*-gerund of certain causative verbs (i.e., those ending in *-uru, -aru*; *-turu*; *-ɣuru, -ɣaru*). Zajączkowski (1932, p. 195) also thought that the directive case was derived from causative verbs. However, he took the idea a step further by claiming that the sound sequence now known as the directive case was transformed from a verbal to a nominal suffix. He writes: "… it is likely that the directive suffix *-ra, -ru* had emerged due to the corruption of gerunds, having been formed from causative verbs in *-r*. And since such gerunds often designate direction, the ending *-ra* was perceived as a directive suffix, such that with its help, they began to create forms from nouns" (Zajączkowski 1932, p. 195).

The result of the process described by Zajączkowski can be illustrated by a much-cited example from Turkish, given in (3), in which the causative and gerundial suffixes are reanalysed as the directive case suffix *-ra*.

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[4] Arat (1964, p. 1), however, goes further to suggest that at least some words with this suffix were derived from denominal verbs.

(3)   taš-ra   <   taš-ïr-a
       outside-DC   overflow-CS-GER
       'to, toward the outside'   'pouring over' (lit. 'making overflow')

Thus, based on Zajączkowski's interpretation of this problem, the directive case emerged as a result of a back formation, in which a new morpheme was created from verbal forms due to some sort of analogy.[5] Then, supposedly, the function of this new morpheme was extended to that of a nominal case suffix.

The independent verb hypothesis is based on the similar premise that the *r* in the directive case is the same sound found in a verbal stem. However, here, scholars believe that the *r* does not represent the remnants of a causative suffix, but is instead derived from a separate verb. For instance, Räsänen (1938, p. 8) suggests that the unattested verb stem **qar-* 'to be against' ('gegen sein') evolved into the directive case, whereas Karimov (1962, p. 8) considers the verb stem *kara-* 'to look at' to be the source of this marker. Ščerbak (1970, p. 32) also concurs that the directive case form in *-ɣaru ~ -gärü* was probably derived from an independent word with a similar "phonetic shape", although he fails to mention precisely what that word might be.

In order to better understand the type of phenomenon these scholars had in mind, it is necessary to consider the broader issue of deverbal adverbs and postpositions in Turkic languages. In brief, many scholars have long claimed that Turkic languages possess a large number of adverbs and postpositions that were originally derived from verbs inflected with a gerundial suffix. One of the primary proponents of this view is Kaare Grønbech (1979 [1936]), who describes adverbs and postpositions in Turkic languages as forming a class of words called "indeclinables", which, at least in older Turkic languages, generally do not take any kind of inflectional suffix. Thus, in Old Turkic this class would include words such as *aša*, *toɣa*, and *käčä* 'beyond, on that side, yonder'; *tapa* 'toward; against'; and *tägi* 'up to, as far as'. And, as Grønbech (1979, p. 42) notes, corresponding verb stems exist for each of these words: *aš-* 'to step over, cross over', *toɣ-* 'to ascend', *käč-* 'to cross over (a river)', *tap-* 'to seek out, find', and *täg-* 'to reach'. In addition, even though many of these deverbal adverbs and postpositions became frozen forms, they still tend to govern the same case as their corresponding verbs. Compare the postposition *tägi* 'up to, as far as' with its corresponding verb stem *täg-* 'to reach' in (4a) and (4b), respectively.

(4a)   tämir   qapïɣ-qa   tägi   sülä-dimiz   (Old Turkic)
       iron   gate-DL   up.to   campaign-PST.1PL
       'We campaigned up to the Iron Gate' (KT E15)

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[5] A number of other languages in Central Asia have had similar case suffixes. For instance, Ramstedt (1952, p. 38) cites Mongolian as having the suffixes *-ru, -rü* in various dialects. Old Tibetan likewise had a dative–locative case suffix in *-r* or *-ru* (Christopher Beckwith p.c. 1989). Both of these languages were in areal contact with Old Turkic. Moreover, Ščerbak (1970) also notes that Persian contains the marker *-ra*, which also expresses directionality.

(4b) alp   är   bizi-ŋä   täg-miš   är-ti.   (Old Turkic)
     brave   man   we-DL   reach-PRT   be-PST.3
     'Brave men had reached us' (KT E40)

Both the postposition in (4a) and its corresponding finite verb in (4b) govern the dative–locative case. This fact also holds true for other deverbal adverbs and postpositions, regardless of their relative proximity to the matrix verb in a sentence.

Nevertheless, it becomes clear that there are at least two major problems with this hypothesis of a verbal origin for words in the directive case. These are: (*a*) the issue of corresponding forms, and (*b*) the issue of causative verbs and transitivity. In view of the rationale behind postulating such a hypothesis about the directive case, both these issues would a priori seem to pose a serious challenge to its very foundation. In order for this hypothesis to be correct, each of the directive case words in Old Turkic must have had a corresponding verbal form at some point in their history. However, if we consider all such words inflected in the dative–locative case, we find that some of them appear to be formed from proper nouns, such as the following examples with the suffix -*γaru*: *oγuzγaru* 'to, toward the Oghuz', *tabγačγaru* 'to, toward the Chinese', and so on. For these words, there are no corresponding verb stems to be found in the available texts. Despite the similarity of the directive case to a causative suffix, it is difficult to conceive of how these proper nouns might have become verbal forms, unless, of course, this causative suffix possessed the dual role of both a causative and denominal derivational suffix (which would be extremely unusual). Even if these words were derived from causative verbs, how could we account for their lack of transitivity? Furthermore, inasmuch as many deverbal adverbs and postpositions often still govern the same case as their original verbal form, how could we explain the lack of case government? As mentioned above, in Turkic syntax a causative suffix makes an intransitive verb transitive, or a transitive verb ditransitive; thus, at the very least, one nominal complement is required. As a consequence, any hypothesis postulating a causative origin of directive case words would have to explain how such words were suddenly transformed from transitive to intransitive verbs. But such an explanation does not seem to be forthcoming. For this reason, it seems clear that most words in the directive case were probably not derived from verbs with a causative suffix in *r*.

Now let us reconsider the assumption that suffixes in -*ra* ~ -*rä, -ru* ~ -*rü, -rï* ~ -*ri* represent nothing other than case markers affixed to words both with and without the dative–locative case in -*γa* ~ -*gä*. Let us also recall Zajączkowski's suggestion that some sort of back formation took place, producing the inflectional suffix -*ra*. The existence of such a form as a case marker might be plausible, if not for several observations by von Gabain (1950a, p. 7). She points out that the directive case suffix -*ra* can in no way be considered a case marker in Old Turkic, because it is only used with a small number of words and, moreover, does not occur with any "real substantives" (i.e., words that represent the name of a person, place, thing etc.).[6] She

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[6] Thus, the following types of words are not attested as being inflected in -*ra*: *il-rä* 'state-DC', *qaγan-ra* 'kagan-DC', *yiš-rä* 'mountain-DC' etc.

also claims that the whole semantic interpretation of the directive case is problematic, since it only occasionally signifies a direction and often only has the meaning of a place (von Gabain 1950a, p. 7).

The only other possibility is that the directive case developed from an independent verb. As mentioned earlier, Räsänen (1938, p. 8) and Karimov (1962, p. 8) had their own ideas about what this verb might have been, with the former suggesting an unattested verb stem *qar- 'to be against' ('gegen sein'), and the latter, the verb stem kara- 'to look at'. But, again, the earliest texts of Old Turkic do not offer any real motivation for either of their derivations, inasmuch as these verbal forms are absent from such texts. In addition, the postulation of such verbs would create a number of important semantic and syntactic problems (e.g., with a verb like kara- 'to look at' it would be difficult to justify the semantic and syntactic usage of words containing the directive case). Such problems notwithstanding, Ščerbak (1970, p. 32) still believes that the directive case form in -γaru ~ -gärü was derived from some sort of independent verb.

Thus, the solution to this problem is to find an independent verb that conforms to the phonological, syntactic, and semantic attributes of directive case words in the earliest texts of Old Turkic. It turns out that the most likely candidate is the verb stem är-, since this particular verb is often listed in dictionaries with the two separate entries meaning (1) 'to be'; (2) 'to reach, arrive, pass' (e.g., Clauson 1972; Gabain 1974; Tekin 1968) and possesses the characteristic r in its phonological shape consistent with that of the directive case markers. Moreover, its double meaning would explain why these suffixes can often be translated either as 'to, toward' or 'in, at' in various syntactic positions within a sentence. In addition, this verb would easily conform to the syntax of directive case words in Old Turkic as well as to the internal morphosyntactic structure of lexical forms, as can be seen in (5a)–(5c) below.

(5a)   noun + (DL) + är- 'to be; reach, arrive, pass' + GER

(5b)   qaγanγaru   <   qaγan-γa + är-ü
        'toward the kagan'   kagan-DL reach-GER (lit. 'reaching the kagan')

(5c)   ičrä   <   ič-gä   +   är-ü   or   ičrä   <   ič   +   är-ü
        inside   interior-DL   be-GER   inside   interior   be-GER
        (lit. 'reaching the inside' or 'being inside')

The sequence in (5a) represents the general pattern followed in the formation of adverbs and postpositions in the directive case. In all likelihood, the verb är- inflected with a gerundial vowel, which varied as shown above, was frequently used with many of these words in pre-Old Turkic and, as a result, became perceived as a single unit. As indicated in (5a), some of these words were inflected in the dative–locative case, shown in parentheses, while others were not. This would, therefore, suggest that some kind of dichotomy existed between the type of words with the dative–locative suffix and those without it, as seen in (5b) and (5c), especially since

the words inflected in *-γaru ~ -gärü* generally do not occur with the suffix *-ra ~ -rä, -ru ~ -rü, -rï ~ -ri*. Perhaps this dichotomy originally took the form of an opposition between strong substantive and weak or non-substantive words (or less abstract and more abstract words), whereby the strong substantives required the dative–locative case, while the non-substantives did not. Such a dichotomy would explain why certain words could be used without a case suffix before the verb, since *är-* with the meaning 'to be' can be used with substantives and non-substantives alike. This same verb form with the meaning 'to reach, arrive, pass' would have a similar kind of flexibility. In this case, it is possible that this verb behaved very much like verbs of motion in the Middle Turkic language Chaghatay. As Eckmann (1966, p. 87) notes, verbs of motion in Chaghatay can take goal complements with a null "indefinite case" instead of the dative case, as in (6).[7]

(6) Samarqand   bar-dï   (Chaghatay)
     Samarkand-Ø   go-PST.3
     'He went to Samarkand' (Eckmann 1966, p. 87)

The syntactic and semantic flexibility of the verb *är-* 'to be; reach, arrive, pass' in Turkic grammar would justify its reconstruction in both forms of the directive case. While there are a number of other issues involved in this reconstruction, such as the elision of the initial vowel of the verb *är-* in words with *-rV* or the variation of vowel quality in the gerundial suffixes, these would not seem to pose a serious problem for the reconstruction presented here.[8]

In summary, many of the adverbs and postpositions possessing the directive case in Old Turkic were originally formed from an independent verb in pre-Old Turkic. Based on the analysis here, there is strong evidence to suggest that it was the verb stem *är-* 'to be; reach, arrive, pass' often preceded by a dative–locative case and inflected with a gerundial suffix. In all likelihood, this gerundial verb became affixed to the dative–locative case and took on a life of its own as a semi-productive suffix. At the same time, it appears likely that this gerundial verb was also frequently used with a certain number of nouns designating a place and that they were uninflected in the dative–locative case. These words and the gerundial verb *är-* eventually became fused together as a single unit to become the adverbs and postpositions inflected in the directive case.

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[7] Null case marking for dative markers is also a characteristic property of goal complements of motion verbs in Iranian languages, and is the likely explanation here for Chaghatay, a language heavily influenced by Persian (see Erickson 2001). In this regard, it should be noted that Middle Persian exhibits a similar kind of variation in its marking of locative and directional prepositions; thus, words signifying location or direction are often not accompanied by a preposition, when they occur immediately before the verb (Rastorgueva 1966, p. 139).

[8] In fact, variation in the quality of gerundial vowels seems to be a very common phenomenon in older Turkic languages (see Ščerbak 1970, p. 32; Mundy 1954, 1955). Moreover, the variation of these vowels in the adverbs and postpositions of Old Turkic could often just as well be explained by progressive assimilation of vowel quality.

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