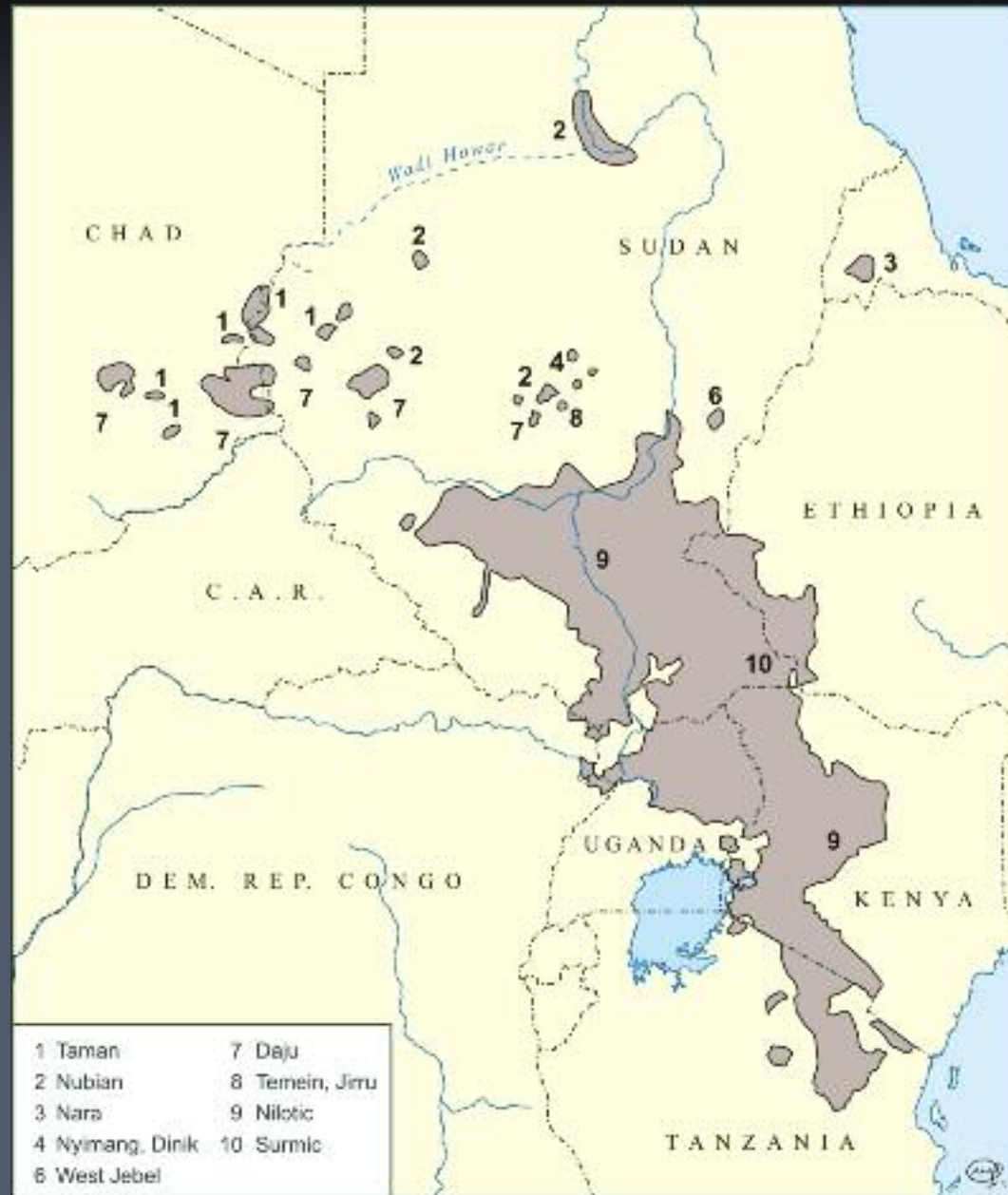# Summer School on Language Typology- Leipzig 2010

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2. ERAGATIVE MARKED NOMINATIVE SYSTEMS

- Eastern Sudanic consists of three subbranches:

- Northern Eastern Sudanic (Nubian, Taman, Nara, Nyimang plus Afitti, Meroitic)

- Central Eastern Sudanic (almost extinct; one language left: Gaam (no case, verb morphology instead)

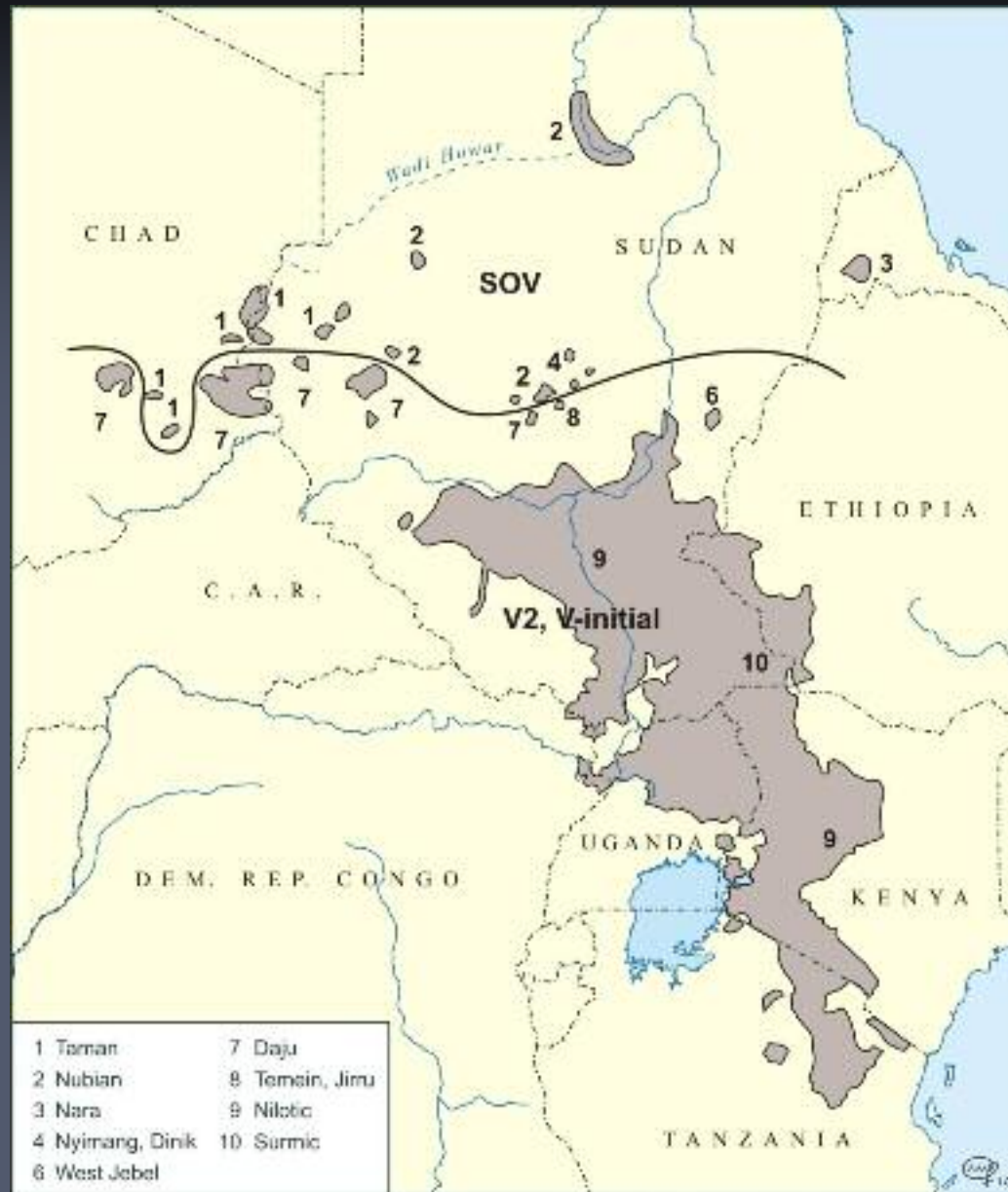- Southern Eastern Sudanic (Daju, Temein plus Keiga Jirru no case, verb morphology instead; Nilotic and Surmic)

1 Taman	7	Daju
2 Nubian	8	Temein, Jirru
3 Nara	9	Nilotic
4 Nyimang, Dinik	10	Surmic
6 West Jebel		

Legend	
1 Taman	7 Daju
2 Nubian	8 Temein, Jirru
3 Nara	9 Nilotic
4 Nyimang, Dinik	10 Surmic
6 West Jebel	

Table 1. *Dependent-marking in Nilo-Saharan*

Language group	Constituent Order	Periph. Case*	ProSu	ProOb
Saharan	V-final	yes	yes	yes
Maban	V-final	yes	yes	yes
Fur	V-final	yes	yes	no
Kunama	V-final	yes	yes	yes
Eastern Sudanic				
Nubian	V-final	yes	yes	no
Tama	V-final	yes	yes	no
Nyimang	V-final	yes	no	no

* Peripheral case: Dative, Instrument, Locative, Ablative, Genitive

Table 2. *Case marking in Nilotic*

Language group	Const. Order	NOM/ERG Postv. SU	ABS OB	Periph. Case*	ProSu	ProOb
Western Nilotic:						
Anywa	V2/OVS	yes	yes	no	yes	yes
Dinka	V2	yes	yes	marginal	yes	no
Päri	OVS	yes				
Shilluk	V2/OVS	yes	yes	no	yes	no
Luo	SVO	no	no	no	yes	yes
Eastern Nilotic:						
Bari group	SVO	no	no	no	no	no
Lotuxo	SVO	no	no	no	yes	no
Ongamo-Maa	V-initial	yes	no	no	yes	yes
Southern Nilotic:						
Kalenjin	V-initial	yes	yes	no	yes	yes
Datooga-Omotik	SVO	no	no	no	yes	yes

Table 3 *Nominative/Ergative case markers in Surmic and Nilotic*

	Absolutive	Nominative/Ergative
Surmic:		
Baale	unmarked	-(j)ɛ, -(j)i (sg)
		-na (pl)
Tennet	unmarked	-ɛ (sg), -i (pl)
		-a (pl)
Murle	unmarked	-ɛ (sg), -i (sg)
		-a (pl)
Majang	unmarked	-ɛ
Nilotic:		
Anywa*	unmarked	-ɛ, -(C)ɪ
Päri	nmarked	tone, -ɛ, -i

*Reh (1996) treats these suffixes as definiteness markers

- Drifting away from the DOM-system and, more generally, dependent marking at the clausal level

- Development of head marking on the verb

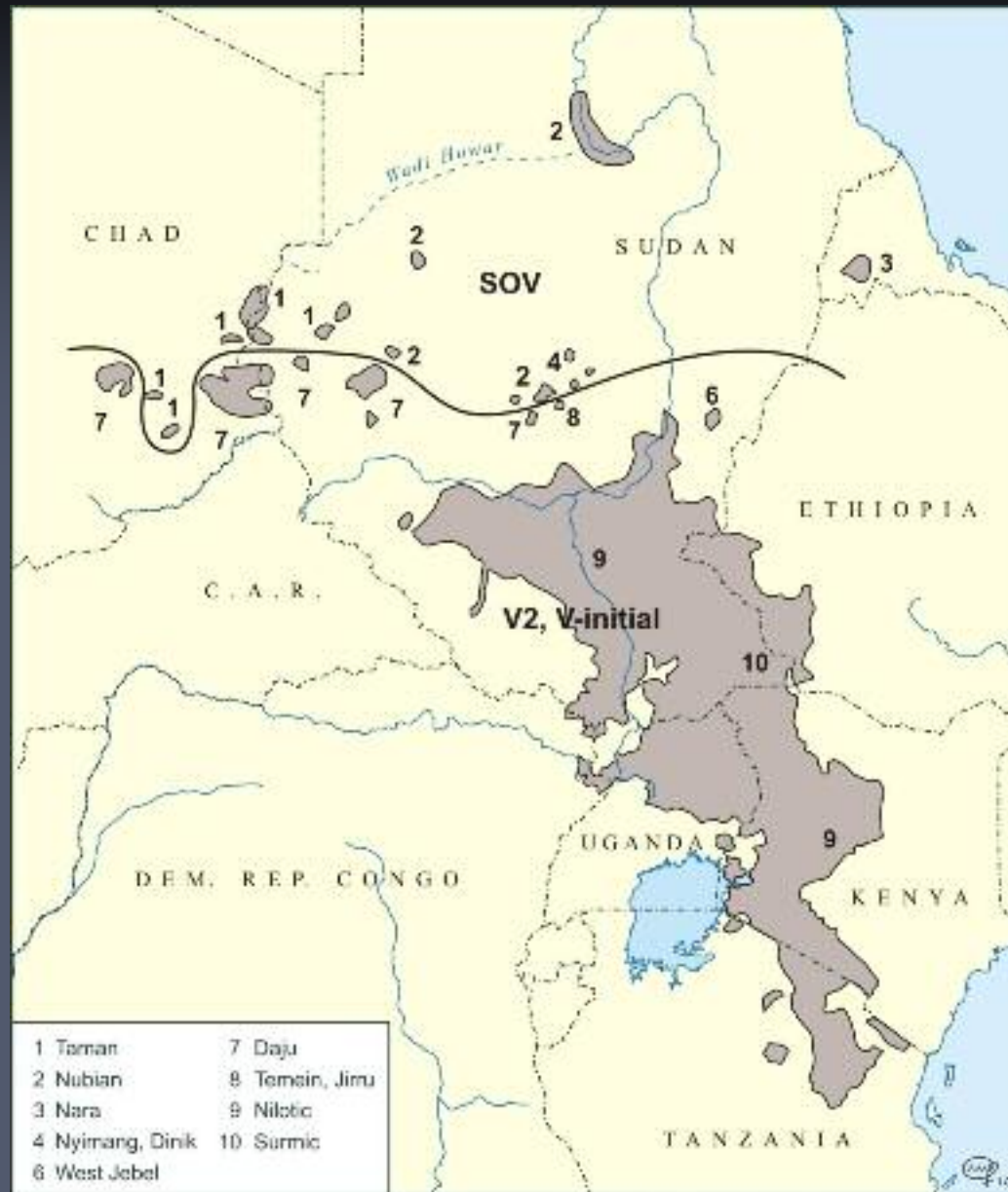- Development of Ergative and Marked Nominative systems for postnominal subjects

Source:

Randal, Scott. 1998. A grammatical sketch of Tennet. In Gerrit J. Dimmendaal and Marco Last (eds.), *Surmic Languages and Cultures*, p. 219-272. Cologne: Rüdiger Köppe.

Some basic properties:

- **Essentially verb-initial**

- **Reduced case marking (compared to Northern Eastern Sudanic languages; Marked Nominative/Ergative, Absolutive)**

- **Peripheral case marking restricted to Oblique case marking**

- **Cross-reference marking on the verb (S, A, O)**

- **Main clause: Marked Nominative (for postverbal S, A)**

- **Absolutive (Accusative) formally marked**

- -   /-i used with proper names occurring as postverbal S, A

- -   / -e used with other types of postverbal A and S

- Dependent clause: Ergative-Absolutive

1 Taman
2 Nubian
3 Nara
4 Nyimang, Dinik
6 West Jebel
7 Daju
8 Temein, Jimu
9 Nilotic
10 Surmic

Tennet (Surmic, Eastern Sudanic, Nilo-Saharan)

The basic constituent order for intransitive clauses is VS, and the order for transitive clauses is VAP.[2]

(1)   V   S

       á-dáah   eez

       PRF-die   goat:NOM

       'The goat died.'

(2)   V   A   P

       á-káti   Lọkọ́rị̱-i   meger

       PRF-spear   Lokori-NOM   oribi

       'Lokori speared an oribi.'

(3) V   S   OBL   OBL
     ókkó   Lǫkǫ́rị̂-i   Lẹtéj-ậ   lǫ́ǫ́zâ
     IPF:go   Lokori-NOM   Leteji-OBL   tomorrow:OBL
     'Lokori is going to Leteji tomorrow.'

(4) V   P   A
     á-dáh-ha   ạnẹ́t   mágíz
     IPF-eat->1SG   1SG   hunger:NOM
     'I am hungry.' (lit. 'Hunger is eating me.')

(7) ị̂ttǫ̂   Lǫúdǫ́   cẹ́ẹ́z   ẹ́cị̣tǫ́
     PRF:enter   Loudo:NOM   house   inside
     'Loudo entered the house.'

(8) úk   Lǫúdǫ́   cẹ́ẹ́z-a   ẹ́cị̣tǫ́
     PRF:go   Loudo:NOM   house-OBL   inside
     'Loudo went into the house.'

(9) ắve   Lǫúdǫ́   keét-á   vúrt-ậ
     be(somewhere)   Loudo:NOM   tree-OBL   under-OB
     'Loudo is under the tree.'

(36) ị-vị̂r-t-ụ   nigá
     PRF-run-PL-2PL   2PL:NOM
     'You(pl) ran.'

(37) ụ́-rụ́h-t-ụ   nigá   gǫǫn-ụ   cî   nǫ̂ng
     PRF-beat-PL-2PL   2PL:NOM   friend-2PL   AM   2PL:GEN
     'You(pl) beat your(pl) friend.'

(38) ụ́-rụ́h-t-ụng   neegé   ịgẹ́ta
     PRF-beat-PL->2PL   3PL:NOM   2PL
     'They beat you(pl).'

Table 3. *A and P marking suffixes on the verb*

		'A' Argument				
		1SG	1PL	2SG	2PL	3
1SG	ARG	X	X	-á	-âng	-a
	NRG	X	X	-ân		-an
1PL	ARG	X	X	-ệt	-ệtụ	-ẹt
	NRG	X	X	-ệta̲		-ẹta̲
2SG	ARG	-nị/-ị		X	X	-nị/-ị
	NRG	-ịn/ị̂n		X	X	-ịn/ị̂n
2PL		-ụng/ụ̂ng		X	X —	-ụng/ụ̂ng

(71a) **k-a̲-tángû̲** **anná** **kwe̲e̲n-a**
1-PRF-sleep 1SG:NOM mat-OBL
'I slept on the sleeping-mat.'

(71b) **k-a̲-tangu-ói** **anná** **kwe̲e̲n**
1-PRF-sleep-OR 1SG:NOM mat
'I slept-on the sleeping-mat.'

(72a) **k-a̲-ká̲t-a̲** **anná** **taang** **i̲llá-w-a**
1-PRF-spear-1SG 1SG:NOM cow spear-EP-OBL
'I speared the cow with a spear.'

(72b) **k-a̲-ka̲t-ói** **anná** **i̲llá**
1-PRF-spear-OR 1SG:NOM spear
'I speared-with the spear.'

(73a) **i̲-vi̲r** **enné** **rok** **oróg** **tó**
PRF-run 3SG:NOM up:to village LOCPRT
'He ran (going) to the village.'

(73b) **i̲-vi̲r-á̲** **enné** **oróg** **tó**
PRF-run-VEN 3SG:NOM village LOCPRT
'He ran (coming) to the village.'

(83a) **u-túny** **Lọkúḷị-i** **ạzị-t**
PRF-wash Lokuli hand-PL
'Lokuli washed his hands.'

(83b) **u-túny-yé** **Lọkúḷị-i**
PRF-wash-ANTP Lokuli-NOM
'Lokuli washed.' (object may be anything, except himself)

(92a) **k-í-cín-a** **anná** **Lọkúḷị** **balwáz**
1-PRF-see-1SG 1SG:NOM Lokuli yesterday
'I saw Lokuli yesterday.'

(92b) **ngạnnị** **anná** **k-i-cin** **Lọkúḷị** **balwáz**
not 1SG:NOM 1-SBJ-see Lokuli yesterday
'I didn't see Lokuli yesterday.'

13:1. Focus

(154)

íjja	zin	wála-i	í-kíya
and	then	crow-NOM	IPF-come

'And then Crow came.'

(156)

Lokúli	néné	cí	á-rúh	Lohâm
Lokuli	the:one	AM	IPF-beat	Loham

'Lokuli is the one who is beating Loham.'

(158)

í-kíyá	éét-i	cí	ngóóli	balwáz
PRF-come	man-NOM	AM:new	crippled	yesterday

'A man who is crippled came yesterday.'

(159)

í-kíyá	éét-i	wá	ngóóli	balwáz
PRF-come	man-NOM	AM:old	crippled	yesterday

'The man who is crippled came yesterday.'

(19) órông Lọwọ́r-i   kákát   Lọhám-i   áríz
     want Lowor-NOM spear:SUBJ Loham-NOM bull:ABS
     'Lowor wants Oham to spear the bull'

(20) órông   Lọwọ́r-i   Lọhám   kíkíya
     want   Lowor-NOM Loham:ABS come:SUBJ
     'Lowor wants Loham to come'

- The cognitive status of the referent(s) in the discourse must be active (in the sense of Chafe 1987) when head marking on the verb occurs by way of suffixation (instead of a peripheral-marking strategy with Oblique case; i.e. it is the current focus of consciousness), accessible (i.e. it is textually, situationally or inferentially available) or inactive (involving the hearer's long-term memory)

  The peripheral strategy (with case marking) occurs for phrases whose cognitive status in the discourse is not active.

  Chafe, Wallace L. 1987. Cognitive constraints on information flow. In Russell S. Tomlin (ed.), *Coherence and Grounding in Discourse*, pp. 21-52. Amsterdam and Philadelphia: John Benjamins.
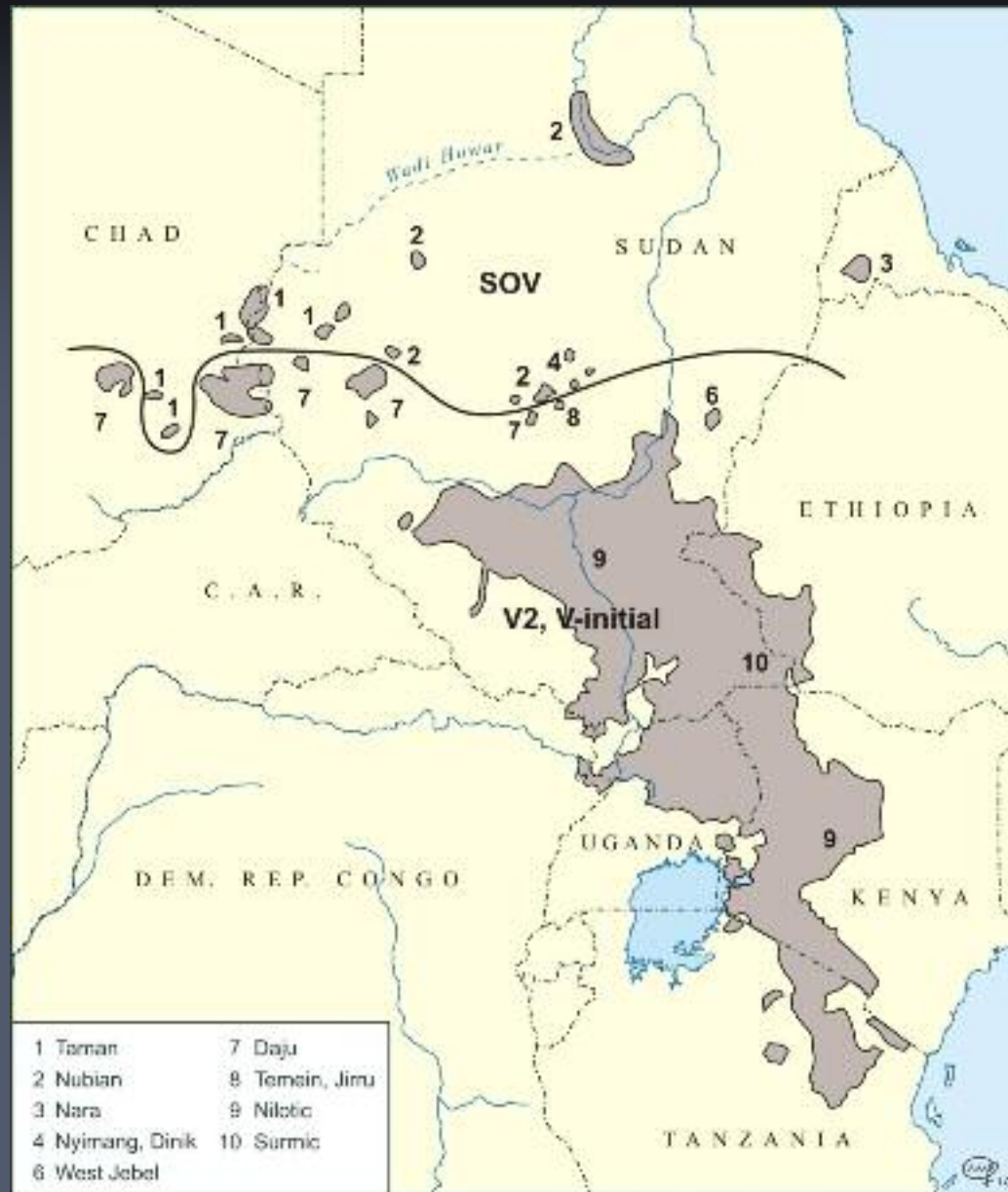
Päri (Nilotic, Eastern Sudanic, Nilo-Saharan)

Source:

Andersen, Torben. 1988. "Ergativity in Päri, a Nilotic OVS language". *Lingua* 75:289-324.

- **Some basic properties:**

- **OVA and SV**

- Only postverbal A is inflected for case; preverbal A (as well as S) or O (regardless of its position) is not inflected for case; hence: Absolutive marking for these positions and functions

- Ergative-Absolutive distinction (no peripheral case marking left)

- Head marking on the verb (as an alternative to expression by way of adpositional phrases)

- **Cross-reference marking on the verb (S, A)**

- **Main clause: Marked Nominative (for postverbal S, A)**

- **Postverbal (but not preverbal A, or S for that matter) marked for case; hence (split) ergativity**

- **No peripheral case marking**

- -ɪ̀/-I and -ɛ̀/ -e as Ergative case markers (distribution is phonologically conditioned)

- Ergative case also expressed by way of tonal inflection (phonologically conditioned). This is the common pattern elsewhere in Nilotic (with the exception of Anywa, which is closely related to Päri).

(3)   Absolutive   Ergative

τɔ́ŋ   τɔ́ŋŋ-ì   'spear'

lέɛp   lέɛp-ì   'tongue'

kìd-í   kíd-î   'stone'

wìɲ-ɔ́   wìɲ-ê   'bird'

jóob-ì   jòob-ì   'buffalo'

pàl-ὲ   pàl-ὲ   'knives'

(4) a. dháagɔ̀   áŋὲɛthɔ̀
      woman:ABS   TAM:laugh
      'The woman laughed'

    b. dháagɔ̀   áyàaɲ   ùbúrr-ì
      woman:ABS   TAM:insult   Ubur-ERG
      'Ubur insulted the woman'

4.3. Non-constituent focus

The fact that the completive prefix *á-* and the verbal adverb are mutually exclusive and that neither of them can cooccur with a focused constituent suggests that they are themselves focus markers. This hypothesis is compatible with other facts about their distribution.

Verbs with the completive prefix *á-* cannot cooccur with a time adverb referring to the future, e.g. *lõ* 'tomorrow'. Conversely, verbs without any tense–aspect prefix can cooccur with a time adverb referring to the past, e.g. *áwàará* 'yesterday', as in the following sentence:

(71) dháagó tìm'-ó   kì   ŋɔ́   áwàarẽ
     woman make + M + AP-SUF PREP what yesterday
     'What did the woman do yesterday?'

Thus the completive prefix *á-* refers specifically to the past, while non-completive verb forms are indifferent with respect to temporal reference. Hence, if *á-* is a focus marker, then past tense or completive aspect is inherently focused in Pári.

This also holds for negative clauses. The negative equivalent of *á-* is a special auxiliary verb *kìrì ~ kĩ*. Cf. the following pairs of affirmative and negative clauses, of which (72)–(73) are intransitive and (74)–(75) transitive:

(72a) dháagó á-rìŋ'-ó
     woman C-run + CF-SUF
     'The woman ran.'
(72b) dháagó kĩ   rìŋ'-ó
     woman NEG + C run + CF-SUF
     'The woman did not run.'
(73a) úbúr á-kwàt-ó   kì   diek
     Ubur C-steal + CF + AP-SUF PREP goats
     'Ubur stole goats.'
(73b) úbúr kĩ   kwàt-ó   kì   diek
     Ubur NEG + C steal + CF + AP-SUF PREP goats
     'Ubur did not steal goats.'
(74a) dhiɛŋ á-kwál úbúrr-i
     cow   C-steal Ubur-ERG
     'Ubur stole the cow.'

(74b) dhiɛŋ kĩ   kwál úbúrr-i
     cow   NEG + C steal Ubur + ERG
     'Ubur did not steal the cow.'
(75a) á-kwál-á
     C-steal-1S
     'I stole it.'
(75b) kà-á'   kwál-ó
     NEG + C-1S steal-SUF
     'I did not steal it.'

The negative equivalents of affirmative non-completive clauses, on the other hand, use the negation *báá*, whether they have a focused constituent, as in (78)–(79), or not, as in (76)–(77).

(76a) dháagó rìŋ'-ó
     woman run + CF-SUF
     'The woman will run.'
(76b) dháagó báá   rìŋ-i
     woman NEG run + CF-SUF
     'The woman will not run.'
(77a) úbúr kwàt-ó   kì   diek
     Ubur steal + CF + AP-SUF PREP goats
     'Ubur is going to steal goats.'
(77b) úbúr báá   kwàt-i   kì   diek
     Ubur NEG steal + CF + AP-SUF PREP goats
     'Ubur is not going to steal goats.'
(78a) dhiɛŋ kwál-á   úbúrr-i
     cow   steal-FOC Ubur-ERG
     'Ubur stole the cow.'
(78b) dhiɛŋ báá   kwál-á   úbúrr-i
     cow   NEG steal-FOC Ubur-ERG
     'Ubur did not steal the cow.'
(79a) úbúr kwál-á   dhiɛŋ
     Ubur steal-FOC cow
     'Ubur stole *the cow*.'
(79b) úbúr báá   kwál-á   dhiɛŋ
     Ubur NEG steal-FOC cow
     'Ubur did not steal *the cow*.'

(73a) úbúr á-kwʌt-ȯ   ki   diek

Ubur C-steal + CF + AP-SUF PREP goats

'Ubur stole goats.'

(73b) úbúr kìi   kwʌt-ȯ   ki   diek

Ubur NEG + C steal + CF + AP-SUF PREP goats

'Ubur did not steal goats.'

(74a) dhìɛŋ á-kwàl úbúrr-i

cow   C-steal Ubur-ERG

'Ubur stole the cow.'

Anywa

Source:

Reh, Mechthild. 1996. *Anywa Language: Description and Internal Reconstructions.* Cologne: Rüdiger Köppe.

CLAUSE-TYPE	LEXICALLY RENDERED ARGUMENTS				Total
(a) transitive	O + A	only A	only O	none	
NP-initial	28% (18)	5% (3)	48% (31)	19% (12)	100% (64)
verb-initial	6% (4)	-	49% (32)	45% (29)	100% (65)
Total (tr. clauses)	17% (22)	2% (3)	49% (63)	32% (41)	100% (129)
(b) intransitive	S	S not			
NP-initial	53% (123)	47% (110)			100% (297)
verb-initial	41% (67)[2]	59% (98)			100% (230)
Total (itr. clauses)	48% (190)	52% (208)			100% (398)

- Note that Reh (1996) treats the postverbal A-marker as a definiteness marker, rather than an ergative case marker. This analysis seems unwarranted, because the same definiteness marker should also occur on S or O – but it does not. Moreover, why is it impossible to use the "definiteness" marker for preverbal A? Also, historically, this is not the Nilotic definiteness marker.

- Extensive investigation of texts with respect to frequency of constituent order and corresponding morphosyntactic strategies.

Dinka (Western Nilotic, Eastern Sudanic, Nilo-Saharan)

Source:

Andersen, Torben. 1991. Subject and topic in Dinka. *Studies in Language* 15(2): 265-294.

- Topic first language (verb-initial or verb-second)

- Postverbal S and A (both inflected for case): Marked Nominative

- Head marking on the verb, but Dinka still has some Locative case marking left

- •Cross-reference marking on the verb (S, A)

1. SVO versus OVS (next to SV): always a preverbal NP in declarative clauses

(1)   tiik   à-bɔ̈́
      woman D come
      'The woman is coming'

(4)   a. tiik   à-thàt mèth
          woman D beat child

      b. mèth à-thɛ́ɛt   tiik
          child D beat:NTS woman
          'The woman is beating the child'

(5)   tiik   à-cɛ̈ bɛ̈ɛn
          woman D PF come:NF
          'The woman has come'

(6)   a. tiik   à-cɛ̈ mèth thàat
          woman D PF child beat:NF

      b. mèth à-cïi   tiik   thàat
          child D PF:NTS woman beat:NF
          'The woman has beaten the child'

(9)   tiik   à-cɛ̈ dòm puùur   è   pùur
      woman D PF field cultivate:NF PREP hoe
      'The woman has cultivated the field with a hoe'

(10) dhɔ̈ɔk à-cɛ̈ tïim yɛ̈ep wàar bɔ̈ɔm
      boy   D PF wood cut:NF river side
      'The boy has cut the wood at the river'

(14) a. *dhɔ̀ɔk à-mòc láy*
boy ᴅ shoot animal

b. *láy à-móoc dhɔ̀ɔk*
animal ᴅ shoot:ɴᴛs boy
'The boy is shooting the animal'

(21) a. *kuɑ̯̀c à-cɛ́ thɔ̀ɔk câam*
leopard ᴅ ᴘꜰ goat eat:ɴꜰ

b. *thɔ̀ɔk à-cíi kuɑ̯̀c câam*
goat ᴅ ᴘꜰ:ɴᴛs leopard:ɢᴇɴ eat:ɴꜰ
'The leopard has eaten the goat'

• verb (or auxiliary) marked for number (coindexed with NP preceding V or Aux):

(24) a. *mòc ạ-kuàl wéŋ*
man ᴅ steal cow
'The man is stealing the cow'

 b. *ròor ạa- kuàl wéŋ*
men ᴅ:ᴘʟ steal cow
'The men are stealing the cow'

(25) a. *wéŋ ạ-kuɛ̣rl mòc*
cow ᴅ steal:ɴᴛs man:ɢᴇɴ
'The man is stealing the cow'

 b. *ɣɔ̣k ạa- kuɛ̣rl mòc*
cows ᴅ:ᴘʟ steal:ɴᴛs man:ɢᴇɴ
'The man is stealing the cows'

• Pre-verbal S, preverbal O, and postverbal O (as well as noun (phrase) in isolation share one case form: Absolutive (not marked in interlinear glossing) ; postverbal S has GENitive case (marked by way of tone; identical to pattern found on possessor in N N construction)

- Pre-verbal constituent (whether 'O', or S) can be represented by zero, postverbal constituent cannot be manifested as zero (is expressed on verb). Postverbal pronominal O also requires overt pronoun

(37) a. ạ-cɔ̀ɔl mèth
D call child
'He/She is calling the child'

b. ạ̈a- cɔ̀ɔl mèth
D:PL call child
'They are calling the child'

(38) a. ạ-cɔ ɔ̀ɔl tịik
D call:NTS woman
'The woman is calling him/her'

b. ạ̈a- cɔɔ̀ɔl tịik
D:PL call:NTS woman
'The woman is calling them'

(40) a. ạ-caạ̀al
D call:1s
'I am calling him/her'

b. ạ̈a- caạ̀al
D:PL call:1s
'I am calling them'

c. ạ-cɔ̀ɔl
D call:2s
'You are calling him/her'

d. ạ̈a- cɔ̀ɔl
D:PL call:2s
'You are calling them'

- Is postverbal S really a "demoted" subject: does not occur clause-finally (unlike adverbials); it has to be specified; there is a separate 'by-phrase'

(45) a. mǎbǒor ǎ-yɨip   è   mǎriǎal
       Mabor ɒ beat:PAS PREP Marial:GEN

   b. mǎbǒor ǎ-yɨiup   mǎriǎal
       Mabor ɒ beat:NTS Marial:GEN

   c. mǎriǎal ǎ-yǔp mǎbǒor
       Marial ɒ beat Mabor
       'Marial is beating Mabor'

The post-verbal S is the *real* (surface and underlying subject). The pre-verbal constituent carries no particular grammatical relation by virtue of its position or form. In semantic terms it could be an agent, patient, possessor, instrument, place, goal, source, time). Andersen calls them *circumstantial topics*
The structure of Dinka (and closely related languages) is similar to that of Philippine language.

- **Päri, Anywa and Dinka all belong to Western Nilotic. In some Eastern and Southern Nilotic languages, head marking on the verb has been taken to an extreme. Compare Nandi (Southern Nilotic):**

    ki i.kä t-ci ine eci n-ä äne e u un
          la   **akwEEt**

    INF.greet-DAT:DAT-VEN:VEN   child:ABS

    'to pass greetings for the child to him/her as one moves towards the speaker'

- **Loss of case in Nilotic (or Surmic) languages once postverbal S or A as constituent order is lost. SVO (< *OVS, *VSO/*VOS) is generalized, as in Luo (Western Nilotic), Bari (Eastern Nilotic) etc.**

Some preliminary conclusions

- **Changes in case-marking strategies revolve around the conceptualization of definiteness and animacy roles, but also the thetic/categorical distinction, as shown by the DOM system**

- **Gradual shift within the Eastern Sudanic branch from dependent-marking systems towards head-marking systems at the clausal level (also for peripheral semantic roles)**

- **The universally rare Marked Nominative (Nominative-Absolutive) system probably goes back to an earlier Ergative-Absolutive system**

- **Extending Dixon's typology: Nominative-Absolutive as a transition**

  Dixon, R. M. W. 1994. *Ergativity*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press

The missing link for Dixon's dichotomy between Nominative-Accusative and Ergative-Absolutive (extending the typology):

Nominative-
Accusative

Nominative-
Absolutive

Ergative-
Absolutive

- Marked nominative (Nominative-Absolutive) systems are also found in, for example, Omotic (Afroasiatic) languages, e.g. Benchnon. Compare:

- Rapold, Christian J. 2006. *Towards a Grammar of Benchnon*. PhD dissertation, Leiden University.

- But given the fact that Marked Nominative in Nilo-Saharan is associated with postverbal A and S, whereas Omotic languages like Benchnon are verb-final, and given lack of areal contact or influence otherwise, this constellation probably is due to independent developments. But:

Why is ergativity so rare and unstable in northeastern Africa!?