

Case Marking in Hajong¹

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1. Introduction

The Hajong people group is one of the scheduled tribes of North East India. They live mainly in Assam and Meghalaya in India and in the Mymensingh District of Bangladesh. Hajong is classified in the Ethnologue as Indo-European, Indo-Iranian, Indo-Aryan, Eastern zone, Bengali-Assamese (Gordon 2005). Although Hajong is classified as Indo-Aryan (IA), several Hajong case markers are not cognate with those of the large neighboring IA languages, Bangla and Asamiya. This raises the question of the origin of these case markers. Some authors have speculated that the Hajong language has a Tibeto-Burman (TB) sub-stratum. The Hajong people are ethnically and culturally closer to the surrounding Tibeto-Burman people groups such as Garo and Koch than to the Bengali population.² The cultural

¹ I would like to thank the many speakers of the Hajong language who have given the data used for this paper, and who have helped to transcribe and translate that data. I especially thank Abhijit Barman and Mamata Hajong for their hours of help.

² For example, the Hajong traditional women's dress (*pathin*) is identical in pattern and the way it is worn to the Koch traditional dress.

and linguistic similarities could be due either to a common origin or to a mutual influence between the groups who have been living in proximity for generations.

In this paper, I will describe the system of case marking in Hajong – that is, the morphemes which specify the syntactic function of the noun phrase. I will describe the syntactic functions associated with each case form and I will compare the Hajong case forms to their equivalents in four geographically proximate languages. From the IA family, Hajong will be compared to Standard Colloquial Bangla and Standard Colloquial Asamiya (both classified as Indo-European, Indo-Iranian, Indo-Aryan, Eastern zone, Bengali-Assamese). From the TB family, I will compare Hajong to Garo and the Wanang dialect of Koch (both classified as Sino-Tibetan, Tibeto-Burman, Jingpho-Konyak-Bodo, Konyak-Bodo-Garo, Bodo-Garo). Garo is the language of wider communication in the Garo Hills of Meghalaya where a majority of the Hajong population is currently located. Koch is culturally similar to Hajong and also located in the Garo Hills of Meghalaya. Where the case forms seem unique to Hajong, I will explore their possible origins. In doing this, I not only provide data on a hitherto practically undocumented variety of Indo-Aryan, but explore the interaction between the IA and TB language families.

2. The Hajong Case Marking System

In Hajong, the formatives³ which specify the syntactic function of a noun phrase occur as postpositions either immediately following the head noun (or its classifier) or with a case marker intervening after the head noun. The dative, genitive, locative, allative, ablative and instrumental markers immediately follow the head noun or its classifier as shown in Table 1 below.

³Formatives are the markers of inflectional information. They are different from words since they cannot govern or be governed by other words, cannot require or undergo agreement, and cannot head phrases (Bickel 2007:172-3).

Table 1 – Case markers which immediately follow the noun

Hajong	Gloss	Translation	Case
<i>buri-rur</i> ⁴	old.woman-DEF	‘the old woman’	unmarked
<i>buri-rur</i> ⁵ <i>ge</i>	old.woman-DEF DAT	‘to the old woman’	dative
<i>buri la</i>	old.woman GEN	‘of the old woman’	genitive
<i>buri ni</i>	old.woman LOC	‘to/at the old woman’	locative
<i>buri b^ha^j</i>	old.woman LOC	‘to the old woman’	allative
<i>buri t^hiki</i>	old.woman ABL	‘from the old woman’	ablative
<i>buri diu</i>	old.woman INST	‘through/by the help of the old woman’	instru- mental

Based on both diachronic and synchronic properties, Masica (1991:231ff.) identifies three layers of formatives with case-like functions in New Indo-Aryan (NIA) languages. Layer I consists of inflectional affixes inherited from OIA/MIA; these affixes are characterized by declensional differences and singular/plural differences; they attach directly to the base with morpho-phonemic adjustments. This layer is essentially missing in Asamiya and other Eastern IA languages including Hajong. Layer II may be attached to the base indirectly, may be mediated by a Layer I element and/or is

⁴ The Hajong definite marker (or generic classifier) *-rur* has allomorphs *-ra*, *-da*, *-la*, *-ʒa*. It should not be confused with the nominative marker of Bangla, *-ra*, which is etymologically related to the genitive (Toulmin 2006:155). The Hajong *-rur* is equivalent to the classifier *-ta* of Bangla, Asamiya and related languages. A similar shift of the [t] to [r] for this classifier is attested in the Rohingya dialect of Chittagonian (Indo-European, Indo-Iranian, Indo-Aryan, Eastern zone, Bengali-Assamese) (Lloyd-Williams, personal communication).

⁵ The definite marker is obligatory before the DAT case marker but optional before the other case markers.

invariant for all nouns and the same for both numbers. Layer II elements may be either agglutinative suffixes or analytic particles and sometimes even clitics. Layer III is mediated by a Layer II element; it lacks morphophonemic variants and often has a transparent connection with an independent word; it is semantically more specific than a Layer II element. All of the Hajong case formatives listed in Table 1 above fall into Masica's category of Layer II affixes since they are invariant for all nouns and the same for both numbers. These case formatives are not phonologically dependent on the noun. They can occur directly after a noun or after its classifier. In this paper, I will usually separate the case formatives from the preceding noun words. The exception is when the case formative follows a pronoun in a form which cannot stand alone. Here, the case formative is hyphenated.

Hajong also has Layer III elements which specify the function of a noun phrase. The benefactive and comparative markers are mediated by the Layer II genitive marker, as shown in Table 2.

Table 2 – Case markers which follow the genitive

Hajong	Gloss	Translation	Case
<i>buri la bede</i>	old.woman GEN BEN	'for the old woman'	benefactive
<i>buri la t̪ʃuɟuɟu</i>	old.woman GEN COM	'than the old woman'	comparative

The markers for specific location such as 'on top of' or 'underneath' can occur with or without the genitive intervening. The genitive marker comes with a change of meaning, as shown in examples (1) and (2).

(1) *tibil up^hur ni*
 table top LOC
 ‘on (the surface of) the table’

(2) *tibil la up^hur ni*
 table GEN top LOC
 ‘over the table’

These formatives are semantically more specific than the general locative case markers *ni* and *b^ha^j* and are always followed by either *ni* or *b^ha^j*.

The scope of this paper is limited to the Layer II case markers, i. e. formatives which come immediately after a head noun or its classifier. This includes the six formatives listed in Table 1 above, i. e. dative, genitive, locative, allative, ablative, and instrumental. Table 3 below lists the forms for Hajong and compares them to the equivalent forms in Standard Colloquial Asamiya, Standard Colloquial Bangla, Wanang Koch and Garo⁶.

⁶ Each of these languages has nominative-accusative alignment.

Table 3 – Cross-linguistic case marker comparisons

	Hajong	Standard Colloquial Asamiya	Standard Colloquial Bangla	Wanang Koch	Garó
Nominative ⁷	Ø	Ø, -e	Ø, -ra (pl., animate)		Ø, -a
Accusative	ge, gon	-[p]k (animate)	-ke, -[e]re -go-re ⁸		-ko
Dative	ge, gon	-[p]k (animate)	-ke, -[e]re	-na	-na
Genitive	la	-[p]r	-[e]r -go ⁹	-ni	-ni
Locative1	-[p]t	-[p]t	-e, -te (inanimate)		-o
Locative2	ni				
Allative	b ^h a ^j	-[p]lɔi		-wa ^j	-chi, -ona
Ablative	t ^h iki, t ^h okon, t ^h aki	-GEN pɔra	-t ^h eke		-oni
Instrumental	diuu, de	-ere, -re	-dia		-chi

In the following sections, I will look first at the syntactic function of each of these markers and then their form and etymology.

⁷ Zero-marking for nominative is common in languages of northeast India.

⁸ Found in the eastern dialect (Dasgupta 2003:365)

⁹ *Ibid.*

3. Accusative/Dative

3.1 Function

The accusative/dative case marker, *ge* or *gon*, marks the object of a transitive clause and the recipient or goal of a di-transitive verb. It is common in NIA languages to use one marker for both of these functions (Masica 1991:365). The two forms, *ge* and *gon*, are synonymous and in free variation although a given speaker will choose one or the other. Examples (3) and (4) illustrate that, subject to animacy conditions elaborated on below, both *ge* and *gon* can be used for the accusative case, i.e. the object of a transitive clause.

- (3) *uduw bandor-ra gon ni-uw ahi-ba lagi-se.*
that monkey-DEF ACC take-ing come-INF start-PERF
'He is bringing a monkey and coming.'

- (4) *u-kuinuw-ruw ge ni-uw...*
that-bride-DEF ACC take-ing
'Taking that bride,'

Example (5) illustrates that *ge* is used for marking the dative case, i.e. the recipient of a di-transitive verb.

- (5) *adzī o-ge tʃwul di-ba na-lag-e.*
today 3SG-DAT rice give-INF not-need-IPFV
'No need to give him rice today.'

In Asamiya the accusative marker *-k* is used exclusively for animate objects (Dasgupta 1993:92). Rajbanshi and related lects use the dative formative only if the head noun is either human or both animate and discourse prominent (Toulmin 2006:152). Likewise, Hajong uses the dative/accusative formative for humans or animate

nouns which are discourse prominent. In example (5) above, the direct object *tʃuul* ‘rice’ does not take *ge / gon* since it is inanimate. Since the *ge / gon* formative must follow a discourse prominent noun, it must follow a noun marked by either the definite *-ruu* or the plural *-glu*. Masica (1991:365) notes that when an accusative suffix is limited to animates, its function is less syntactic than pragmatic. The marker is stressing the patienthood of human nouns which is a marked status (humans are normally agents). LaPolla (1992) calls this type of marking ‘anti-ergative.’ He points out that ergative marking marks an argument that is an agent, but ‘anti-ergative’ marking marks an argument that is not an agent. Usually this is an animate object that might otherwise be interpreted as an agent. Bossong calls this selective marking of objects Differential Object Marking (DOM) (1991).

This accusative/dative formative can also be used optionally on the non-finite verbs of complement clauses although it is not obligatory. When it does occur, it is usually because the marked verb is removed from its normal position directly before the main verb. Again, *ge* and *gon* are interchangeable in this function as shown in examples (6) and (7).

- (6) *poka gusti-ruu ge kamra-ba ge na-de.*
 insect guest-DEF DAT bite-INF **DAT** not-give
 ‘[He] didn’t allow the mosquitoes to bite the guest.’

- (7) *oi o-la guru-ruu*
 3SG 3SG-GEN ox-DEF
mo-la bagan k^ha-ba gon di-le.
 1SG-GEN garden eat-INF **DAT** give-IMM.PST
 ‘He has allowed his cow to eat my garden.’

In example (6), the non-finite verb phrase *poka gustirui ge kamraba* ‘mosquito bite the guest’ is a complement of the main verb *nade* ‘not allow.’ This whole phrase takes the object marker *ge* which comes after the non-finite verb *kamraba* ‘to bite.’ Within the complement clause, the object of the verb *kamra* ‘bite’ is *gustirui* ‘guest’ which then also takes the object marker *ge*. Since both the non-finite verb and its object are marked with *ge*, it looks like they are agreeing with each other. However, example (8) shows that a non-finite verb and an object of a different verb phrase can both be marked with *ge*.

- (8) *to-ge* *k^ha-ba* *ge* *de-ba*
 2SG-DAT eat-INF DAT give-INF
 kisui *nui* *pa-i*
 anything neg get-IPFV
 ‘[He] was not able to give you anything to eat.’

In example (8), the pronoun *to* ‘2SG’ is marked with *ge* although it is the object of *deba* ‘to give’ which is not marked with *ge*. In example (9), although the object of the verb, *mo* ‘1SG’, is marked with *ge*, the verb is left unmarked.

- (9) *mo-ge* *basa-ba* *pa-bo*
 1SG-DAT save-INF able-IRR
 ‘[You] will be able to save me.’

Based on the evidence of examples (8) and (9), *ge* does not have the function of an agreement marker.

3.2 Form

There are two variants of the accusative/dative formative in Hajong, *ge* and *gon*. The first, *ge*, is cognate with the Bangla *-ke*. The cognate words for ‘pond,’ Hajong *pagar* and Bangla *pukur*, are another example where Hajong has a voiced consonant and the Bangla cognate has a voiceless consonant. However, there is no cognate for the accusative/dative variant *gon* in standard Asamiya, Bangla, or Garo.¹⁰ Table 4 compares the accusative/dative formatives in Hajong, Asamiya, Bangla and Garo.

Table 4 – Cross-linguistic comparison of the accusative/dative formative

	Hajong	Asamiya	Bangla	Garo
Accusative	<i>ge, gon</i>	<i>-k, -pk</i>	<i>-ke, -[e]re</i>	<i>-ko</i>
Dative	<i>ge, gon</i>	<i>-k, -pk</i>	<i>-ke, -[e]re</i>	<i>-na</i>

One possible cognate for the Hajong *gon* is the Sylheti¹¹ classifier for animate nouns which is *-gu* in the singular and *-guin* in the plural (Lloyd-Williams, personal communication). The morpheme *-in* is the most common plural in Sylheti. Although these classifiers in Sylheti are not restricted to the accusative or dative positions, they are used exclusively for animate nouns as the Hajong accusative/dative is used only for animate nouns. The Hajong *gon* could also be related to the archaic Bangla plural morpheme *gon*.

¹⁰ Data for Wanang Koch are unavailable.

¹¹ Indo-European, Indo-Iranian, Indo-Aryan, Eastern zone, Bengali-Assamese

It is interesting to note that two other words in Hajong have an optional *-on* ending. The comitative *loge* is in free variation with *logon* and the ablative *t^hiki* is in free variation with *t^hokon*.

4. Genitive

4.1 Function

The genitive formative *la* is applied to the same range of uses as the Asamiya and Bangla genitive morphemes. It is used to denote material possession, as in example (10), before words showing the specific location of an object, as in example (11), and in expressions of time, as in example (12).

- (10) *dʒoto dinu sib la g^hor ni t^haki-bo*
as.many day Shiv GEN house LOC stay-IRR
‘As long as I stay in Shiv’s house...’

- (11) *to-la up^hur b^ha^j ut^hi-u dʒa-ba lagi-bo*
2SG-GEN up LOC climb-ing go-INF need-IRR
(monkey says to tiger) ‘I will have to climb on top of you.’

- (12) *pak aha la pore tʃini de-i*
boil come GEN after sugar give-IPFV
‘After it has come to a boil, add sugar.’

4.2 Form

The morpheme *la* is not transparently cognate with the genitive case markers in Asamiya, Bangla, Koch or Garo¹², as shown in Table 5 below.

Table 5 – Comparison of genitive case markers

	Hajong	Asamiya	Bangla	Koch	Garó
Genitive	<i>la</i>	<i>-r, -dr</i>	<i>-r, -er</i>	<i>-ni</i>	<i>-ni</i>

In this paper, three hypotheses for the etymology of this formative are presented. One hypothesis is that *la* is a cognate of the Bangla and Asamiya genitive *-r*. Chatterji (1926:755) traces the etymology of the Bangla genitive *-r* from the OIA *kera* and *kara* which had a variant *kela*. Although Chatterji does not comment on the etymology of Hajong *la*, it is possible that it traces its descent from this *kela*.

In the Linguistic Survey of India, Grierson gives some Hajong (Hajong) data from Mymensingh and Sylhet Districts in which the genitive is listed variously as *la*, *lak* and *lag*. The presence of the final velar consonants raises the question of whether the genitive is derived from the Hajong (also Hindi, Bangla, Asamiya) *lag* meaning ‘attach.’ Presumably *lag* ‘attach’ is the source of the Hajong comitative *loge*, *logon*. It is easy to imagine the semantic transition from the verb ‘attach’ to the genitive marking formative since an object which is ‘attached’ to you or ‘with’ you is yours – the genitive. It is not difficult to explain the subsequent drop of the final velar consonants since these are often unreleased in Hajong and difficult to hear.

¹² All of these languages have dependent case marking for the genitive.

A third hypothesis is related to the theory that the Hajong language has Sino-Tibetan origins. If it was originally a Tibeto-Burman language that was relexified by Bangla, some hints of its origin may show through. Several TB languages have a genitive [*lə*] or [*la*] morpheme such as Gamale Kham¹³ (Watters 2003: 689), Manange¹⁴ (Hildebrandt 2004), and Tamang¹⁵ (Mazaudon 2003). Interestingly, Gamale Kham also has a [*ni*] ablative (cf. the Hajong locative *ni*). Kurtöp¹⁶ (Hyslop in prep.) and Lepcha¹⁷ (Plaisier 2007) also have [*n*] based ablatives [*ning*] ~ [*ni*] and [*nun*] ~ [*nu*], respectively. These languages are spoken in the hills to the north of the Hajong population. Various authors, such as Biren Hajong, have hypothesized that the Hajong people originally migrated down from Tibet.

5. Locatives

5.1 Functions

There are four formatives used to mark locational function in Hajong: *-(p)t*, *ni*, *b^ha^j*, and *t^hiki*. The first is the *t* based locative, cognate with Asamiya and Bangla and most likely a borrowing from those languages. Sometimes it is used in a context where it would be

¹³ Kham, Gamale: Sino-Tibetan, Tibeto-Burman, Himalayish, Mahakiranti, Kham-Magar-Chepeng-Sunwari, Kham (Gordon 2005)

¹⁴ Manangba: Sino-Tibetan, Tibeto-Burman, Himalayish, Tibeto-Kanauri, Tibetic, Tamangic (Gordon 2005)

¹⁵ Sino-Tibetan, Tibeto-Burman, Himalayish, Tibeto-Kanauri, Tibetic, Tamangic (Gordon 2005)

¹⁶ Kurtokha: Sino-Tibetan, Tibeto-Burman, Himalayish, Tibeto-Kanauri, Tibetic, Tibetan, Eastern (Gordon 2005) but see Hyslop (to appear) for more information regarding the classification of Kurtöp.

¹⁷ Lepcha: Sino-Tibetan, Tibeto-Burman, Himalayish, Tibeto-Kanauri, Lepcha (Gordon 2005)

replaced by *ni* or *b^ha^j* if the speakers wanted to dissociate themselves from speakers of Bangla or Asamiya. At other times it is idiomatic and cannot be replaced, as in example (13).

- (13) *nam-ra mon-ot pahri-le ela*
 name-DEF mind-LOC forget-IMM.PST now
 ‘I have forgotten the name right now.’

Of the remaining three locative markers, *ni* has the broadest scope as it can be used as both a general locative and an allative case marker. It can also be used metaphorically for location in time. *b^ha^j* is limited to allative case and *t^hiki* marks ablative case.

5.1.1 *ni* and *b^ha^j*

The locative formatives *ni* and *b^ha^j* are used in free variation to express allative case, as shown in examples (14) and (15).

- (14) *g^hor ni ahi-le*
 house LOC come-IMM.PST
 ‘(He) came home.’

- (15) *g^hor b^ha^j ahi-le*
 house LOC come-IMM.PST
 ‘(He) came home.’

However, *ni* shows precise location as in example (16) where it means ‘in.’ *b^ha^j* cannot be used in this way as shown in example (17).

- (16) *bugnu ni pani gorom de-i*
 pot LOC water hot give-IPFV

‘Heat water in the pot.’

- (17) *bugnuw b^ha^j pani gorom de-i
pot LOC water hot give-IPFV

Only *ni* can be used metaphorically for location in time, as illustrated by the data in (18).

- (18) te b^hijun ni b^hat-tat k^hur-juw
then morning LOC rice eat-ing
‘Then in the morning, after eating rice...’

5.1.2 t^hiki, t^hokon, t^hake

The ablative markers *t^hiki*, *t^hokon*, *t^hake* are cognate with the Bangla *t^heke* and are used in free variation in the same contexts as the Bangla ablative. They can be used directly following a place name or pronoun as in examples (19), (20) and (21).

- (19) mo-la dʒoŋgol t^hiki kene k^huri-ra ne-i?
1SG-GEN forest ABL why? firewood-DEF take-IPFV
‘Why are you taking firewood from my jungle?’

- (20) golpara t^hokon e-b^ha^j ahi-se.
Goalpara ABL this-LOC come-PERF
‘From Goalpara we came here.’

- (21) idu moi ei-t^hokon b^haga-i b^hala.
this 1SG this-ABL flee-IPFV good
‘It’s better for me to flee from here.’

They can also be used after *b^ha^j*¹⁸ or *ni* as in examples (22) and (23).

- (22) *pas b^ha^j t^hiki o-gon kuibuu*
back side ABL 3SG-DAT someone
d^huri-buu nek^han lagi-se
grasp-INF like attach-PERF
‘He felt like someone was touching him from behind.’
- (23) *o-ge moi kun ni t^hokon di-bo?*
3SG-DAT 1SG where LOC from give-IRR
‘From where shall I give to him?’

Finally, they can be used metaphorically for time as in (24).

- (24) *kunb^hola t^hiki taifoid hu-se?*
when? ABL typhoid be-PERF
‘From when have you had typhoid?’

5.2 Form

5.2.1 *ni*

The etymology of the locative morpheme *ni* is not easily identified. Grierson, writing a hundred years ago, gives *mi* as the locative marker for Hajong (Haijong) of Sylhet district. *mi* is reminiscent of the Hindi *mē* and Maithili *me*, both meaning ‘in.’ Neither *ni* or *mi* has a cognate

¹⁸ In this instance, *b^ha^j* behaves more like a lexeme than a formative and is therefore glossed differently. Its possible status as a lexeme is discussed in section 5.2.2.

in Asamiya or Bangla. Neither do they have transparent cognates in the surrounding TB languages although *-ni* shows up as a genitive affix in Garo and Koch. DeLancey comments that there often seems to be a relationship between genitive and locative cases in TB languages; however, tracing the development from one to the other is difficult:

It is not unusual to find homophony between genitive and locative, ablative or ergative case. While there is some evidence for the conceptual relationship between possession and location, the question of the diachronic development of genitive from locative case (or vice versa?) is an open one, and we cannot for the present assume a historical directionality here. (1984:66)

5.2.2 *b^ha^j*

Likewise, the source of the locative *b^ha^j* is not easily identified as it is not transparently cognate with anything in Asamiya or Bangla. There is evidence for a locative marker *wa^j* in Wanang Koch (Kondakov 2007), although more research on Koch is needed to verify this. This could point either to Hajong being historically related to the Koch language, or to borrowing between the languages whose speakers have been living in close proximity for generations. It would be interesting to see if there are other cognates in these two languages with the same [*b^h*]-[*w*] alternation.

In addition to its function as a formative, *b^ha^j* also looks like a noun at times, as in example (25).

- (25) *to-la lok-glu ni-se gor b^ha^j*
 2SG-GEN friend-PL take-PERF bottom **part**
tui an-se agal b^ha^j
 2SG bring-PERF top **part**
 ‘Your friends took the bottom part; you brought the top part.’

Formatives are often grammaticalized from nouns. In both Assamese and Hajong there is a noun *b^hag* ‘part.’ It would be interesting to see if there is a phonological pattern of a velar in Assamese becoming palatalized in Hajong.

5.2.3 *t^hiki, t^hokon, t^hake*

The ablative markers *t^hiki* and *t^hake* are clearly cognate with the Bangla *t^heke* and therefore not surprising in Hajong. However, the alternative form *t^hokon* is unexpected. These forms are in free variation. The source of *-on* in *t^hokon* is unknown. It is possible that the first [o] vowel lowered to match the vowel of the second syllable as there is a pattern of vowel harmony in Hajong. As mentioned in section 3.2 the *-on* ending is also seen as an alternative on both the comitative *loge* and the accusative/dative *ge*.

6. Instrumental

The instrumental marker *diu* is cognate with the Asamiya and Bangla instrumental markers. It is often shortened and pronounced [de] in Hajong. It is used as in the following examples.

- (26) *in^hkuke aŋgul diu gutu-i*
 thus finger INST poke-IPFV
 ‘Poking with his finger like this,’

- (27) *baŋla b^hasa diu ko-i sen puk^hi*
 Bangla language INST say-IPFV sen bird
 ‘In Bangla it is called ‘sen’ bird.’

Conclusion

The case markers of Hajong are interesting in that there is a mix of some obvious cognates with Indo-Aryan languages, some possible cognates with Tibeto-Burman languages and some cases where finding a cognate is a stretch. Table 6 highlights the possible cognates.

Table 6 – Possible cognates for Hajong case markers

	Hajong	IA (Bangla, Asamiya)	TB (Koch, Garo)
DAT/ACC	<i>ge, gon</i>	<i>-ke</i>	
GEN	<i>la</i>	possibly <i>-[e]r</i>	
LOC	<i>ni</i>		<i>-ni</i> (GEN)
LOC	<i>b^ha^j</i>		<i>-wa^j</i>
ABL	<i>t^hiki, t^hake, t^hokon</i>	<i>-t^heke</i>	
INST	<i>diu</i>	<i>-dia</i>	

Although the dative/accusative and the ablative marker have partial cognates in Bangla, the *[on]* endings remain unexplained. The genitive *la* in Hajong does not have an obvious cognate in any surrounding language although it may be related to the *-[e]r* of Bangla. The locative *ni* may be cognate with the Garo and Koch genitive but the relationship between them is not easily identified. The locative *b^ha^j* seems to have a cognate in Koch *wa^j*. The instrumental is clearly cognate with Bangla.

This survey of the case markers of Hajong provides some data and description of a relatively undocumented variety of IA. It also explores the interactions between the IA and TB language families in northeast India. This paper raises many possibilities and questions

regarding the origin of Hajong case markers. Although there are some possible cognates with TB languages, more evidence is needed to assert that Hajong has a Tibeto-Burman sub-stratum. At the same time, the differences between Hajong and the surrounding IA languages are too many to ignore the suggestion that the language has some origin or influence from outside the IA family.

Abbreviations

ABL	Ablative
ACC	Accusative
BEN	Benefactive
COM	Comparative
DAT	Dative
DEF	Definite
GEN	Genitive
IMM.PST	Immediate Past
INF	Infinitive
INST	Instrumental
IPFV	Imperfective
IRR	Irrealis
LOC	Locative
PERF	Perfective
PL	Plural
SG	Singular

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