The study gives an account of the argument selection in Sadani/ Sadri as spoken in Assam. The objectives primarily include (1) a detailed descriptive study of case marking and thematic roles in the language and (2) an attempt to show how the grammar of argument marking is organized in a hierarchy. At the secondary level, the study also tries to assess the influence of Assamese, the dominant regional language in the argument marking of Sadri.

Chapter 1 throws light on the origin of Sadri language in Assam, its existing literature, its importance from socio-linguistic perspective, along with a typological description. Sadani/Sadri originated as the mother tongue of the Sadans, an Aryan group amongst the non Aryans in Chota Nagpur Plateau. It evolved as a link language of the Adivasis mainly living in and around Chota Nagpur Plateau that spreads over present day Bihar, Jharkhand, Chhattisgarh and parts of West Bengal and Orissa. About 97 or so heterogeneous communities come under the umbrella term Adivasis. These communities, mostly belonging to three language families namely, Austro-Asiatic, Indo-Aryan and Dravidian used Sadri as their link language for inter and intra community communication. From pidgin, Sadri gradually evolved as a creole, primarily due to inter community marriages between the various linguistic groups amongst them. The offspring of these bilingual parents adopted the link language as their mother tongue.

When the British tea planters brought these adivasis to Assam, as labourers in the 19th century, Sadri as link language came along with them. Over the period of two hundred years, Sadri came under tremendous influence of the dominant regional languages: Assamese in the Brahmaputra valley and Bangla in the Barrack Valley. Sadri as spoken in Assam has been labeled as Assam Sadri (henceforth AS) to distinguish it from the Sadri spoken in Chota Nagpur Plateau better known as
Nagpuria Sadri (henceforth NS). The language data has been mainly collected from Sadri speakers of Lakhimpur and Sonitpur districts in Assam.

The typological description of AS in the chapter brings forth its Indo-Aryan features. It has the subject-object-verb word order; the verbs are inflected for Tense Aspect and Mood. Postpositions are free markers and it has a Nominative-Accusative case system.

Chapter 2 throws light on some theoretical assumptions, primarily the Aspectual Approach (Zeno Vendler 1957, Comrie (1976a), Levin and Hovav (2005:88) and the Proto-role Approach of (Dowty 1991). In a clause structure, a verb entails certain proto-properties to the agent and patient arguments. Arguments with greater proto-agent properties are lexicalized as the subject and arguments with greater proto-patient properties are lexicalized as the object (Dowty 1991). As a result, we get an array of other thematic roles like experiencer, instrumental, theme, locative and so on in between the proto-roles. The chapter discusses the core arguments and also the derived arguments; namely causee and the derived passive subject. In causativisation, the role of causee can be understood as per the degree of agency or control (Cole 1983). Baker (1988), Bresnan and Moshi (1990) and Alsina (1996) look passive as a manifestation of an underlying asymmetry among objects. In other words, the derived passive subject retains the underlying property or ‘property U’ of basic object. An overview of the argument selection in Indo-Aryan languages shows that apart from the nominative subjects, they also take various other non-nominative subjects. Nominative subjects are mostly agentive and non-nominatives are non-agentive. Objects with accusatives and nominative case vary with regards to the thematic roles. As a result, there is no one to one correspondence between the thematic role and the grammatical marking. It has been observed that AS also has similar Indo-Aryan phenomenon.

Chapter 3 shows that in AS, the aspectual properties of the verb determines the assignment of agentive and non-agentive subjects. In AS, non-volitional dynamic
verbs take the non-nominative subjects marked by dative *ke*, genitive *–r/-ker* and locative *me* and *opre*. Unlike the proto-agent, these subjects do not have full control over the action and are therefore, in between both the proto-roles in the thematic hierarchy. Dative subjects occur with verbs expressing physical states, obligation, necessity, non volition, perception and psych verbs. Genitive subjects occur with verbs denoting ‘desire’, ‘physical ailment’, and ‘mental states’, apart from non-volitional action. Analysis of the verbal categories and their proto-entailments shows that the verbs that take dative *ke* have more proto-agent features than verbs that take genitive *–r/-ker*. Subjects with locative *me/opre*, have the syntactic subject properties. But semantically, they do not denote properties like volitionality, sentience, causation, independent existence and so on. The verbs that take locative subjects do not entail any of the proto-agent or proto-patient properties and thus appear after the patient role in the thematic hierarchy.

Chapters 4 discusses the factors like animacy, definiteness and specificity that determine the object case marking in AS. Like other Indo-Aryan languages, the case features do not correspond to the thematic roles of the object arguments. Rather, it is the verbal properties that determine the thematic roles of the object. The dynamic verbs entail greater number of proto-patient properties to object than the non dynamic verbs. Analysis of the AS data illustrates that, not all verbs imply total affectedness of the objects. Rather, the degree of affectedness can be seen as a continuum between more affected and less affected patient. The dynamic action verbs that physically affect the arguments are considered to be proto-typical patients followed by arguments that are mentally affected, as that of ‘scold’ and ‘remember’, followed by perception verbs like ‘see’ and finally by stative ‘know’. The oblique objects take the various non canonical cases marked by instrumental *se*, ablative *se*, locative *me/opre* and associative *sage*. These objects are not the prototypical patients, but can imply affectedness when occurs with a dynamic verb.
In ditransitive constructions, the indirect object with thematic role of recipient is marked by dative \textit{ke}; and that of beneficiary is marked by dative \textit{khatir}. The direct object with the role of theme takes nominative case. The recipient is the one who ‘receives’, hence, can be considered more involved in the verbal action than the beneficiary, who is supposed to be ‘benefited by the action’. Thus, recipient is more affected than the beneficiary.

Chapter 5 looks into the causative and passive constructions: the two grammatical function changing conditions in AS. In causativisation, the subject is demoted to the object position. The causee NP can take accusative, dative or instrumental case with regards to the argument position. The thematic role of the causee can be organised in a hierarchy, where the causee with the accusative \textit{ke} appears to be more affected in case of action verbs like \textit{pit} ‘beat’ and \textit{maar} ‘kill’. They are followed by mental verbs like \textit{djan} ‘know’ or ‘understand’ and then by psych verb like ‘frighten’ and finally by perception verbs like ‘show’. Again in AS, the derived passive subjects are the affected ones, that retain the underlying property of the object argument. The thematic hierarchy of the derived passive subjects forms a degree of continuum between more affected arguments and less affected arguments. It has been observed that in causative-passive interaction, the causative markers do not co-occur with the passive morphology; rather the perfective participle marker –\textit{al} gives the causative implication.

Finally, Chapter 6 looks into the AS and NS argument selection, assessing the influence of Assamese, the dominant regional language. A cross-linguistic analysis of argument selection rules in AS, NS and Assamese shows that the use of genitive subject case can be seen as influence of Assamese. Predicates like \textit{bimar hoe he} ‘fever happen’ and \textit{mon ahe} ‘desire’ select an experiencer subject in both NS and AS. The subject selected by these verbs takes dative \textit{ke} in NS, whereas, in AS, it takes genitive –\textit{r/-ker}. 

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