Case loss and the rise of articles:
Evidence for a typological tendency

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In this paper, we focus on the second central question of the workshop, namely, the grammatical consequences of having or lacking an article system. We present typological evidence for a correlation between the loss of case marking and the rise of an article system (definite or indefinite). The claim that there was this kind of inverse correlation between case marking and article systems has been discussed for more than 100 years (see, e.g. Krámský 1972, 48—49) but it has never been subjected to rigorous testing.

The data for article systems comes from Matthew Dryer (Dryer 2013a,b) and the data for case marking from Oliver Iggesen (Iggesen 2013); altogether the sample contains data for 183 languages. We tested the hypothesis using generalized mixed effects modeling (GLMMs). In our models the variable article system was coded as the dependent variable with values "present" and "absent". The variable number of cases was coded as the predictor with values ranging from zero cases to ten or more.

The results provide statistical evidence for an inverse relationship between the occurrence of article system and the number of cases in a language (estimate = -.17; df = 1; p = 0.0048). This result means that the smaller the number of cases is in a language, the more likely it has an article system, and vice versa. We further discuss what the causal connection between an article system and the number of cases might be. While agreeing in principle with Hewson and Bubenik (2006: 364) on the role of word order, we argue for the specific domain, sentence-level information structure, connecting the articles and grammatical case.

References: ● Dryer, M.S. 2013a. Definite articles - Chapter 37. In Dryer and Haspelmath (eds.). ● Dryer, M.S. 2013b. Indefinite articles - chapter 38. In Dryer and Haspelmath (eds.). ● Dryer, M.S. and M. Haspelmath (eds.) 2013. *The World Atlas of Language Structures Online.* Leipzig: Max Planck Institute for Evolutionary Anthropology. ● Hewson, J. and V. Bubenik 2006. *From Case to Adposition: The Development of Configurational Syntax in Indo-European Languages.* Amsterdam: John Benjamins. ● Iggesen, O.A. 2013. Number of cases - chapter 49. In Dryer and Haspelmath (eds.). ● Krámský, J. 1972. *The Article and the Concept of Definiteness in Language.* The Hague: Mouton.