

Lecture 14: Case.

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Outline

- ① Case
- ② Accusative Case
 - Case assigners
 - Case Filter
 - Adjacency
- ③ Nominative Case
 - Case assigners

Case

Case

- (1)
- a. She loves her.
 - b. *She loves she.
 - c. *Her loves her.
 - d. *Her loves she.

Why are sentences above ungrammatical?

- Cannot be accounted by θ -theory: number of arguments is right.

Case

In many languages, there are certain mappings of **word forms** to **arguments**.

- In English this system is very poor, and only active on pronouns:

Subject	Object
<i>he</i>	<i>him</i>
<i>she</i>	<i>her</i>
<i>I</i>	<i>me</i>
<i>John</i>	<i>John</i>
<i>apple</i>	<i>apple</i>

- In other languages, like Japanese, marking is productive:

(2) John-**ga** ringo-**o** tabeta
 John-**SUBJ** apple-**OBJ** ate
 'John ate an apple.'

Standard cases

A few important cases

Case	Usage
Nominative	Subjects of <i>finite</i> clauses
Accusative	Direct objects
Dative	Indirect objects
Genitive	Possessor (like 's in English)

Note: there are many more cases in world languages: *instrumental*, *ablative*, *allative*, etc.

Russian

- (3) Ol'ga dala [knigu Maši] Anne.
 Olga.NOM gave [book.ACC Maša.GEN] Anna.DAT
 'Olga gave Masha's book to Anna.'

Case and θ -roles

It might seem like Case and θ -roles are related. But it is not the case:

- | | | | |
|-----|----|------------------------------|------------------|
| (4) | a. | She loves Bill. | Experiencer, NOM |
| | b. | She is loved by Bill. | Patient, NOM |
| (5) | a. | I believe her to be happy. | Experiencer, ACC |
| | b. | I believe that she is happy. | Experiencer, NOM |

Accusative Case

What assigns accusative case?

Let's look at the **accusative case (ACC)**:

- | | | | | |
|-----|----|----------------------------------|-----|--------------------------------|
| (6) | a. | Mary [loves him]. | (7) | |
| | b. | [to him] | | |
| | c. | the [destruction of him] | c. | *the [destruction him] |
| | d. | proud [of him] | d. | *proud him |

- **Verbs assign ACC** to their complements.
- **Prepositions assign ACC** to their complements.
- **Nouns don't assign ACC** to their complements.
- **Adjectives don't assign ACC** to their complements.

These are also categories that allow NP complements!

What assigns case?

NP complements:

- (8) a. Mary [loves John]. (9)
 b. [to the city]
 c. the [destruction of the city] c. *the [destruction the city]
 d. satisfied [of dinner] d. *satisfied [dinner]

	NP Complements	ACC pronouns
V	✓	✓
P	✓	✓
N	✗	✗
A	✗	✗

What assigns case?

Russian

- In Russian, Accusative case is morphologically marked (separate form of the noun).
- It occurs also only after **Verbs** and **Prepositions**, but not after **Nouns** and **Adjectives**.

(10) a. **ljubit** Mašu
loves Maša.ACC
b. **v** Moskvu
to Moscow.ACC

c. **uničtoženie** Moskvu
destruction Moscow.GEN
d. **dovolen** obedom
satisfied dinner.INST

Morphological vs. abstract case

- **V** and **P**:
 - Allow NP complements in English;
 - Need an accusative pronoun in English;
 - Need an accusative noun/pronoun complement in Russian.
- **N** and **A**:
 - **Don't** allow NP complements;
 - Need a **PP** (often headed by *of*) in English;
 - Do **not** have accusative noun/pronoun complement in Russian (can have GEN, INST, or other).

Morphological vs. abstract case

Russian and English

- Where Russian **allows accusative NP complement**, English **allows NP complement**, and if it's a pronoun, it is also **accusative**.
 - After **V** and **P**.
- Where Russian **doesn't allow accusative complement**, English also **doesn't allow NP complement**.
 - After **N** and **A**.

Even though English doesn't have morphological accusative case marking on nouns, we can argue that **accusative case** in English exists, and it has **phonologically empty** morphology (i.e it's just **not pronounced**), except on pronouns.

We call this **Abstract Case** (as opposed to **Morphological Case**). In what follows, we will only talk about Abstract Case.

Case filter

- (11)
- the destruction **of** the city
 - our love **for** puppies
 - fond **of** Mary
 - satisfied **of** dinner
- (12)
- *the destruction the city
 - *our love puppies
 - *fond Mary
 - *satisfied dinner

Question: Why are phrases in (12) ungrammatical?

Case Filter: Every NP should have a case.

- N and A do not assign case, so respective nouns (*the city*, *puppies*, *Mary*, *dinner*) in (12) are caseless.

Adjacency condition

- (13)
- a. Mary very often believes him.
 - b. Mary believes him very often.
 - c. *Mary believes very often him.
- (14)
- a. Mary very often believes John.
 - b. Mary believes John very often.
 - c. *Mary believes very often John.

Is there any other condition that can account for ungrammaticality of (13-c) and (14-c)?

Accusative case can only be assigned by V or P to the adjacent NP (this is an English specific requirement!).

Adjacency condition

Such adjacency effects only work with NP complements. PP complements don't have to be adjacent!

- (15) a. Sue **shouted** **to her friends** that it was snowing.
b. ?Sue **shouted** that it was snowing **to her friends**.
- (16) a. the **destruction of the Rome** by the barbarians
b. ?the **destruction** by the barbarians **of the Rome**

Accusative case: summary

Accusative case

- Only Verbs and Prepositions assign accusative case to their complements.
- In English, accusative case only assigned to the adjacent complement (this explains why arguments should be next to verbs!).
- **Case filter:** Every NP needs a case. If there is no case assigner, the sentence is ungrammatical.

Nominative Case

Assigning nominative case

Now let's look at the nominative case. What is needed for NOM?

- (17)
- a. I believe [her to be stupid].
 - b. *I believe [she to be stupid].
 - c. I believe [that she is stupid].
- (18)
- a. I saw [her reading Chomsky].
 - b. *I saw [she reading Chomsky].
 - c. I saw [that she was reading Chomsky].
- (19)
- a. I want [for her to win]
 - b. *I want [she to win].

Assigning nominative case

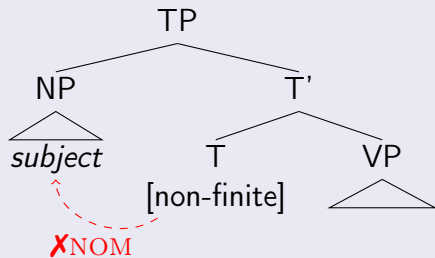
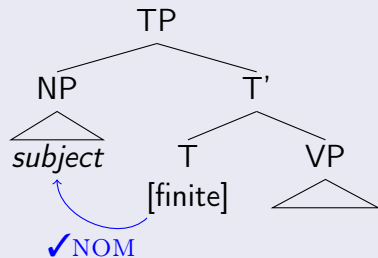
Finiteness

- Nominative case goes to subjects in **finite** clauses (i.e. no infinitives, gerunds, etc.)
- T should be a tense or a modal.
- Or we must have something else to assign a case, but it will not be a nominative case anymore, (21-b).

- (20) a. **John** must eat a cake.
b. **Sally** does not drink beer.

- (21) a. ***[Bill** to leave the house] is exhausting.
b. **[For Bill** to leave the house] is exhausting.

Finite T assigns nominative case



Summary

- Only finite T assigns NOM.
- V assigns ACC (in English, under adjacency).
- If an NP lacks case, the sentence is ungrammatical.
- P also assigns (some) case to its complement.

