What is case?

**Nominative/accusative languages**

- Many languages mark nouns or noun phrases with morphology that indicates their grammatical function in the clause (subject, object, etc.).

- The various forms that nouns (or NPs) take in such languages are called *cases*.

  **nominative:** subject of a finite (= not infinitival) clause ...

  **accusative:** direct object ...

  **genitive:** possessor, other syntactic dependents of N ...

  **dative:** recipient (indirect object), experiencer...

  *and others*
Nominative-Accusative case systems

Russian:

Ol'g-а dala [knig-u Maš-i] devušk-e.
Olga-NOM gave book.ACC Masha-GEN girl-DAT
subject direct object possessor indirect object

'Olga gave Masha's book to the girl.'
Nominative-Accusative case systems

Latin:

a. Caesar omnes druides in Galliā interfecit.
   Caesar.NOM all.ACC druids.ACC in Gaul.ABL killed
   'Caesar killed all the Druids in Gaul.'

b. Caesarem Romam redire populōs voluit.
   Caesar.ACC Rome-to return people.NOM wanted
   'The people wanted Caesar to return to Rome.'

c. Senatus Caesarī provinciam dedit.
   senate.NOM Caesar.DAT province.ACC gave
   'The senate gave a/the province to Caesar.'

d. Legiones Caesaris multas gentes subegerunt.
   legions.NOM Caesar.GEN many.ACC peoples.ACC subjugated
   'Caesar’s legions subjugated many peoples.'
Nominative-Accusative case systems

Finnish:

a. Kirja on pöydällä.
   book.NOM is table.ADESSIVE
   'The book is on the table.'

b. Pekka osti jonkin kirjan.
   Pekka bought some.ACC book.ACC
   'Pekka bought a book.'

c. Todennäköisesti hän etsi sitä kampaa.
   probably (s)he.NOM looked-for that.PART comb.PART
   'It was pretty clear that (s)he was looking for that comb.'

d. Hänelä on vihreät silmät.
   (s)he.ADESSIVE is green.NOM.pl eye.NOM.pl
   ‘(S)he has green eyes.’
Ergative-absolutive case systems

**absolutive:** direct object if the clause contains one, otherwise subject

**ergative:** subject of a clause that also contains an absolutive object

**Basque:**

a. Mari joan da.
   Mary.ABS left has
   'Mary left.'

b. Marik liburua erosi du.
   Mary.ERG book-the.ABS bought has
   'Mary bought the book.'

c. Nik diot Mariri trikota ez eman.
   I.ERG have Mary.DAT sweater-the.ABS not given
   'I did not give the sweater to Mary.'
Ergative-absolutive case systems

**absolutive:** direct object if the clause contains one, otherwise subject

**ergative:** subject of a clause that also contains an absolutive object

**Dyirbal (NE Australia, Pama-Nyungan):**

a. Bayi yara baninu.
   DEIC-I.ABS man.ABS coming
   'The man is coming.'

b. Bayi yara bangun dugumbiru balgan.
   DEIC-I.ABS man.ABS DEIC-II.ERG woman.ERG hitting
   'The woman is hitting the man.'
Ergative-absolutive case systems
Split ergative systems

**Tense splits:** past tense ERG/ABS, present tense NOM/ACC

**Aspect splits:** perfective ERG/ABS, imperfective NOM/ACC

**Agreement splits:** case ERG/ABS, verbal agreement NOM/ACC
(never the reverse!)

**Person split:** 3rd person ERG/ABS, [+participant] NOM/ACC

*and more!*
Ergative-absolutive case systems

In this class: we now return (permanently, alas) to NOM/ACC systems
Environments of Accusative case

- In languages like Russian, Latin, Japanese, and many others, *accusative* case is found on the complements of V and some instances of P — but not on the complements of N and A.

- A complement of N and A either bears a case such as genitive or else is a PP.
Environments of Accusative case

Russian:

(1) Complement to V (accusative)  (2) Complement to P (accusative)
[VP čitaet knigu]  [PP v Moskvu]
reads book-ACC  to Moscow-ACC
Environments of Accusative case

(3) **Complement to N** (*accusative*)

a. [NP kritika knigi]  
criticism book-GEN

b. *[NP kritika knigu]  
criticism book-ACC

C. [NP ljubov' [PP k muzyke]]  
love to music-DAT

d. *[NP ljubov' muzyku]  
love music-ACC

(4) **Complement to A** (*accusative*)

a. [AP dovolen obedom]  
satisfied dinner-INSTR

b. *[AP dovolen obed]  
satisfied dinner-ACC

c. [AP serdit [PP na menja]]  
angry on me-ACC

d. *[AP serdit menja]  
angry me-ACC
Environments of Accusative case

**Rules for accusative case in Russian (and similar languages)**

a. V and P may assign accusative case to an NP complement.
b. N and A do not assign accusative case.

(simplified!)
Environments of Accusative case

**English:**

At first glance, case does not appear to be a part of English grammar.

(though ask me about *I* vs. *me*, *we* vs. *us*)
Environments of Accusative case

Rules for accusative case in Russian (and similar languages)
a. V and P may assign accusative case to an NP complement.
b. N and A do not assign accusative case.

Facts about the availability of NP complements in English
a. V and P allow an NP complement.
b. N and A do not allow an NP complement.
Environments of Accusative case

English:

(1) **Complement to V (NP)**

   [VP reads the book]

(2) **Complement to P (NP)**

   [PP to the city]

(3) **Complement to N**

   a. [NP the criticism of the book]
   b. *[NP the criticism the book]
   c. [NP our love [PP of music]]
   d. *[NP our love music]

(4) **Complement to A**

   a. [AP satisfied with dinner]
   b. *[AP satisfied dinner]
   c. [AP fond [PP of the child]]
   d. *[AP fond the child]
Environments of Accusative case

**Russian:**

(1) **Complement to V (accusative)**  
\[
[VP \text{ čitaet} \text{ knigu}]
\]
reads book-ACC

(2) **Complement to P (accusative)**  
\[
[PP \text{ v} \text{ Moskvu}]
\]
to Moscow-ACC
Environments of Accusative case

(3) Complement to N (*accusative)
   a. [NP kritika knigi]  b. *[NP kritika knigu]
      criticism book-GEN  criticism book-ACC
   c. [NP ljubov' [PP k muzyke]]  d. *[NP ljubov' muzyku]
      love             to music-DAT  love             music-ACC

(4) Complement to A (*accusative)
   a. [AP dovolen obedom]  b. *[AP dovolen obed]
      satisfied dinner-INSTR  satisfied dinner-ACC
   c. [AP serdit [PP na menja]]  d. *[AP serdit menja]
      angry             on me  angry me-ACC
Environments of Accusative case

**Generalization:**

- Where Russian allows an accusative NP as a complement, English allows an NP.

- Where Russian does not allow an accusative NP — but might allow an NP with some other case — English simply does not allow an NP.
Environments of Accusative case

- In Russian, the following fact is obvious on the face of it, since any NP that can show case morphology must show case morphology:

**Case Filter for Russian**

*\([NP – case]\)*
Environments of Accusative case

- In Russian, the following fact is obvious on the face of it, since any NP that *can* show case morphology *must* show case morphology:

**Case Filter for Russian**

* [NP –case]

- *Suppose the Case Filter is also true of English...*

- *and suppose the distribution of accusative case is governed by the same rules that govern it in Russian.*

**Rules for accusative case in Russian**

a. V and P may assign accusative case to an NP complement.

b. N and A do not assign accusative case.
Environments of Accusative case

Case Filter for Russian & English
* [NP –case]

Rules for accusative case in Russian & English
a. V and P may assign accusative case to an NP complement.
b. N and A do not assign accusative case.

Differences between English and Russian
a. Case morphology in English is phonologically zero.
b. English has rules assigning accusative case, but lacks genitive, dative, instrumental, etc.
Environments of Accusative case
The fact that English lacks such cases as genitive, dative, and instrumental, means the complement to N and A simply *may not be an NP*.

This is why what looks like a restriction on accusative case in Russian looks like a restriction on the *very existence of an NP* in English.

**Case Filter for Russian & English**

* [NP –case]

**Rules for accusative case in Russian & English**

a. V and P may assign accusative case to an NP complement.
b. N and A do not assign accusative case.

**Differences between English and Russian**

a. Case morphology in English is phonologically zero.
b. English has rules assigning accusative case, but lacks genitive, dative, instrumental, etc.
Environments of Accusative case

Is the idea of phonologically null case-marking absurd?
Environments of Accusative case

Is the idea of phonologically null case-marking absurd?

No.
Environments of Accusative case

Indeclinable Russian kangaroos

a. \[\text{VP} \text{ vidit kenguru}\] sees kangaroo-ACC
b. \[\text{PP} \text{ v kenguru}\] into kangaroo-ACC

c. \[\text{NP} \text{ kritika kenguru}\] criticism kangaroo-GEN
   'criticism of the kangaroo'
d. \[\text{NP} \text{ ljubov' [PP k kenguru]}\] love to kangaroo
   'love for a kangaroo'

e. \[\text{AP} \text{ dovolen kenguru}\] satisfied kangaroo-INSTR
   'satisfied with the kangaroo'
f. \[\text{AP} \text{ serdit [PP na kenguru]}\] angry at kangaroo
   'angry at a kangaroo'
Environments of Accusative case

The indeclinable noun heads an NP that does bear case:

a. [VP vidit mo-ego kenguru]
   sees my-ACC kangaroo-ACC

b. [NP kritika èt-ogo kenguru]
   criticism this-GEN kangaroo-GEN

c [AP dovolen krasiv-ym kenguru]
   satisfied beautiful-INSTR kangaroo-INSTR

Declinable elements that agree with the head noun in case show the expected case suffix even when the head noun itself is indeclinable.
Кенгуру

Материал из Википедии — свободной энциклопедии

У этого термина существуют и другие значения, см. Кенгуру (значения).

Кенгуру (лат. Macropus) — общеупотребительное название группы животных из отряда двуного-хвостых млекопитающих. В широком смысле термин кенгуру относится ко всем представителям семейства кенгуровых. В узком смысле это название применяется по отношению к наиболее крупным представителям этого семейства, тогда как более мелкие называются валлару и валлаби. Кенгуру живут от 8 до 16 лет [источник не указан 431 день].

Происхождение названия

Слово «кенгуру» происходит от «kangaroo» или «gangurru» — названия этого животного на куку-йимитирском языке аборигенов Австралии (язык пама-ньюngской семьи), услышанного Джеймсом Куком от аборигенов во время его высадки на северо-восточном берегу Австралии в 1770 году[1].

Широко распространился миф, в соответствии с которым Джеймс Кук,
Environments of Accusative case

The Adjacency Condition on Accusative Case Assignment

We are developing a picture of a part of syntax called Case Theory. Case Theory distinguishes among the syntactic categories in two ways:

1. It distinguishes between *accusative case assigners* (V, P) and categories that do not assign accusative case (N, A).

2. It distinguishes between NP, which needs case by the Case Filter, and other categories such as PP and CP, which do not need case.

Let us focus on distinction 2. The distinction between NP complements and PP and CP complements is visible in the morphology of languages like Russian. *In Russian, nouns bear case morphology, but prepositions and complementizers do not.*
Environments of Accusative case

- Interestingly, the distinction shows up in English as well. Consider verbs like *put* and *persuade* that take more than one complement.

When one of these complements is an NP, it is always the one that is next to the verb:

(1) a. Sue put the book under the desk. \((ok \ V \ NP \ PP)\)
    b. *Sue put under the desk the book. \((* \ V \ PP \ NP)\)

(2) a. Bill persuaded his friends that the world is flat. \((ok \ V \ NP \ CP)\)
    b. *Bill persuaded that the world is flat his friends. \((* \ V \ CP \ NP)\)
Environments of Accusative case

- For verbs that take a PP and a CP complement, or two PPs, there may be a slight preference for one order of complements over another, but it is nothing like the strong effect seen in Error! Reference source not found.) and Error! Reference source not found.).

(1a)  Sue spoke to Tom about Bill.  \hspace{1cm} (ok V PP PP)
    b. Sue spoke about Bill to Tom.

(2a)  Sue shouted to her friends that it was snowing. \hspace{1cm} (ok V PP CP)
    b. ?Sue shouted that it was snowing to her friends. \hspace{1cm} (ok V CP PP)

- The ordering effect also disappears in NP, where the complement that would be accusative in VP is replaced by a PP.

(3a)  the placement of the book under the desk \hspace{1cm} (ok N PP PP)
    b. the placement under the desk of the book
Environments of Accusative case

(4)a. her promise to her friends that she would leave
   b. ?her promise that she would leave early to her friends
Environments of Accusative case

**Accusative case assignment (version 1)**

\( \alpha \) assigns accusative case to \( \beta \) only if:

i. \( \alpha \) is V or P (but not N or A);

ii. \( \beta \) is the complement of \( \alpha \); and

iii. \( \alpha \) and \( \beta \) are adjacent.

(ask me about French)
(ask me about English topicalization or \textit{wh}-movement)
Environments of Accusative case

The glory of this proposal:

We do not need to suppose that any special rules besides the laws of Case Theory dictate the relative ordering of complements.

We do not need to build this into subcategorization frames or stipulations about Merge, for example.
Nominative Case assignment
T assigns nominative case to its specifier.
Nominative Case assignment

Finite T assigns nominative case to its specifier.

a. I am happy [that Mary left the room].
b. *I am happy [ø Mary to leave the room].
**Nominative Case assignment**

**Finite** T assigns nominative case to its specifier.

a. I am happy [that Mary left the room].
b. *I am happy [ø Mary to leave the room].

but what about:

c. I would be happy [for Mary to leave the room].
Draw some conclusions:

a. Sue thinks [that soon the class will have a party].
b. I am happy [that soon the class will have a party].

c. Sue arranged [for (*soon) the class to have a party].
d. I would be happy [for (*soon) the class to have a party].
**Accusative case assignment (version 2)**

\( \alpha \) assigns accusative case to \( \beta \) only if:

i. \( \alpha \) is V or P or the complementizer *for* (not N or A);

ii. \( \alpha \) c-commands \( \beta \) with no CP barrier intervening; and

iii. \( \alpha \) and \( \beta \) are adjacent.

*If complementizer for has prepositional features, we can simplify this:*

**Accusative case assignment (version 2')**

\( \alpha \) assigns accusative case to \( \beta \) only if:

i. \( \alpha \) is V or P (not N or A);

ii. \( \alpha \) c-commands \( \beta \) with no CP barrier intervening; and

iii. \( \alpha \) and \( \beta \) are adjacent.
"Exceptional case marking" (ECM) verbs

a. Tom believed [Mary to have left the room].

b. Sue considers [Jill to be the best candidate for the job].

What is case-marking *Mary* and *Jill*?
Case assignment across a clause boundary

"Exceptional case marking" verbs

a. Tom believed [Mary to have left the room].

b. Sue considers [Jill to be the best candidate for the job].

What is case-marking Mary and Jill?

c. Tom believed [that recently Mary had left the room].

d. *Tom believed [recently Mary to have left the room].
Case assignment across a clause boundary

"Exceptional case marking" verbs

a. Tom believed [Mary to have left the room].

b. Sue considers [Jill to be the best candidate for the job].

What is case-marking *Mary* and *Jill*?

c. Tom believed [that recently Mary had left the room].

d. *Tom believed [recently Mary to have left the room].

e. Tom's belief [that Mary left the room] ...

f. *Tom's belief [Mary to have left the room]...
Case assignment across a clause boundary

**Accusative case assignment (version 2')**

α assigns accusative case to β only if:

i. α is V or P (not N or A);

ii. α c-commands β with no CP barrier intervening; and

iii. α and β are adjacent.

Stipulation: A clause that is a complement to an ECM verb is not a barrier to case assignment.

(That is why such a clause is "exceptional"!)
Passive

a. The pizza was devoured by the lion.
Passive

a. The pizza was devoured (by the lion).

b. The book was put under the desk (by Tom).

c. Mary was persuaded [that the world was ending] (by her friends).
Passive

a. [The pizza] was devoured __ (by the lion).

b. [The book] was put __ [under the desk] (by Tom).

c. [Mary] was persuaded __ [that the world was ending] (by her friends).
Passive

Japanese

a. **Kuruma-ga 3-dai** doroboo-ni nusum-are-ta.
car-NOM 3-cl thief-by steal-PASS-Past
'3 cars were stolen by the thief.'

b. **Kuruma-ga** doroboo-ni **3-dai** nusum-are-ta.

a. Kinoo, **gakusei-ga 2-ri** [ano otoko]-ni home-rare ta.
yesterday student-NOM 2-cl that man-by praise-PASS-Past
'Yesterday, 2 students were praised by that man.'

b. Kinoo, **gakusei-ga** [ano otoko]-ni **2-ri** home-rare ta.
'Yesterday, 2 students were praised by that man.'
Passive

Japanese

   car-NOM 3-cl thief-by steal-PASS-Past
   '3 cars were stolen by the thief.'

Passive

English idioms

(1) a. Bill let the cat out of the bag.
    b. The cat was let out of the bag (by Bill).
('let the cat out of the bag' = 'reveal the secret')

(2) a. John really took the wind out of our sails.
    b. The wind was really taken out of our sails (by John).
('take the wind out of someone's sails' = 'destroy someone's enthusiasm')

(3) a. Sue kept close tabs on the opposition.
    b. Close tabs were kept on the opposition (by Sue).
('keep close tabs on...' = 'monitor closely')

(4) a. John kept a close eye on the opposition.
    b. A close eye was kept on the opposition by (John).
('keep a close eye on ...' = 'monitor closely')

(5) a. Our programmers really dropped the ball on that one.
    b. The ball was really dropped on that one (by the programmers).
('drop the ball on X' = 'screwed up by forgetting something X-related')
The pizza was devoured by the lion.
Passive

Why does the NP complement have to move in a passive sentence, but not a PP or CP complement?

a. The pizza was devoured __ (by the lion).

b. The book was put __ [under the desk] (by Tom).

c. Mary was persuaded __ [that the world was ending] (by her friends).
Passive

Why does the NP complement have to move in a passive sentence, but not a PP or CP complement?

a. The pizza was devoured __ (by the lion).

b. The book was put ___ [under the desk] (by Tom).

c. Mary was persuaded ___ [that the world was ending] (by her friends).

Hypothesis about passive morphology

Passive morphology...
1. ...suppresses assignment of accusative case;
2. ...suppresses normal assignment of external semantic role (θ-role)
   (the role assigned to the subject in an active sentence)
Passive

T' → T → NP
  ↓                    ↓
  VP                  V' → NP
                   ↓          ↓
                   INTERNAL ARGUMENT  INTERNAL ARGUMENT
Passive

Accusative case assignment (version 2')

\( \alpha \) assigns accusative case to \( \beta \) only if:
i. \( \alpha \) is a V in the active voice or P (not N or A);
ii. \( \alpha \) c-commands \( \beta \) with no CP barrier intervening; and
iii. \( \alpha \) and \( \beta \) are adjacent.

Hypothesis about passive morphology

Passive morphology...

1. suppresses assignment of accusative case;
2. suppresses normal assignment of external \( \theta \)-role
**Passive**

- Notice also that English sentences need an overt specifier of TP.

- This requirement is sometimes called the *Extra Peripheral Position principle*, abbreviated **EPP**:

  **EPP**
  
  TP must have a specifier.

*(Note: You may meet linguists who tell you that the initials "EPP" stand for something else. If you do, report them promptly to me...)*
Passive

was (EPP not satisfied yet 😞)

T

T'

VP

V

devoured

NP

the pizza (no case 😞)

PP

P

by

NP

the lion
Passive

TP

NP

the pizza (nominative) 😊

T

was (EPP satisfied) 😊

T'

VP

V'

V

devoured

P

by

NP

the lion
Passive

Two results from passivizing a verb with a CP complement:

a. [That the world is round] was discovered __ by the ancient Greeks.
b. It was discovered by the ancient Greeks [that the world is round].

But verbs that take an NP complement have only one passive:

a. The book was put __ under the table (by Mary).
b. *It was put the book under the table (by Mary).

Why?
Passive

Two results from passivizing a verb with a CP complement:

a. [That the world is round] was discovered __ by the ancient Greeks.

b. It was discovered by the ancient Greeks [that the world is round].

EPP satisfied by expletive *it.*
CP does not need to receive case.

But verbs that take an NP complement have only one passive:

a. The book was put __ under the table (by John).

b. *It was put the book under the table (by John).

EPP satisfied by expletive *it.*
But the *book* does need to receive case — and remains caseless
Passive
Passive

ECM

John believed [Mary to have left the room]

Passive meets ECM

a. Mary was believed [ ___ to have left the room] (by her friends).

b. *It was believed [Mary to have left the room] (by her friends).

Why?
Passive

ECM
a. John believed [Mary to have left the room]

Passive meets ECM

b. Mary was believed [ ___ to have left the room] (by her friends).

EPP satisfied by raising *Mary to Spec,TP

*Mary, which needs case, is assigned NOM by finite T in the main clause.

c. *It was believed [Mary to have left the room] (by her friends).

EPP satisfied by expletive *it.

*Mary needs to receive case. In (a) the active form of believe assigns ACC, but in (b) the passive form does not (nor does to).
Passive

Idioms

Recall full-sentence idioms:

(1) a. Bill let the cat out of the bag.

    b. The cat was let out of the bag (by Bill).

('let the cat out of the bag' = 'reveal the secret')

(2) a. John really took the wind out of our sails.

    b. The wind was really taken out of our sails (by John).

('take the wind out of someone's sails' = 'destroy someone's enthusiasm')

(3) a. Sue believed [the shit to have hit the fan on Thursday].

    b. The shit was believed to have hit the fan on Thursday (by John).

('The shit hit the fan.' = '<Contextually salient people> got in trouble.')

(4) a. John believed [the tide to have turned].

    b. The tide was believed to have turned (by John).
Passive

Passive meets ECM meets passive

a. The pizza was believed [__ to have been devoured __].

b. The cat was believed [__ to have been let __ out of the bag].
Passive

Passive meets ECM meets passive

\[\text{\textbullet\textbullet}\]

a. The pizza was believed [__ to have been devoured __].

\[\text{\textbullet\textbullet}\]

b. The cat was considered [__ to have been let __ out of the bag].
Passive recall:

a. Mary was believed [ ___ to have left the room] (by her friends).

b. The shit was believed [ ___ to have hit the fan].

c. The pizza was believed [ ___ to have been devoured ___].

d. The cat was considered [ ___ to have been let ___ out of the bag].
Raising

a. Mary seems [ ___ to have left the room]

b. The shit appears [ ___ to have hit the fan].

c. The pizza is likely [ ___ to have been devoured ___].

d. The cat is certain [ ___ to have been let ___ out of the bag].
Raising

a. Mary **seems** [ ___ to have left the room]  
   It **seems** [that Mary has left the room].

b. The shit **appears** [ ___ to have hit the fan].  
   It **appears** [that the shit has hit the fan].

c. John **is likely** [ ___ to eat the meal].  
   It **is likely** [that John will eat the meal].
Raising

a. Mary seems [ ___ to have left the room]

*It seems [that Mary has left the room].

b. The shit appears [ ___ to have hit the fan]

It appears [that the shit has hit the fan].

*c. John is likely [ ___ to eat the meal]

It is likely [that John will eat the meal].

*It is likely [John to eat the meal].