The Case for Case
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(thanks to Steve Bethard)

Overview

- Previous Work
- Case Theory
Problems with previous work

- Focus on morphology, ignoring syntax
- The nominative was largely ignored
  - ‘dative of separation’, ‘dative of possession’, etc.,
    but not
  - ‘nominative of personal agent’, ‘nominative of patient’, etc.
- The classification criteria were not rigorous
  - Mix of syntactic, historical, and semantic
  - Use of a ‘leftover’ or ‘residue’ case
- Assumption of Subject/Predicate division

Case Theory

- Case relations occur in deep-structure
  - Surface-structure cases are derived
- A sentence is a verb + one or more NPs
  - Each NP has a deep-structure case
    - A(gentive)
    - I(nstrumental)
    - D(ative)
    - F(actitive)
    - L(ocative)
    - O(bjective)
  - Subject is no more important than Object
    - Subject/Object are surface structure
Case Selection

- Noun types
  - Different cases require different nouns
  - E.g.  \( N \rightarrow [+animate]^{A,D}[X\_Y] \)

- Verbs frames
  - Verbs require arguments of particular cases
  - E.g.
    - \( sad[\_D] \)
    - \( give[\_O+D+A] \)
    - \( open[\_O(I)(A)] \)

Case Theory Benefits

- Fewer tokens
  - Fewer verb senses
  - E.g. \( cook[\_O(A)] \) covers
    - Mother is cooking the potatoes
    - The potatoes are cooking
    - Mother is cooking

- Fewer types
  - “Different” verbs may be the same semantically, but with different subject selection preferences
  - E.g. \( like \) and \( please \) are both \( [\_O+D] \)
Summary

- Each verb is associated with a frame
  - Frames indicate the cases of each argument

- Language dependent surface phenomena
  - Subject/Object
  - Case markings

- From syntax to surface structure
  - Verb argument movement
  - Verb argument copying