



# 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(active)*
    - *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 → [+animate]<sup>A,D</sup>[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