

Generative Syntax
RGGU / MGU

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Handout #4:
Case and Passive

•• All NPs (in all languages) must have **case** ••

1) **Case Forms:** (SC)

Nominative: knjiga
Accusative: knjigu
Genitive: knjige
Dative: knjizi
Locative: knjizi
Instrumental: knjigom

--The requirement that all NPs must have case is referred to as **The Case Filter**:

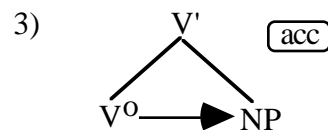
2) **The Case Filter:** *NP if NP has phonetic form, and no case.

I. Structural Case:

A. Accusative

- | | |
|------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| 2) a. John saw him . | *d. John saw he . |
| b. Chomsky likes me . | *e. Chomsky likes I . |
| c. Yeltsin knows us . | *f. Yeltsin knows we . |

This occurs in a certain configuration, as shown below:



Accusative case is assigned to the sister of V⁰

• Hypothesis: Case is assigned to all complements

This rule for case-assignment is both too strong and too weak:

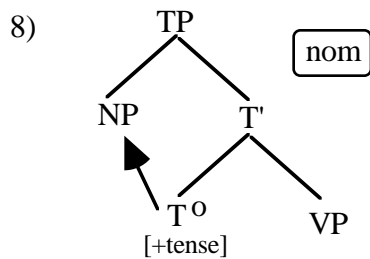
--It is too strong because not all heads can assign case to their complements (nouns and adjectives in English do not, for example). It is too weak because many NPs successfully get case without being a complement, especially **subjects**.

B. Nominative

Question: What assigns case to subjects, or, what assigns Nominative case?

Consider the following examples:

- 4) a. Everyone hopes that **he** is recovering well.
 b. Everyone hopes for **him** to recover well.
 *c. Everyone hopes **he** to recover well.
 *d. Everyone hopes **him** to recover well.
- 5) a. Everyone hopes that **Yeltsin** is recovering well.
 b. Everyone hopes for **Yeltsin** to recover well.
 *c. Everyone hopes **Yeltsin** to recover well.
- 6) a. It seems [that **he** is a crazy man]
 b. **He** seems to be a crazy man.
 *c. It seems **he** to be a crazy man.
- 7) a. It seems [that **Lebed** is a crazy man]
 b. **Lebed** seems to be a crazy man.
 *c. It seems **Lebed** to be a crazy man.



Nominative case is assigned to SpecT when T⁰ is [+tns]

Theta-Roles:

•What is wrong with the strange (b) sentences below?

- 9) a. Honesty frightens Bush.
 b. # Bush frightens honesty.
- 10) a. Putin writes poetry.
 b. # A piece of wood writes fiction.
- 11) a. There is trouble is the world..
 b. * There wrote a novel.
- 12) Fred wrote a novel. *write* V [__NP] or: <agent, theme>

agent, theme are **thematic-roles** or **θ-roles** ("theta-roles"). The basic **θ-roles** are:

Agent • Initiator, doer of action
 • must be capable of volition (desire) or deliberate action

Patient / theme • recipient of action
 • "victim" / "affected object"

Goal • Entity toward which motion takes place
 • motion may be concrete or abstract:

- 13) a. They went to **Siberia**.
 b. Clinton gave a present to **Putin**.

