When is a Case not a Case?
Adventures in Noun Morphology

Pete Bleackley
When is a Case not a Case?

- What is a case?
What is a Case?

- Case is a grammatical category determined by the syntactic or semantic function of a noun or pronoun.
  
  - *SIL Glossary of Linguistic Terms*
Latin

- servus *nom.s*
- serve *voc.s*
- servum *acc.s*
- servi *gen.s*
- servo *dat.s*
- servo *abl.s*
- servi *nom.pl*
- servi *voc.pl*
- servos *acc.pl*
- servorum *gen.pl*
- servis *dat.pl*
- servis *abl.pl*
When is a Case not a Case?

*When it's a segunak*
What is a segunak?

- **Khangāpyagon** for suffix
- Literally “follow-part”
- An affix in an agglutinating noun-system that can combine with other affixes to mark complex relationships
- Khangāpyagon segunakar are organised in a system of six ranks
Modsegunakar - deixis

• \il this
• \ban that
• \dau what
• \she no
• \wo any
• \ye you
densegunakar - proximity

- \uparrow \uparrow \text{ut at}
- \downarrow \text{eb touching, in contact}
- \rightarrow \rightarrow \text{art with (commitative)}
- \rightarrow \rightarrow \text{ash without}
- \rightarrow \rightarrow \text{iss near}
- \rightarrow \rightarrow \text{orr far}
radsegunakar - position

- \( \text{ip in} \)
- \( \text{sta outside} \)
- \( \text{omb around} \)
- \( \text{gri above} \)
- \( \text{od below} \)
- \( \text{shing left} \)
- \( \text{hop beside} \)
- \( \text{urp right} \)
- \( \text{æks alligned with} \)
- \( \text{tuk in front of} \)
- \( \text{ðen behind} \)
karvsegunakar - motion

- ಮುಂದಾದ am destination
- ಪ್ರಾರಂಭ ig origin
- ಅಂತಾ ಗು path
sintsegunakar - abstract

- ụ uz of
- ụ ol by (instrumental)
- ụ akh to (recipient)
- ụ ku about, topic
- ụ ung for (benefactive)
- ụ nụn zen on behalf of

- ụnwụ aug for (goal, reason)
- ụnlụ yat against
bantsegunak - number

¹ Ⴕ (a)r plural
Putting it all together

hirriltar zerrishar magyeissgrigur
May birds fly just over the top of you trees!
No accusative or ergative!

- Core case role deliberately omitted
- A major function of case does not occur in Khangaḅyagon's noun morphology
<table>
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<th></th>
<th>Non-distal</th>
<th>Distal</th>
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<tr>
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<td>Allative</td>
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<td>among</td>
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<td>on horizontal</td>
<td>-t‡′(o)</td>
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<td>on vertical</td>
<td>-q(o)</td>
<td>-qo-r</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
gjâ-zym-byn by Jim Henry

- Three core spatial postpositions
- Take suffixes for being near, far or inside
- Take prefixes for orientation relative to a centre
- Case markers formed from a root word + core spatial postposition
When is a Case not a Case?

*When it's a verb*
I give the dog a bone.
I give a bone, the dog gets it.
I give a bone the dogget.
iljena

- Spoken on lijin kovt, the 4th planet of Δ Pavonis
- Spoken by the Leyen (ljn), crepuscular bipeds with vibrissae all over their bodies
- They perceive themselves as embedded in an active world
- Everything is doing something
iljena

• Words consist of triconsonantal noun roots eg ljn “Leyen”
• ... and verbal vowel patterns eg i12e3a “speak”
• iljena = “Leyen speak”
He decorated everything he made with beautiful patterns.
Case-like verb patterns

- e₁₂e₃ have (genitive)
- 1₀₂₃ hold (locative)
- ₁₂e₃₀ use (instrumental)
- a₁₂a₃ₑ receive (dative)
- ₁₂u₃₀ undergo (accusative)
hmuno

“The human undergoes”
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When it's a kowu.
Tenata by Lila Sadkin

- *lume* Semantic roots
- *teja* Categorical suffixes
- *kowu* Function prefixes
- *ngona* Verbal inflection particles
- *ruma* Validity particles
- *feni* Conjunctions
- *jiso* Pronouns
kowu

- so- actor
- ti- action
- ru- recipient
- fi- beneficiary
- pe- purpose
- lo- location
- ka- direction

- ne- instrument
- mu- auxiliary
kowu

- Content words consist of kowu+lume+teja
- kowu relates to role of the word in the clause
- Words may function as noun, verb, adjective or adverb depending on context
Snow blanketed the mountain path, but we went by those mountains.
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