Case Assignment and Verb Classes in Dothraki

David J. Peterson

Voji Dothraki

- Language of the Dothraki from George R. R. Martin's <u>A Song of Ice and Fire</u>.

- Dothraki: Nomadic horse warriors. Inspired by various Native American cultures and the Mongols of the Silk Road period.

- Pre-literate; contact with literate societies; near the end of their Iron Age.

Lekh Dothraki

- Head-initial: SVO, NA, NG, NR, Prep

- Inflectional language

- Full case system for nouns/pronouns

- Verbs conjugate for person/number

- Mix of suffixes, prefixes and circumfixes

Vekhikh Dothraki

- Two broad noun classes: Animate and inanimate.

- Part semantics; part phonology; part history.

- Differ in case endings and number.

Vekhikh Hranna

- Inanimate nouns simpler: Don't distinguish number on the noun.

- Sample words: qeso "basket"; os "path"

	Singular	Plural
Nominative	qeso / os	
Accusative	qes / os	
Genitive	qesi / osi	
Allative	qesaan / osaan	
Ablative	qesoon / osoon	

Vekhikh Asavva

- Animate nouns have separate plural forms for most cases.

- Sample words: rizh "son"; ko "bodyguard"

	Singular	Plural
Nominative	rizh / ko	rizhi / kosi
Accusative	rizhes / koes	rizhis / koes
Genitive	rizhi / kosi	
Allative	rizhaan / kosaan	rizhea / kosea
Ablative	rizhoon / kosoon	rizhoa / kosoa

TIHIKHZIRI

- NOMINATIVE (VARIES): SUBJECT

- ACCUSATIVE (—/-ES): DIRECT OBJECT

- GENITIVE (-I): POSSESSOR

- ALLATIVE (-AAN/-EA): MOTION TOWARDS

- ABLATIVE (-OON/-OA): MOTION AWAY FROM

Tikkheya Dothraki

- Conjugate for tense: Past, Present, Future.

- Agree with person/number of subject.

- Agree with polarity (positive/negative).

- Imperative (informal/formal), infinitive and participle (archaic).

VENESERI TIKKHEYI

- BASED ON BETH LEVIN'S <u>ENGLISH VERB CLASSES AND ALTERNATIONS</u> (1993).

- CLASSES DEFINED BY USAGE.

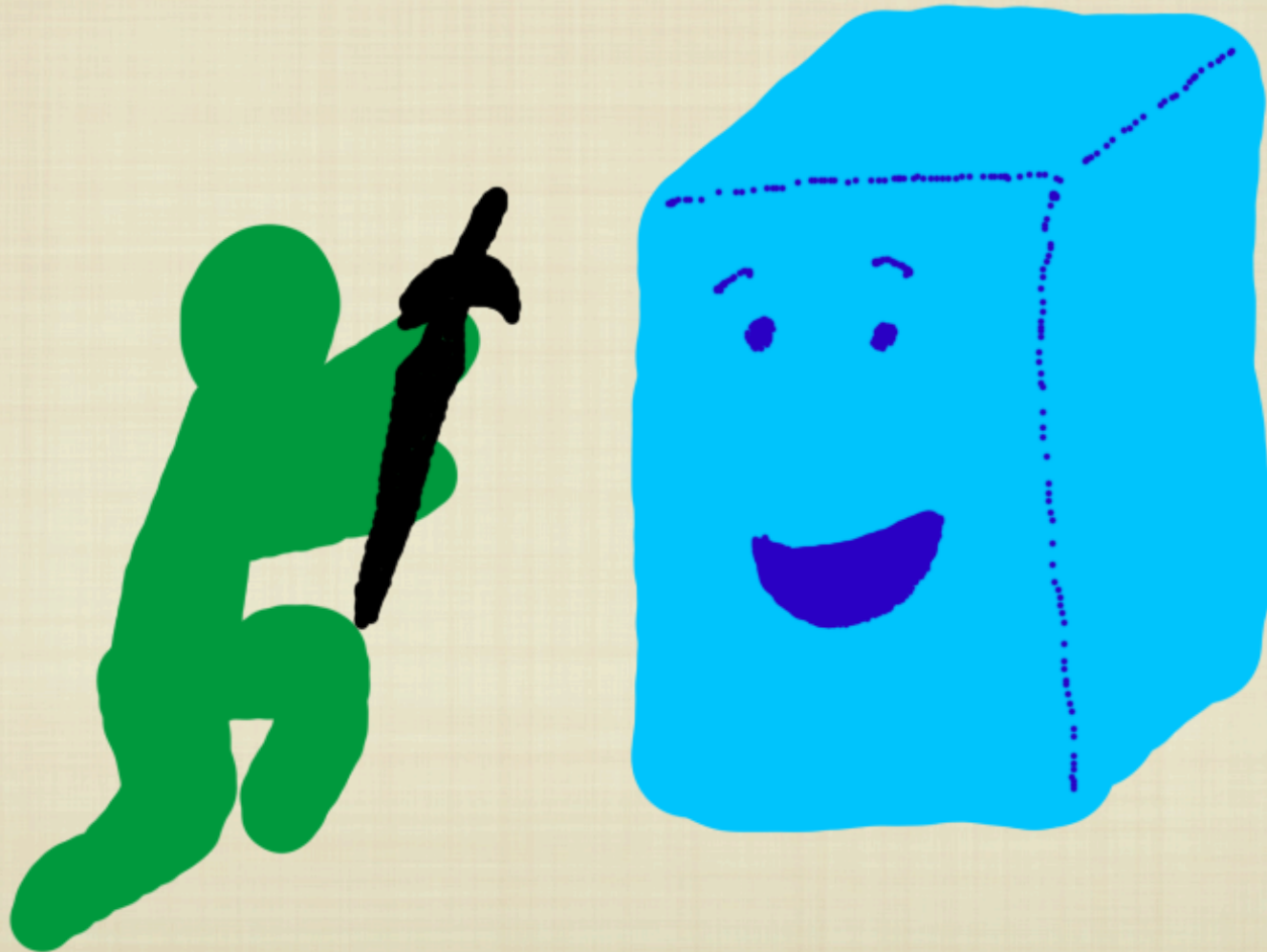- NOT EXHAUSTIVE.

Veneser Ataki

- Case(s): Allative
- Semantics: Recipient

azhat "to give"

- Rakh azh yot nayataan. "The boy gave a fruit to the girl."

- Rakh chom nayataan. "The boy respected the girl."

- Other verbs: assilat "to signal"; davralat "to be useful"; emat "to smile/approve"

ALLATIVE RECIPIENT

Veneser Akataki

- Case(s): Accusative~Allative
- Semantics: complete~irresultative

vindelat "to stab"

- Rakh vinde yot. "The boy stabbed the fruit."

- Rakh vinde yotaan. "The boy stabbed at the fruit"

- Other verbs: lojat "to hit"; fakat "to kick"; fatat "to slap"; fatilat "to insult"; frakhat "to touch"; sikhtelat "to spit"
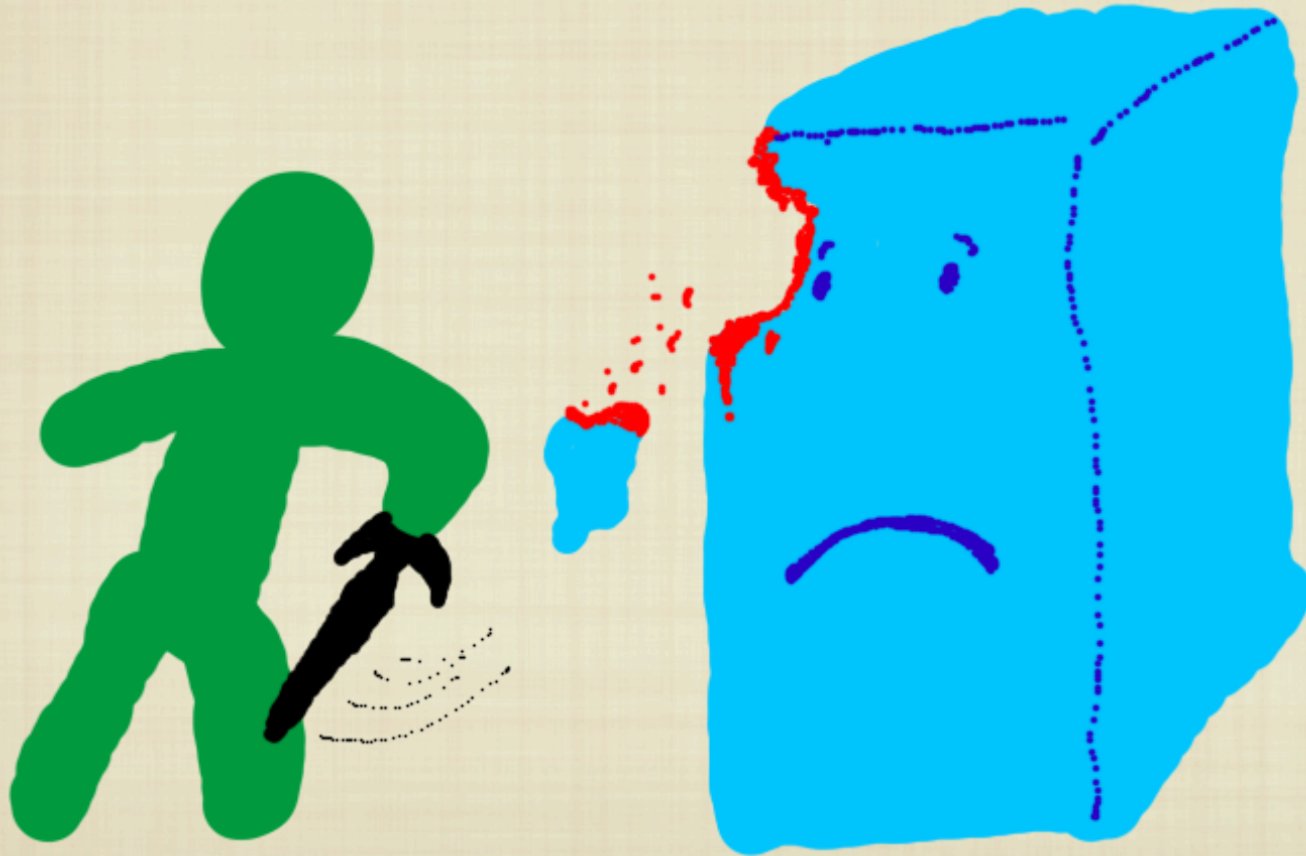
Accusative~Allative

Veneser Senaki

- Case(s): Accusative~Ablative
- Semantics: complete~partitive

rissat "to cut"

- Rakh risse yot. "The boy sliced the fruit."

- Rakh risse yotoon. "The boy cut into the fruit."

- Other verbs: charat "to hear"; tihat "to see"; adakhat "to eat"; ostat "to bite"; yanqolat "to gather"; lekhilat "to taste"

Accusative~Ablative

Veneser Toraki

- Case(s): Accusative~Genitive
- Semantics: object~topic

charat "to hear"

- Rakh char nayat. "The boy heard the girl."

- Rakh char nayati. "The boy heard about the girl."

- Other verbs: qafat "to ask"; tihat "to see"; astolat "to speak"; astilat "to joke"; other communicative verbs, e.g. donat "to shout"
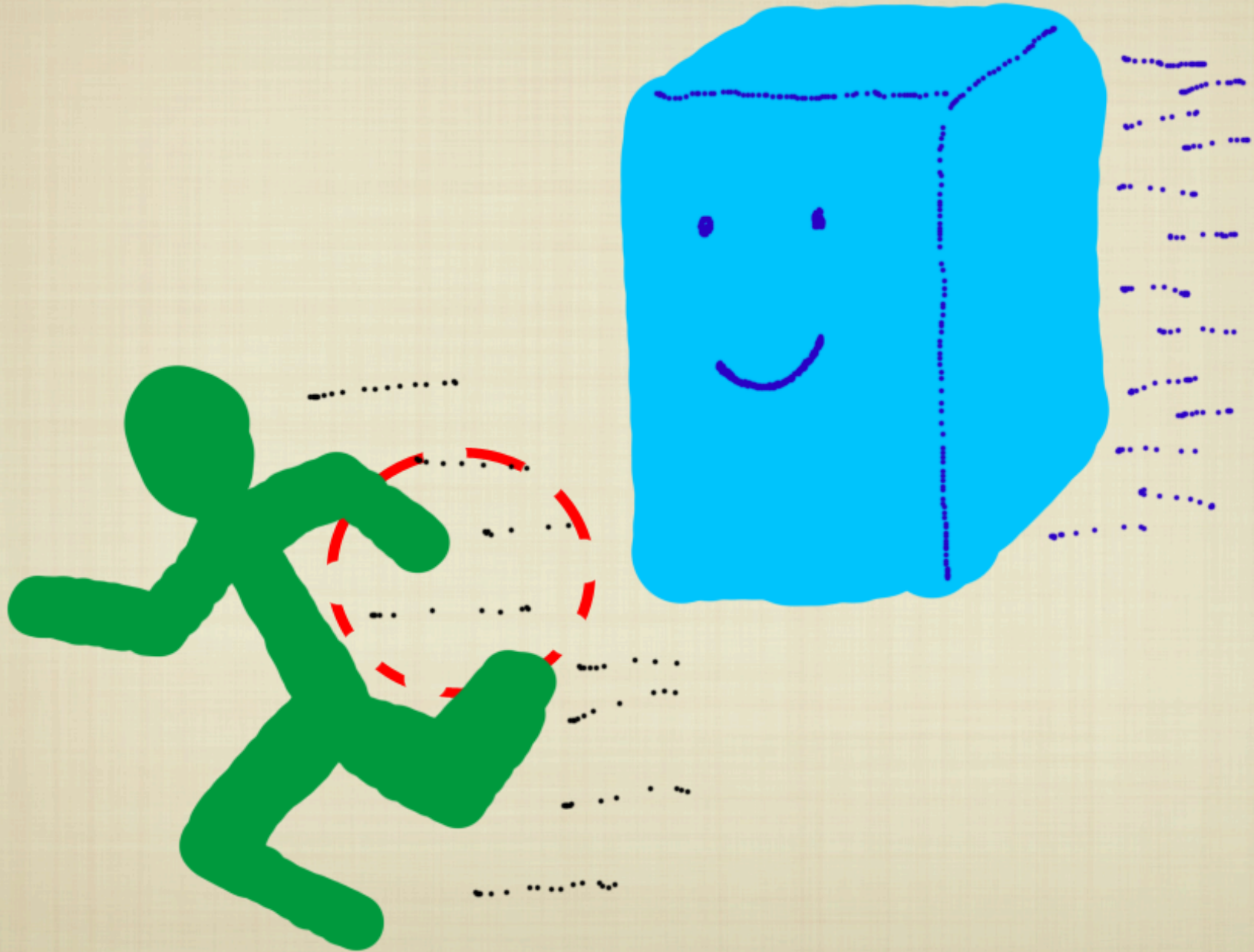
Veneser Mekaki

- Case(s): Genitive
- Semantics: motion beside another body

  lanat "to run"

- Rakh lan nayati. "The boy ran beside the girl."

- Other verbs: dothralat "to ride"; anat "to jog"; ifat "to walk"; elat "to go"; other verbs of motion, e.g. chetirat "to canter" or karlinat "to gallop"
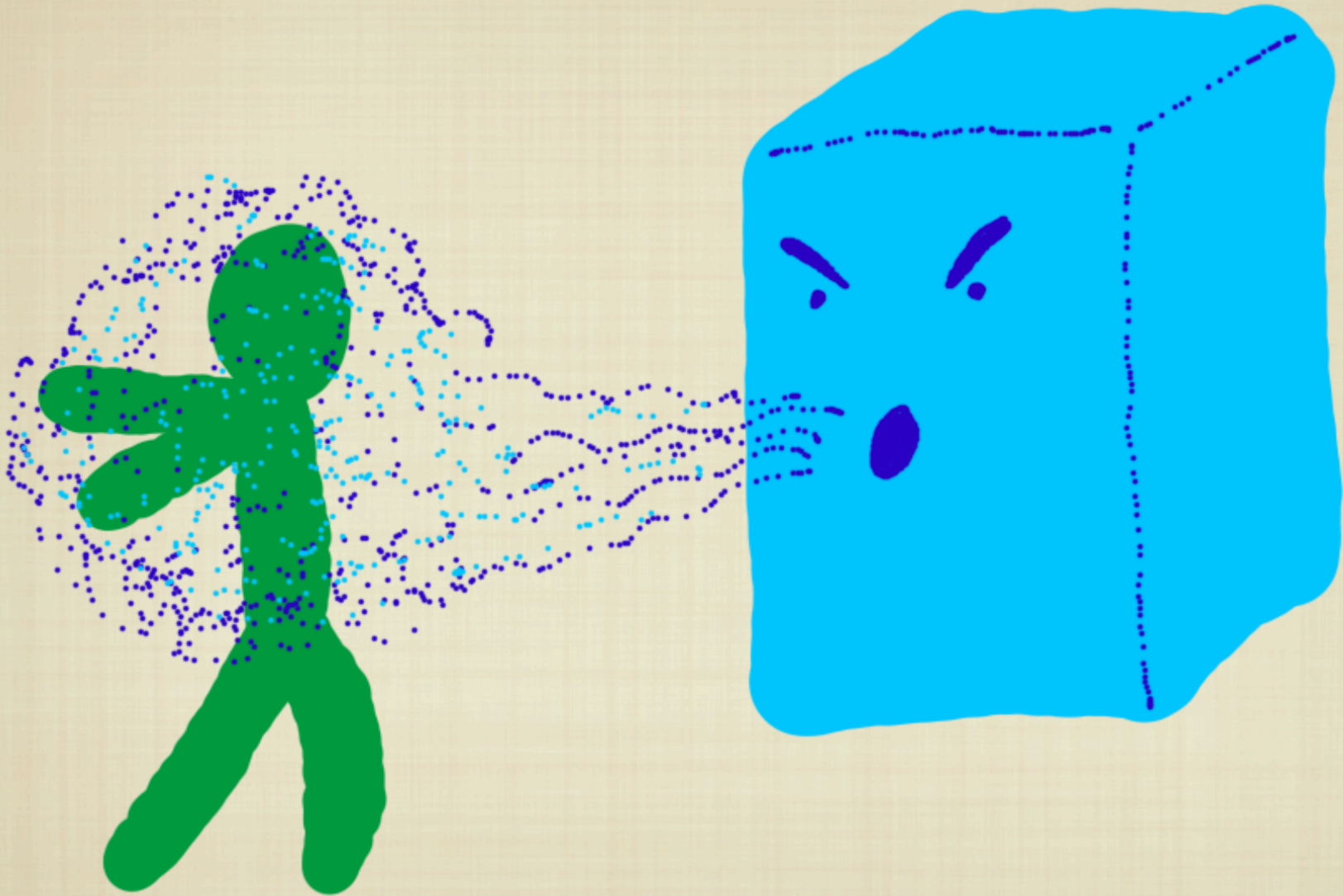
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Bodies in Motion

Veneser Zhindaki

- Case(s): Ablative
- Semantics: source

nirat "to be full"

- Heffof nir evethoon. "The jug was full of water."

- Other verbs: menat "to be empty"; dogat "to suffer"; fevelat "to thirst"; garvolat "to hunger"; drivolat "to die"; gerat "to lack"; zigerelat "to need"; ildat "to strike"; khezhat "to be sad"; nithat "to feel pain"

Source

Dirge Ha Nakhaan

- Only so many cases; a number of possible thematic roles for a given verb frame.

- Hierarchy: Canonical case role >> non-canonical case role >> object of preposition >> subordinate clause.

- Non-canonical case functions derive from original, canonical case functions.

Fonas Chek!