

The Semantics of Case

The phenomenon of case has long been a central topic of study in linguistics. While the majority of the literature so far has been on the syntax of case, semantics also has a crucial role to play in how case operates. This book investigates the relationship between semantics and case-marking in the languages of the world, exploring a range of phenomena in which case-assignment is affected by (or affects) meaning. By bringing together data from a wide range of languages, representing different language families, a cross-linguistic picture emerges of the correlation between case and meaning. Different approaches to the phenomena are considered, including both syntactic and semantic analyses, and the question is raised as to whether case can be treated as meaningful, ultimately helping us shed light on the broader connections between grammar and meaning and, moreover, grammar and human cognition.

OLGA KAGAN is based at Ben-Gurion University of the Negev. She is the author of the books *Semantics of Genitive Objects in Russian* and *Scalarity in the Verbal Domain*.

KEY TOPICS IN SEMANTICS AND PRAGMATICS

'Key Topics in Semantics and Pragmatics' focuses on the main topics of study in semantics and pragmatics today. It consists of accessible yet challenging accounts of the most important issues, concepts and phenomena to consider when examining meaning in language. Some topics have been the subject of semantic and pragmatic study for many years, and are re-examined in this series in light of new developments in the field; others are issues of growing importance that have not so far been given a sustained treatment. Written by leading experts and designed to bridge the gap between textbooks and primary literature, the books in this series can either be used on courses and seminars, or as one-stop, succinct guides to a particular topic for individual students and researchers. Each book includes useful suggestions for further reading, discussion questions, and a helpful glossary.

Already published in the series:

Meaning and Humour by Andrew Goatly

Metaphor by L. David Ritchie

Imperatives by Mark Jary and Mikhail Kissine

Modification by Marcin Morzycki

Semantics for Counting and Measuring by Susan Rothstein

Irony by Joana Garmendia

Implicatures by Sandrine Zufferey, Jacques Moeschler and Anne Reboul

The Semantics of Case by Olga Kagan

Forthcoming titles:

Frame Semantics by Hans C. Boas

Proper Names and Direct Reference by Gregory Bochner

Semantics and Pragmatics in Sign Languages by Kathryn Davidson Zaremba

Attitude Reports by Thomas Grano

Propositional Logic by Allen Hazen and Jeffrey Pelletier

Indirect Speech Acts by Nicolas Ruytenbeek

The Semantics of Case

OLGA KAGAN

Ben-Gurion University of the Negev, Israel



CAMBRIDGE
UNIVERSITY PRESS

Cambridge University Press
978-1-108-41642-9 — The Semantics of Case
Olga Kagan
Frontmatter
[More Information](#)

CAMBRIDGE UNIVERSITY PRESS

University Printing House, Cambridge CB2 8BS, United Kingdom

One Liberty Plaza, 20th Floor, New York, NY 10006, USA

477 Williamstown Road, Port Melbourne, VIC 3207, Australia

314–321, 3rd Floor, Plot 3, Splendor Forum, Jasola District Centre,
New Delhi – 110025, India

79 Anson Road, #06–04/06, Singapore 079906

Cambridge University Press is part of the University of Cambridge.

It furthers the University's mission by disseminating knowledge in the pursuit of education, learning, and research at the highest international levels of excellence.

www.cambridge.org

Information on this title: www.cambridge.org/9781108416429

DOI: 10.1017/9781108236867

© Olga Kagan 2020

This publication is in copyright. Subject to statutory exception and to the provisions of relevant collective licensing agreements, no reproduction of any part may take place without the written permission of Cambridge University Press.

First published 2020

Printed in the United Kingdom by TJ International Ltd, Padstow Cornwall

A catalogue record for this publication is available from the British Library.

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data

Names: Kagan, Olga, 1977– author.

Title: The semantics of case / Olga Kagan, Ben Gurion University of the Negev, Israel.

Description: Cambridge ; New York : Cambridge University Press, 2020. | Series: Key topics in semantics and pragmatics | Includes bibliographical references and index.

Identifiers: LCCN 2019053941 (print) | LCCN 2019053942 (ebook) | ISBN

9781108416429 (hardback) | ISBN 9781108236867 (ebook)

Subjects: LCSH: Grammar, Comparative and general – Case. | Semantics.

Classification: LCC P240.6 .K34 2020 (print) | LCC P240.6 (ebook) | DDC 401/.43–dc23

LC record available at <https://lcn.loc.gov/2019053941>

LC ebook record available at <https://lcn.loc.gov/2019053942>

ISBN 978-1-108-41642-9 Hardback

Cambridge University Press has no responsibility for the persistence or accuracy of URLs for external or third-party internet websites referred to in this publication and does not guarantee that any content on such websites is, or will remain, accurate or appropriate.

Cambridge University Press
978-1-108-41642-9 — The Semantics of Case
Olga Kagan
Frontmatter
[More Information](#)

To Edit Doron,
who has been a mother to me in the world of linguistics

Cambridge University Press
978-1-108-41642-9 — The Semantics of Case
Olga Kagan
Frontmatter
[More Information](#)

Contents

List of Figures page ix
List of Tables x
Acknowledgments xi
List of Abbreviations xiv

1 Introduction 1
1.1 Introduction 1
1.2 What Is Case? 7
1.3 Abstract versus Morpho-Syntactic Case 9
1.4 Case Systems 15
1.5 Structural, Inherent, Lexical and Semantic Case 20
1.6 Case-Marking and Thematic Roles 28
1.7 Structure of the Book 33
Further Reading 37

2 Dative Case 39
2.1 Thematic Roles 39
2.2 Additional Environments 44
2.3 Dative Case: Analyses 52
2.4 Conclusion 68
Further Reading 68

3 Spatial Cases 70
3.1 Spatial Cases: An Introduction 70
3.2 Semantics of Spatial Cases 73
3.3 Illustrating Rich Spatial Case Systems:
Nakh-Daghestanian Languages 78
3.4 Non-Spatial Uses of Spatial Cases 85
3.5 Case-Assignment in Syntax: Challenges for a Formal
Analysis 89
3.6 Interaction of Spatial Case and Prepositions 93
3.7 Conclusion 97
Further Reading 98

- 4 Case and Aspect 99
 - 4.1 Objects in Finnic Languages 102
 - 4.2 Accusative Adjuncts 120
 - 4.3 Complements of Prepositions: Accusative Case and Goals 138
 - 4.4 Conclusion 145
 - Further Reading 145
- 5 Differential Object Marking 147
 - 5.1 DOM Systems Exemplified 148
 - 5.2 The Reasoning behind DOM? 161
 - 5.3 Verbal Influence: Direct or Indirect? 166
 - 5.4 Cross-Linguistic Analyses of DOM 170
 - 5.5 Conclusion 187
 - Further Reading 188
- 6 The Genitive/Accusative Alternation in Balto-Slavic 189
 - 6.1 Irrealis Genitive in Balto-Slavic 191
 - 6.2 Unifying GenNeg and Intensional Genitive 194
 - 6.3 The Semantics of Irrealis Genitive 199
 - 6.4 Partitive Genitive 213
 - 6.5 Conclusion 221
 - Further Reading 222
- 7 Predicate Case 223
 - 7.1 Instrumental Predicates in Slavic 223
 - 7.2 Uralic Languages and the Essive 236
 - 7.3 Translative Case and the Notion of Change 239
 - 7.4 Conclusion 250
 - Further Reading 250
- 8 Generalizations and Conclusions 251
 - Terminology* 257
 - Bibliography* 263
 - Index* 286

Figures

- 5.1 Relative markedness on the dimensions
of animacy and definiteness *page 173*
- 5.2 Prioritizing in Spanish 185
- 5.3 Prioritizing in Mongolian 186

Tables

- 1.1 Ukrainian case system *page 16*
- 1.2 Finnish case system *17*
- 1.3 Structural versus inherent case *24*
- 1.4 Inherent versus lexical case *26*
- 3.1 Spatial cases in Finnish *72*
- 3.2 Spatial prepositions and case in Russian *95*
- 3.3 Spatial prepositions and case in German *96*
- 5.1 Case-marking and scope in Kannada *159*
- 5.2 Properties of subjects (A) and objects (O) *180*
- 6.1 Genitive of Negation and Intensional Genitive across languages *195*
- 6.2 Comparative analysis of Partitive Genitive NPs and measure-classified NPs *218*

Acknowledgments

It took several years for this book to be born, and many more years of thoughts and research on the nature of case that preceded the actual writing. Over these years, many people helped me by discussing, commenting, sharing ideas, criticizing and encouraging. I am very grateful to them all.

I would like to begin by expressing my deep gratitude to Professor Edit Doron, who, tragically, passed away this year. I intended to dedicate this book to her long before this happened, although, unfortunately, now I will not be able to show it to her. I first met Edit during my B.A. studies, and both my M.A. and Ph.D. theses were written under her supervision. She was a wonderful person and a dedicated scientist, and without her, I wouldn't have become the researcher I am.

I want to thank not only those people who helped me during my work on this specific book but also everybody who commented, participated in discussions, inspired and encouraged me during my work on the Ph.D. dissertation and the subsequent book *Semantics of Genitive Objects in Russian*. As is clear from the title, that project was very strongly related to the semantics of case as well, although, unlike the present book, it concentrated on two specific uses of a particular case in a particular group of languages (primarily Russian, but also Balto-Slavic more broadly).

I am very grateful to Barbara Partee and Vladimir Borschev for invaluable discussions of non-canonical genitive case in Russian and for their comments on my papers written at different stages of this work. I am indebted to Barbara Partee for being so supportive and generous, for commenting on my work at its different stages and for sharing with me her papers and ideas.

I wish to thank Donka Farkas for her invaluable help during my stay at UC, Santa Cruz, and for inspiring discussions of a range of topics in semantics, including case and mood. My thanks also go to Pranav Anand and Judith Aissen for our conversations during this period.

I am also deeply indebted to Malka Rappaport Hovav for her insightful comments, advice and support. Malka is a wonderful person and teacher, and I have learnt a lot from her. I also owe a lot to Anita Mittwoch for her comments and suggestions and for our inspiring conversations about aspect.

I wish to thank Elena Anagnostopoulou and Christina Sevdali for organizing a wonderful conference “On the Place of Case in Grammar” which brought together so many bright linguists investigating case in different languages from different perspectives. This conference significantly enriched my vision of the topic. I also thank the audience of this conference for the important comments on my presentation and subsequent discussions.

Conversations with my colleagues on various topics in syntax and semantics, including case, aspect, modality, mood and specificity were, of course, invaluable. I wish to thank Hana Filip, Idan Landau, Arik Cohen, Tova Rappaport, Aviya Hacoheh, David Erschler, Ivy Sichel, David Pesetsky, Paul Kiparsky, Miriam Butt, Steven Franks, Louise McNally, Manfred Krifka, Fred Landman, Susan Rothstein, Yael Sharvit, Anna Szabolcsi, Ede Zimmerman, Anastasia Giannakidou, Asya Pereltsvaig, Monica Alexandrina Irimia, Yael Greenberg, Sergei Tatevosov, Scott Grimm, Lavi Wolf, Zarina Levy-Forsythe and Oria Ytzhaki for the discussions we conducted.

I am very grateful to Madzhid Khalilov for the discussion of case in Bezhta and for sharing with me his native-speaker judgments. And I wish to thank David Erschler for his help with complex transliteration matters.

I am grateful to the audiences of IATL 21, FDSL 6, SALT 17, FASL 17, Linguistic Evidence 2010, The Second Budapest Linguistics Conference, IATL 33, Ben-Gurion Linguistics Colloquium, Tel-Aviv University Linguistics Colloquium, Linguistics Departmental Seminars at Hebrew University of Jerusalem, the Linguistics Colloquia at New York University, University of California, Santa Cruz, University of California, Los Angeles, and the LLCC Center at Hebrew University of Jerusalem for important and inspiring comments and questions.

My thanks also go to the students who attended my seminars “On the Semantics of Case” and “Differential Object Marking”: the preparation of these courses and the discussions that took place during the lectures contributed greatly to the work on the present book.

Of course, this work wouldn't have been possible without my numerous consultants, who provided their native-speaker

Acknowledgments

xiii

judgments in different languages. Unfortunately, naming all of them wouldn't be possible, but I am grateful to everybody, and would particularly like to mention Zarina Levy-Forsythe (Uzbek), Madzhid Khalilov (Bezhta), Anya Ago and Satu Vallineva (Finnish), Pavel Čaha (Czech), Franc Marušič (Slovenian), Joanna Zaleska and Robert Rothstein (Polish), Boban Arsenijević, Donka Torov and Mirjana Dedaic (Serbo-Croatian), Oria Ytzhaki and Lavi Wolf (Modern Hebrew).

I'm also indebted to Dana Reznikov for her help with the Finnish data.

Finally, I would like to thank my husband Evgeny and my son Yoni, who would have received more attention if I hadn't been working on this book and other projects! And, of course, I am deeply indebted to my parents, who have always encouraged my aspiration toward self-realization.

Abbreviations

ABL	ablative
ABS	absolutive
ACC	accusative
ADESS	adessive
AgrOP	object agreement phrase
ALL	allative
AOR	aorist
AP	adjectival phrase
APPROX	approximative
AspP	aspect phrase
CL	clitic
COM	comitative
CP	complementizer phrase
DAT	dative
DEC	declarative
DOM	differential object marking
DP	determiner phrase
DSM	differential subject marking
EC	existential commitment
ECM	exceptional case-marking
EL	elative
ERG	ergative
ESS	essive
F	feminine
GEN	genitive
GenNeg	Genitive of Negation
ILL	illative
IMP	imperfective
IMPV	imperative
INDIC	indicative
INESS	inessive

List of Abbreviations

xv

INF	infinitive
INSTR	instrumental
L	ligature marker
LOC	locative
M	masculine
NEG	negation
NEUT	neutral
NOM	nominative
NPI	negative polarity item
NQP	negative quantifier phrase
NONFIN	non-finite
NP	nominal phrase
NPST	non-past tense
OBL	oblique
OT	Optimality Theory
P	preposition
PART	partitive
PASS	passive
PERF	perfective
PF	phonological form
PFC	potential for change
PL	plural
POSS	possessive
PP	prepositional phrase
PPTCP	past participle
PRES	present tense
PROG	progressive
PST	past tense
PTCP	participle
REFL	reflexive
SC	small clause
SG	singular
Spec	specifier
SUBJ	subjunctive
TP	tense phrase
TRA	translative
V	verb
v	little v functional head
VALL	verbal allative
VP	verb phrase

Cambridge University Press
978-1-108-41642-9 — The Semantics of Case
Olga Kagan
Frontmatter
[More Information](#)
