

Universals of Human Language

Edited by Joseph H. Greenberg

Associate Editors:
Charles A. Ferguson & Edith A. Moravcsik

VOLUME 4

Syntax



Stanford University Press, Stanford, California

1978

On the Case Marking of Objects

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ABSTRACT

In some languages some non-agentive and non-dative noun phrases admit of alternative case markings. The paper is a study of the semantic conditions from which such case marking alternatives can be predicted. Four types of alternations are investigated: accusative-adverbial, accusative-partitive, accusative-nominative, and accusative-topic. The recurrence of certain semantic features conditioning such alternations, such as definiteness, affectedness and animacy, is noted and it is pointed out that the same type of semantic information is also conditional to alternative agreement, order and stress patterns of some non-agentive and non-dative noun phrases, as well as to alternative expressions of some agentive and dative ones.

This paper is an abridged version of an unpublished one entitled "On case function and sentence form" which I wrote in 1975 as part of my work for the Stanford Project on Language Universals. I am grateful for comments on the longer paper from members of this research group. I also wish to express my gratitude to Charles Li for having invited me to attend the conference on Subject and Topic held in Santa Barbara, California in March 1975, which experience contributed to my writing this paper; and to Mara Hegedeos for discussions on object case marking. Data on a number of languages in this paper come from her data file; in all such instances reference to the original source will be followed by a mention of her name.

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1. Introduction

All languages can provide for the formal differentiation of noun phrases that denote otherwise identical referents performing different participant functions in an event. There are, in particular, three generalizations that I believe can be safely made about the way such formal differentiation is universally provided for. First, the meanings of at least some participants can in all languages be expressed by symbolizing them separately from the event proper itself. All languages, in other words, have separately lexicalized verbs and nouns: there is no language, for instance, where the three meanings 'I saw a man,' 'I saw an elephant' and 'you saw a man' can be expressed only by three distinct sound sequences which include no subsequences identifiable as carriers of the submeanings 'saw,' 'a man,' 'an elephant,' 'I,' and 'you' and where all other such three-place predications are also expressed in this "holophrastic" manner. Second, the differentiation between functionally distinct participants is effected in all languages by means other than multiple lexicalization. No language, that is, differentiates between the two expressions of 'the man' in sentences such as The man ate the bear. and The bear ate the man. in terms of two distinct sound sequences which include no substring identifiable as corresponding to 'the man' in its case-functionally neutral sense. Third, the set of form devices that languages use to differentiate between functionally distinct participants can be simply characterized as including segmental markers, linear order and stress; where the segmental markers are either segment sequences adjacent to the noun (generally called case markers) or markers adjacent to the verb (generally called verb-agreement markers).

The correspondence relation between case-marking, verb-agreement, linear ordering, and stressing, on the one hand, and semantic case function, on the other, is not one-to-one, however; the same agreement pattern, for instance, may correspond to more than one distinct semantic case function, and the same semantic case function may be alternatively expressed by more than one distinct case marking. The concern of this present paper is this latter aspect of the complex relation between case meaning and case form. The general question being asked is this: if case-marking, verb-agreement, linear order, and stress in simple intransitive and transitive sentences are not fully predictable from semantic case function, then what are they predictable from? Since semantic case function appears necessary for predicting such form properties of sentences but it is clearly not sufficient, the question is what the additional conditions may be that would

successfully complement semantic case function specifications for the prediction of these form properties. The actual scope of the paper will be restricted to the consideration of (adpositional or morphological) case-marking only (to the exclusion of verb-agreement, ordering and stressing) and in particular to the case-marking of noun phrases whose semantic function is non-agentive and non-dative. Such noun phrases will be called (semantic) Objects.¹

The obvious procedure for trying to answer this question will be that of examining sentence sets of various languages whose noun phrases are identical in semantic case function but differ nonetheless in case marking and attempting to establish what, if any, semantic conditions are correlated with the different markings. After some preliminary remarks (2.1), section 2.2 will consider sentence pairs where the alternative case markings are accusative versus some adverbial case; section 2.3 will be concerned with accusative-partitive alternations; section 2.4 with accusative-nominative alternations; and section 2.5 with accusative-topic alternations. A summary of our findings and a brief outlook towards other aspects of the general problem will be provided in the concluding section.

¹ Semantic case-function labels will be used impressionistically throughout the paper and no attempt will be made to justify their assignment. I will simply label a noun phrase by semantic case-label X if it seems intuitively correct to me to say: "The referent of this noun phrase is an X participant of the event and not a Y, Z... participant of the event;" where "Y, Z..." comprises the total set of case labels that I will be using, except for X. I will assume the following set of case-labels: AGENT, DATIVE, EXPERIENCER, INSTRUMENT, GOAL, SOURCE, NEUTRAL. As far as case-marking labels are concerned, by the term "accusative" I will mean a case marker whose use includes the marking of at least some non-emphatic, animate and definite noun phrases with the semantic function NEUTRAL (i.e. that are the passive participants of events such as 'hitting,' 'cutting,' 'breaking,' or 'eating'), that are said to be fully affected by the event (i.e. they undergo a change of state in their full extent); and whose use excludes the marking of any agentive noun phrase in simple transitive sentences. The term "adverbial case" refers to any case marker whose use includes the marking of either instrumental or locative noun phrases. "Partitive" is a normally adnominal case that marks the total quantity of which a part is designated. "Topic" is a case whose semantic range is functionally undifferentiated and which marks semantically topical noun phrases.

2. Case-marking Alternatives for Objects

2.1 Preliminary remarks

I would first like to point out two non-semantic conditions that in ENGLISH, as well as in some other languages, account for some case-marking alternatives of semantic Objects. One such type of condition is lexical properties of the verb; the other is properties of the internal constituent structure of the verb. Instances where it is the lexical properties of the verb that determine the morphological case marking of case-functionally alike noun phrases are illustrated by the following sentences of ENGLISH and HUNGARIAN. In each sentence the semantic case function of the post-verbal noun phrase is NEUTRAL; nevertheless, the morphological case markings as governed by the particular verb range from accusative to various adverbial cases.

ENGLISH:

He considered the question.

He laughed at her behavior.

He insisted on the answer.

He puzzled over the problem.

He referred to the solution. (Stockwell, Schachter, Partee 1973: 36, 42f)

HUNGARIAN:

Mérlegelte a kérdés-t. "considered-he/she the question-accus." "He/she considered the question."

Nevetett a magatartása-n. "laughed-he/she the behavior-his/her-on" "He/she laughed at his/her behavior."

Ragaszzkodott a válasz-hoz. "insisted-he/she the answer-to" "He/she insisted on the answer."

Tűnődött a probléma felett. "mused-he/she the problem over" "He/she mused over the problem."

Utalt a megoldásra. "referred-he/she the solution-onto" "He/she referred to the solution." (All HUNGARIAN data in the paper are my own.)

Whereas these seem to be truly idiosyncratic differences, there are also some more systematic alternatives in case choice that depend on the internal syntactic structure of the verb. Thus, as the following sentences illustrate, it makes a difference from the point of view of case choice whether the verb is a lexical verb, a lexical adjective, or a verb-noun phrase, even though the alternative verb forms are

synonymous. The generalization that these examples reveal is that whereas the adjective or the verb-noun phrase does not take the accusative, the lexical verb may.

ENGLISH:

This indicates progress.

This is indicative of progress.

He counted the apples.

He made a count of the apples.

HUNGARIAN:

Ez érdekli őt.

"this interests-him/her him/her"

'This interests him/her.'

Ez érdekes neki.

"this interesting to-him/her"

'This is interesting to him/her.'

Jelentette az esetet.

"reported-he/she the case-accus."

'He/she reported the case.'

Jelentést tett az esetről.

"report-accus.made-he/she the case-from"

'He/she made a report of the case.'

There are, however, many instances of case marking variation involving the accusative where the choice between the alternative cases cannot be seen as dependent either on lexical or structural properties of the verb since the sentences that exhibit the case variation include verbs that are alike both structurally and lexically. These are the cases we will now turn to.

2.2 Accusative and adverbial

A subset of those verbs in ENGLISH whose complements are alternatively case-marked for the accusative and some adverbial case constitutes a natural semantic class in that its members all express the notion of filling or providing or that of emptying or depriving.² Some examples to illustrate these verbs and their

² Not all verbs that belong to the semantic class of verbs of filling and emptying in ENGLISH also belong to the same syntactic class; verbs such as pour, fill do not tolerate freely the accusative-adverbial alternation of their complements. Thus, one can pour wine into the bottle but one cannot pour the bottle with wine; and one can, in turn, fill the bottle with wine but not fill wine into the bottle. In HUNGARIAN, however, both of these two verbs behave like other verbs of filling in that their complements do alternate in accusative-adverbial case marking.

use are the following:

John smeared paint on the wall.

John smeared the wall with paint.

John planted trees in the garden.

John planted the garden with trees.

He cleaned the fat out of the pan.

He cleaned the pan of the fat.

In ENGLISH the marking of accusative noun phrases is partly by segmental marking, partly by position: the accusative noun phrase is a postverbal prepositionless noun phrase. The sentence pairs cited above thus show that either of the two non-agentive complements of these verbs may occur either in the accusative or in an instrumental or locative case.

The accusative-adverbial alternation does not correlate in these sentences with a semantic case-functional alternation: each of the two noun phrases retains its semantic case function in spite of their variation in form. Thus, the referents of the phrases paint, trees and the fat are invariantly the things moved into or onto something or taken out of something in both members of the pertinent sentence pair; and referents of the phrases the wall, the garden and the pan are similarly invariant in their functions as goals or sources of a movement (cp. Stockwell, Schachter Partee 1973: 49). Nonetheless, as pointed out by all linguists who have investigated such verbs of filling and emptying in ENGLISH, and most clearly by Anderson (1970), there is indeed a semantic difference between the alternative constructions. The semantic difference can be appreciated through the differential entailments of members of each pair. Thus, for instance, smearing the wall with paint entails that something has been done to the wall; and smearing paint on the wall entails that something has been done with the wall. In the first instance the entailment is that the wall has been "affected;" in the second case there is no such entailment. Furthermore, planting the garden with trees entails that as a result the whole garden had trees in it, whereas planting trees in the garden does not entail this. Thus, in the first instance involvement of the whole location is understood, whereas in the second there is no such understanding. In general the locative complement marked as accusative is asserted to be affected by the event in its full extent, whereas the locative marked as locative adverbial is not asserted to be so affected.

In addition to verbs expressing filling or emptying there are also other verbs in ENGLISH whose semantic locative complements may

be alternatively marked as accusative or locative. The above-proposed generalization about the correlated semantic conditions appear to hold for these other verbs as well. Thus, as pointed out by Anderson (1970), the first sentences in the pairs below imply the successful completion of the action whereas the second sentences do not:

- a. John climbed the mountain.
John climbed up the mountain.
- b. John leapt the chasm.
John leapt over the chasm.
- c. John swam Lake Michigan.
John swam across Lake Michigan.

In HUNGARIAN, which is a language both genetically unrelated and areally distinct from ENGLISH, the class of verbs expressing filling or providing and emptying or depriving behave almost exactly the same way as their ENGLISH translation equivalents (compare Zsilka 1967). These HUNGARIAN verbs, too, occur in two alternative constructions that differ in form by the different case markings of the two complements involved and that also differ in meaning in exactly the same way the corresponding constructions in ENGLISH do. Note, for example, the following sentences:

Other such verbs were listed and discussed by Jespersen (1954: 238ff); e.g. stab (at), kick (towards), strike (at), catch (at). In each case the construction including an accusative locative implies the successful execution of the action, whereas the construction involving a prepositional locative implies merely an attempt. There are, furthermore, also verbs whose complements alternate between accusative and adverbial marking with the corresponding by now familiar semantic difference, although the complements are not semantically locative but neutral; e.g. know (about/of), hear (about/of). There are, furthermore, verbal meanings which are conveyed by different phonological shapes depending on the associated semantic difference and whether they are transitive or intransitive; e.g. weep over - bewail; feed on - consume; look at - watch. There are, finally, also a number of verbs whose complements can be alternatively either in the accusative or in an adverbial case; nonetheless, the two constructions have exactly the same meaning. E.g. improve (on), check (on), forget (about).

- a. János rámaázolta a festéket a falra.
"John onto-smeared-he-it the paint-accus. the wall-onto"
'John smeared paint on the wall.'

- János bemáázolta a falat festékkal.
"John in -smeared-he-it the wall-accus. paint-with"
'John smeared the wall with paint.'

- b. János elültette a fákat a kertben.
"John away-planted-he-them the trees-accus. the garden-in"
'John planted the trees in the garden.'

- János beültette a kertet fákkal.
"John in-planted-he-it the garden-accus. trees-with"
'John planted the garden with trees.'

As these sentences illustrate, in HUNGARIAN as in ENGLISH, both the NEUTRAL and the GOAL phrase may be alternatively marked as accusative — which in HUNGARIAN means a suffixed *-t* (except in first and second person singular personal pronouns and possessed nouns which may or may not take this suffix) and being agreed-with by the verb in definiteness — or they may occur in the instrumental case (*-val/-vel*, with the *v* assimilated to the final consonant of the stem) or in a locative case (*-ra/-re* 'onto,' *-ban/-ben* 'in' in the above examples), respectively. The semantic difference between the alternative constructions is also exactly the same as in ENGLISH and it could be thus similarly demonstrated by showing that the alternative constructions entail different sentences.

There is only one significant difference between corresponding constructions in the two languages which has to do with the form in which the verb appears in the alternative constructions. Whereas the form of the verb in the alternative ENGLISH constructions is in most cases the same, in HUNGARIAN the two forms differ in most cases in that their verbal prefixes differ. HUNGARIAN verbal prefixes are similar in function to ENGLISH post-verbal particles such as up, down, through, etc. and to the verbal prefixes in ANCIENT GREEK, LATIN, GERMAN and RUSSIAN in that they convey sometimes a directional meaning, other times the meaning of completed action and again other times both. In ENGLISH, as noted by Fraser (1971), verbal particles can cooccur only with a semantically locative accusative and not with a semantically neutral accusative in these constructions; see, for instance:

They loaded up the wagon with hay.
 *They loaded up the hay on the wagon.

In HUNGARIAN what corresponds to this up that cooccurs with locative accusative is meg-, a verbal prefix with no directional but purely completive meaning; or, in some cases, be- 'in' as in the above examples or át- 'through;' see, for instance:

Rárakta a szénát a szekérre.
 "onto-put the hay-accus. the cart-onto"
 'He/she put-he/she-it the hay on the cart.'

Megrakta a szekeret szénával.
 "up-put-he/she-it the cart-accus. hay-with"
 'He/she loaded the cart with hay.'

Belefonta a szalagot a hajába.
 "into-it-wove the ribbon-accus. the hair-his/her-into"
 'He/she wove a ribbon into his/her hair.'

Átfonta a haját a szalaggal.
 "through-wove-he/she-it the hair-his/her-accus. the ribbon-with"
 'He/she braided his/her hair with the ribbon.'

Another verbal prefix that may cooccur with an accusative locative is tele- 'full;' its use corresponds to the use of full of in ENGLISH which also occurs only with locative accusatives; compare

Telerakta a szekeret szénával.
 "full-put-he/she-it the wagon-accus. hay-with"
 'He/she loaded the cart full of hay.'

*Telerakta a szénát a szekérre.
 "full-put he/she-it the hay-accus. the cart-onto"
 'He/she loaded the wagon full of hay.'

In summary: the difference between the ENGLISH and HUNGARIAN constructions is that whereas in ENGLISH completive verbal particles occur only with some verbs and only if the accusative is the semantically locative phrase, in HUNGARIAN some verbal particles occur with any verb and with both kinds of accusative.

HUNGARIAN also resembles ENGLISH in that it has a number of additional verbs whose complements may be either in the accusative or in some adverbial case with the same corresponding semantic difference that obtains in ENGLISH. Compare the following:

a. Megmászta a hegyet.
 "up-climbed-he/she-it the mountain-accus."
 'He/she climbed the mountain.'

Felmászott a hegyre.
 "up-climbed-he/she the mountain-onto"
 'He/she climbed up the mountain.'

b. Átugrotta az árkot.
 "across-leapt-he/she-it the ditch-accus."
 'He/she leapt the ditch.'

Átugrott az árkon.
 "across-leapt-he/she the ditch-on"
 'He/she leapt across the ditch.'

c. Átúszta a tavat.
 "across-swam-he/she-it the lake-accus."
 'He/she swam the lake.'

Átúszott a tavon.
 "across-swam-he/she the lake-on"
 'He/she swam across the lake.'

Besides ENGLISH and HUNGARIAN, there are a number of other genetically, areally and typologically disparate languages that offer examples for the correlation between accusative-adverbial case-marking variation, on the one hand, and totally versus partially affected object, on the other. I have some examples from KABARDIAN, ESKIMO, WALBIRI and AMHARIC. Both KABARDIAN and ESKIMO are ergative languages — the case of the subject of an intransitive sentence is the same as the case of the object of an intransitive sentence. The case of the direct object, however, varies in both languages depending on some semantic properties of the object:

KABARDIAN:	
š'álem txə̀ləər yəʒ	"boy-erg. book-nom. reads" 'The boy is reading the (whole) book.'
š'áler txə̀ləəm yóʒe	"boy-nom. book-loc. reads" 'The boy is reading (in) the book.'
hām q'əpšhār yəʒàqe	"dog-erg. bone-nom. chews" 'The dog chews up the bone.'

hār q'əpśhām yōʒaqe "dog-nom. bone-loc. chews"
 'The dog is chewing (on) the bone.'
 (Knobloch 1952: 416)

ESKIMO:

uyayaq tiḡuḡaa "stone-nom. he-took"
 'He took the stone.'

uyayqamik tiḡusiḡuq "stone-instrumental he-took"
 'He took a stone.'
 (Swadesh 1946 - Hegedeos)

As these examples show, the direct object is marked adverbially in KABARDIAN if it is partially involved in the event and in ESKIMO if it is indefinite; and it is marked as "nominative" (which, being the case of the definite, animate, pragmatically neutral direct object in two-place predication, corresponds to our definition of "accusative") if it is totally involved (in KABARDIAN) or definite (in ESKIMO). In WALBIRI the accusative-adverbial alternation correlates with the object of an accomplished versus of an attempted action.

WALBIRI:

njuntululu npatju pantuḡu ḡatju
 'you-erg. you-I spear-past I-nom.'
 'You speared me.'

njuntululu npətjuḷa pantuḡu ḡatjuku
 'you-erg. you-I-? spear-past I-dative'
 'You speared me.' or 'You tried to spear me.' (Hale 1973: 336)

In AMHARIC preverbal adverbial phrases may occur either case-marked by their appropriate adverbial case marking or case-marked as accusatives. For some of these cases a semantic difference was indicated in my sources; in others there was none indicated. Examples are the following:

AMHARIC:

kāzzičč set lay and māṣḥəf gāzzah^w(at)
 'from-this woman on one book I-bought(-her)'

yahaččən set and māṣḥəf gāzzah^wat
 'this-accus. woman one book I-bought-her'

According to Hetzron (1971: 331) both sentences mean 'I bought a

book from this woman' but whereas the first simply "describes the woman as the origin of the book," the second implies that "the woman managed to give the book away, she does not own it anymore." In other words the accusatively marked source phrase appears to be described as one undergoing a change of state, whereas the adverbially marked phrase does not. Haile (1971: 109) gives similar examples without any comment on the semantic difference between the two alternatives:

Almaz bəməṭrəḡiyaw betun ṭərrəḡəccibbət
 'Almaz with-broom-the house-the clean-he-with-it'
 'Almaz cleaned the house with the broom.'

Almaz məṭrəḡiyawin betun ṭərrəḡəccibbət
 'Almaz broom-the-accusative house-the clean-he-with-it'
 'Almaz cleaned the house with the broom.'

The preceding examples from ENGLISH, HUNGARIAN, KABARDIAN, ESKIMO, WALBIRI and AMHARIC are all consistent with the following generalization: if in a language the same verbal meaning is expressible either through a construction where a complement of the verb is in the accusative or through a construction where the same complement is in an adverbial case and there is a meaning difference between the two constructions, this semantic contrast will be either a contrast between a definite and an indefinite object, or a contrast between an object that is fully involved in the event and one that is partially involved, or a contrast between affected and not affected participant.

2.3 Accusative and partitive

In HUNGARIAN, as well as in a number of other languages, accusatively marked noun phrases may also alternate with partitively marked ones, with their semantic case-function remaining the same non-agentive and non-dative function. Note the following examples from HUNGARIAN:

Ette a süteményt. "ate-he/she-it the pastry-accus."
 'He ate the pastry.'

Evett a süteményből. "ate-he/she the pastry-from"
 'He/she ate some of the pastry.'

Olvasta a könyvet. "read-he/she-it the book-accus."
 'He read the book.'

Olvasott a könyvből.	"read-he/she the book-from"
	'He read some of the book.'

The semantic correlates of this case variation are the same as those that we have noted for the accusative-adverbial case alternation of semantically locative phrases: the accusative correlates with the meaning of the referent of the noun phrase being involved in the event in its full extent and the partitive indicates that only part of the specified extension of the object is involved.

There are two restrictions on this case-marking alternation. First, whereas non-completive verbs may occur either with an accusative or with a partitive complement, verbs that express completed action must take an accusative complement. Compare the following examples:

Ette a süteményt.	"ate-he/she-it the pastry-accus."
	'He/she ate the pastry.'
Evett a süteményből.	"ate-he/she the pastry-from"
	'He/she ate some of the pastry.'
Megette a süteményt.	"up-ate-he/she-it the pastry-accus."
	'He ate up the pastry.'
*Megette a süteményből.	"up-ate-he/she-it the pastry-from"
*Megevett a süteményből.	"up-ate-he/she the pastry-from"
Olvasta a könyvet.	"read-he/she-it the book-accus."
	'He/she read the book.'
Olvasott a könyvből.	"read-he/she the book-from"
	'He/she read some of the book.'
Elolvasta a könyvet.	"away-read-he/she-it the book-accus."
	'He read the book (and has finished it).'
*Elolvasta a könyvből.	"away-read-he/she-it the book-from"
*Elolvasott a könyvből.	"away-read-he/she the book-from"

The other restriction is that the accusative complement cooccurring with a completive verb must be known in its quantity – that is to say, it must be either definite or quantified, but it cannot be both non-definite and non-quantified. Compare, for instance:

Ette a süteményt.	"ate-he/she-it the pastry-accus."
	'He/she ate the pastry.'
Evett tizenkét süteményt.	"ate-he/she twelve-pastry-accus."
	'He ate twelve pieces of pastry.'
Evett süteményeket.	"ate-he/she pastries-accus."
	'He/she ate some pieces of pastry.'
Megette a süteményt.	"up-ate-he/she-it the pastry-accus."
	'He/she ate up the pastry.'
Megette a tizenkét süteményt.	"up-ate-he/she-it the twelve pastries-accus."
	'He/she ate up the twelve pieces of pastry.'
*Megette süteményeket.	"up-ate-he/she-it pastries-accus."
*Megevett süteményeket.	"up-ate-he/she pastries-accus."

I will next turn to considering instances of accusative-partitive case marking alternation in languages other than HUNGARIAN. We will see that these other instances of this alternation are similar to those in HUNGARIAN in that the semantic correlates are the same or similar and that the constraints on the alternation in terms of the completedness of the verb and the quantification of the object are also related. Languages of which I have relevant data mostly belong to the Baltic and Slavic subgroups of INDO-EUROPEAN (LATVIAN, LITHUANIAN; RUSSIAN, POLISH) and to the Finnic branch of FINNO-UGRIC (FINNISH, ESTONIAN) and constitute an areally coherent group in North-East Europe. An INDO-EUROPEAN language outside this areal group which also exhibits phenomena of this kind is GOTHIC; and there are also relevant data from the both areally and genetically distinct BASQUE language.

In LATVIAN and LITHUANIAN as well as in GOTHIC the case marking of objects depend on whether their verb is affirmative or negative. In GOTHIC and LATVIAN the choice is furthermore restricted to possessive sentences – to sentences, that is, that express somebody's owning something. In both of these languages the thing possessed is the subject of such sentences and it is in the nominative case if the sentence is affirmative and it is in the genitive – which is also the partitive case in these languages – if the sentence is negative. Examples for the negated sentences are these:

GOTHIC:

jah ni was im barnē "? was not ? child-gen."
 'They had no child.' (Wright 1899:130)

LATVIAN:

man nav naudav "to-me not-is money-gen."
 'I have no money.' (Lazdina 1966:28)

In LITHUANIAN (Dambriūnas 1966) the same alternative holds for possessive sentences:

jis tūri knygā "he ? book-nom."
 'He has a book.'

 jis netūri knygōs "he not-? book-gen."
 'He has no book.'

but the same alternation also holds for direct objects of transitive sentences: if the verb is affirmative, the object is in the accusative and if it is negative, the object is in the genitive (which, again, is also the partitive case in the language), e.g.:

jis nedirba slālo "he not-making desk-gen."
 'He is not making a desk.'

In POLISH objects of negated verbs are generally in the genitive (which is the partitive case of the language), whether they are subjects of an intransitive sentence (in which case they are in the nominative in affirmative sentences) or whether they are objects of a transitive sentence (in which case they are in the accusative in transitive sentences). Compare the following:

mam czas "I have time-acc."
 'I have time.'

 nie mam czasu "not I-have time-gen."
 'I have no time.'

 tu są okulary "here are glasses-nom."
 'The glasses are here.'

 tu nie ma okularów "here not ? glasses-gen."
 'The glasses are not here.'

 nie zamierzam sprzedać domu "not intend-I sell-to home-gen."
 'I have no intention to sell the home.'
 (Schenker 1966:28; Damerau 1967:116)

Partitively specified objects, however, are not restricted to negative sentences in this language: they also occur in affirmative sentences under certain conditions. Although usage appears to be fluctuating and the conditions are complex, including choice of verb, choice of noun, emphasis and style, at least some subset of the alternating sentence pairs is consistent with the following generalization: the case alternation correlates either with the definiteness versus indefiniteness of the object or with the completedness versus incompleteness of the action. Compare the following:

POLISH:

daj me ołówka
 'give me pencil-gen.'
 'Give me a pencil!'

daj me ten czarny ołówek
 "give me this black-nom. pencil-nom."
 'Give me this black pencil!'

daj me tego czarnego ołówka na chwilę
 "give me this-gen. black-gen. pencil-gen. for minute"
 'Hand me this black pencil for a minute!'

The first sentence has indefinite object which is in the genitive. The second sentence has a definite object in the nominative. The third sentence also has a definite object but the meaning to be conveyed here is 'lending for a short time,' rather than 'giving' -- as Brooks says (1967), in the second sentence, "there is no mention of time and whether or not the pencil was to be returned," whereas in the third "the black pencil is asked for a short time and will probably be returned" -- and it is to this momentariness of the event of lending that the genitive case corresponds even though the object is definite. The nominative-gen. difference in the first two sentences thus corresponds to the indefinite-definite distinction with respect to the meaning of the object; and the nominative-gen. distinction in the second and third sentence corresponds to the complete versus incomplete distinction with respect to the meaning of the verb.

In RUSSIAN objects are alternatively case-marked accusative (nominative) or genitive both in negative and in affirmative sentences. In both sentence types there is a correlation between definiteness of object and non-genitive marking and indefiniteness of object and genitive marking; as well as between completedness of action and non-genitive marking and non-completeness of action

and genitive marking. The definiteness difference as conveyed by differential case marking in affirmative sentences can be illustrated by the following examples:

RUSSIAN:

peredajte me xleb

"pass me bread-nom."

'Pass me the bread.' ("all the bread (the plateful, the loaf)")

peredajte me xleba

"pass me bread-gen."

'Pass me some bread.' ("some of the bread, i.e. a slice")

student otpil piva

"student drank beer-gen."

'The student had a drink of beer.'

čerez minutu on dopil pivo i ušel

"after minute he up-drank wine-nom. and left"

'A minute later he drank up the beer and left.' (Christian 1961)

cvetov narvali

"flowers-gen. picked-we"

'We picked some flowers.'

plesni-ka eščē dofejku

"pour still little-coffee-gen."

'Do pour some more coffee.'

(Crockett 1975)

ždat' avtobusa

"wait-to bus-gen."

'to wait for the bus'

ždat' p'atyj avtobus

"wait-to fifth-nom. bus-nom."

'to wait for bus number five'

(Brooks 1967)

The semantic difference between completed and not completed action in affirmative sentences as conveyed by differential case marking is exemplifiable by a sentence very similar to the POLISH sentence cited earlier: according to Jakobson (1966), the sentence daj mne tvojego noža "give me your-gen. knife-gen." means 'Give me your knife (for a short time)!' whereas I gather the sentence daj mne tvoj

nož "give me your-nom. knife-nom." would simply mean 'Give me your knife!'

Objects in negative sentences in RUSSIAN as well as in POLISH used to be always in the genitive. The development towards marking some such objects as accusative-nominative rather than genitive, which started in POLISH only recently, was in process in RUSSIAN already in the middle of the nineteenth century and has been going on ever since. Present usage, as in POLISH, is heterogeneous, conditions are complex and of diverse types as indicated by the large literature on the subject.³ Nevertheless, the two conditions

³ See, for instance, Magner 1955, Uglitsky 1956, Restan 1960, Christian 1961, Ward 1965, Davidson 1967. The conditions that enter can be roughly classified as sentence-semantic, lexical-semantic, grammatical and stylistic. First of all the choice of specific verbs and specific object nouns may be criterial. Thus, concrete nouns, proper names, animate nouns, singular nouns, singular nouns of the feminine declension are more often in the accusative than those that belong to the opposite category and body part names and the word for 'this,' eto, are generally in the genitive. If a sentence is a negative interrogative sentence with an affirmative answer expected, then the object may be in the accusative. The choice of emphatic constituent in the sentence also enters; according to Ward 1965 the two versions of the sentence 'He did not buy a machine.' answer two different questions: on ne kupil mašinu, with 'machine' in the accusative, answers the question: 'He did not do what?' and on ne kupil mašiny, with 'machine' in the genitive, answers the question 'He did not buy what?' Objects indirectly governed by a negative verb, those preceding a negative verb rather than following it, those modified, those in imperative sentences and those cooccurring with a predicate instrumental are more often in the accusative. Some of these conditions also appear to hold in POLISH (see Brooks 1967); such as the fact that indirectly governed objects or those occurring in negative questions with an affirmative answer expected or those preposed to the verb are more often in the accusative. It is interesting to note that objects in imperative sentences behave differently from objects of declarative sentences from the point of view of case-assignment not only in RUSSIAN -- where they tend to be in the accusative even if negated, rather than in the genitive -- but also in FINNISH where they are in the nominative rather than in the genitive. For the FINNISH facts see Timberlake 1975. Finally, the choice of case-marking on negated objects is also a matter of style in that there are more frequent occurrences of the accusative in colloquial than in literary style. There are also sentences where the accusative and the genitive are simply in free variation; e.g. on ne prines moju lapatu / mojej lapaty 'he not brought-he my-accus. shovel-accus./my-gen. shovel-gen.' 'He did not bring my shovel.'

that we have seen to be sufficient to account for at least some of the case-marking alternations also suffice to do so in RUSSIAN. Some sentences to illustrate the definiteness-distinguishing role of the case alternation are the following:

ne proexalo avtomobil' a
 "not went-by-it car-gen."
 'Not a car went by.'

ne slyšno ptitsy
 "not heard-it bird-gen."
 'Not a bird is to be heard.'

(Davidson 1967)

otveta ne prišlo
 "answer-gen. not came-it"
 'No answer came.'

otvet ne prišol
 "answer-nom. not came-it"
 'The answer didn't come.'

(Jakobson 1966)

on ne ljubiti eti stixi
 "he not likes these-nom. verses-nom."
 'He does not like these verses.'

on ne ljubiti stixov
 "he not likes verses-gen."
 'He does not like poetry.'

ja ne vižu dna
 "I not see-I bottom-gen."
 'I don't see (a/the) bottom.' (as if looking down into a pail of water)

Ja ne vižu dno
 "I not see-I bottom-nom."
 'I don't see the bottom.' (as if looking down into a pail of water and trying to see the bottom)

(Magner 1955)

An example suggestive of the case-marking difference being correlated with completedness difference is this:

ona nam obed ne prigatovila
 "she us dinner-nom. not up-prepared-she"
 'She did not prepare (completed) dinner for us.'

ona nam obeda ne gatovila
 "she us dinner-gen. not prepared-she"
 'She did not prepare dinner for us.'

(Magner 1955)

In ESTONIAN and in FINNISH the direct object is either in the nominative or in the genitive, or in the partitive. The conditions correlated with the choice between the nominative and the genitive will be mentioned in the next section; it is the alternation of the nominative or genitive with the partitive that is of concern now. The conditions that correspond to this choice are those that we have just seen to be included among the set of varied and complicated conditions that determine the corresponding choice in POLISH and RUSSIAN. The rule for ESTONIAN and FINNISH is this: the direct object is in the partitive if it is indefinite and/or if the action is in complete (progressive or repeated) and/or if the verb is negated. As in the Slavic and Baltic languages, the case of at least some intransitive subjects alternates under the same conditions between nominative and partitive.

The object-definiteness and action-completedness distinction as correlated with the case marking of the object can be illustrated for ESTONIAN by the following sentences:

jõin vett "I-drunk water-part."
 'I drank (some) water.'

jõin vee ära "I-drunk water-gen. up"
 'I drank (all) the water.'

tahan õuna süüa "want-I apple-part. eat-to"
 'I want to eat an apple.'

tahan selle õuna ära süüa "want-I this-gen. apple-gen. up eat-to"
 'I want to eat (up) this apple.'

kirjanik kirjutab uut romaani "writer is-writing new-part. novel"
 'The writer is writing a new novel.'

kirjanik kirjutab uue romaani "writer is-writing new-gen. novel"
 'The writer will write a new novel.'

kirjanik kirjutas uut romaani "writer was-writing new-part. novel"
 'The writer was writing a new novel.'

kirjanik kirjutas uue romaani "writer was-writing new-gen. novel"
 'The writer wrote a new novel.'

otsi endale tood "yourself find work-part."
 'Find yourself (some) work!'

otsi endale too "yourself find work-gen."
 'Find yourself a job!'
 (Raun and Saareste 1965: 32-33)

An example to illustrate case-use in affirmative and negative sentence is this:

mees tappap naise "man will-kill woman-gen."
 'The man will kill the woman.'
 mees ei tappa naist "man not will-kill woman-part."
 'The man will not kill the woman.'
 (Harms 1962: 127)

In ESTONIAN there are certain verbs expressing feelings, wishes, sensations, approval or disapproval — verbs, that is, that do not affect their objects in that no change of state is caused to them — which require a partitive object even in the affirmative. For example:

armastan seda inimest "I-love this-part. person-part."
 'I love this person.'

As pointed out by Raun and Saareste (1965: 33) the verb 'love' with a genitive complement such as in the sentence armastan selle inimese 'I-love this-gen. person-gen.' "does not mean anything or may be vaguely associated with killing somebody by love." However, if these verbs cooccur with a completive adverb (such as ära 'off, away,' labi 'through, finished,' maha 'down,' üles 'together,' kinni 'closed, stick,' heaks 'well'), they require genitive or nominative rather than partitive objects; e.g.:

ma ootasin rongi "I waited-for train-part."
 'I waited for the train.'
 ma ootasin ära rongi tuleku "I waited-for train-of arrival-gen."
 'I waited for the train's arrival.'
 ta tundis selle naist "he knew this-part. woman-part."
 'He knew this woman.'
 ta tundis selle naise ära "he knew this-gen. woman-gen. up"
 'He recognized this woman.'
 seda opilast kiidete väga "this-part. student-part. was-praised highly"
 'This student was praised highly.'
 see plaan kiideti heaks "this-nom. plan-nom. was-praised well"
 'This plan was approved.'
 (Oinas 1966: 224)

Illustrative sentences for similarly conditioned genitive/nominative partitive alternations for transitive objects and intransitive subjects in FINNISH may be the following:

halvan paistia "I-want steak-part."
 'I want some steak.'
 halvan paistin "I-want steak-gen."
 'I want a/the steak.'
 otan kahvia kaapista "I-take coffee-part. cupboard-from"
 'I take/am taking some coffee from the the cupboard.'
 otan kahvin kaapista "I-take coffee-gen. cupboard-from"
 'I take the coffee from the cupboard.'
 en ota kahvia kaapista "not will-take-I coffee-part. cupboard-from"
 'I will not take coffee from the cupboard.'
 pöydällä on kirja "table-on is book-nom."
 'There is a book on the table.'
 pöydällä ei ole kirjaa "table-on not is book-partitive"
 'There is no book on the table.'
 (Lehtinen 1963: 69f)
 mies loi koiraa "man struck dog-part."
 'The man struck the dog.'
 mies tappoi koiran "man killed dog-gen."
 'The man killed the dog.'
 (Wickman 1955: 11ff)

In BASQUE the direct object is marked partitive in contexts that are more restricted than similar contexts in the FINNIC and SLAVIC languages just discussed. The direct object is in the partitive in this language if it is indefinite and the object of a negated verb. Note the following examples (de Rijk 1972):

ijito ori ikusi degu "gypsy-nom. that seen have-we"
 'We have seen that gypsy.'
 ez degu ijito ori ikusi "not have-we gypsy-nom. that seen"
 'We have not seen that gypsy.'

ijitoa ikusi degu	"gypsy-a seen have-we" 'We have seen a gypsy.'
ez degu ijitorik ikusi	"not have-we gypsy-part. seen" 'We have not seen a gypsy.'

As the first two sentences show, definite noun phrases have the same nominative markings in affirmative and negative sentences; indefinite noun phrases, however, as the third and fourth sentences indicate, are differently marked depending on whether the sentence is affirmative or negative; and the marking they have in negative sentences is partitive marking.

The sentences of GOTHIC, LATVIAN, LITHUANIAN, POLISH, RUSSIAN, ESTONIAN, FINNISH and BASQUE show that in some languages objects -- whether objects of transitive or subjects of intransitive sentences -- may be alternatively marked by an accusative-nominative marker or by a partitive marker, that this marking difference does not correlate with any difference in semantic case function, and that it correlates at least in some cases with one or more of the following semantic properties of the verbs or nouns involved:

- the definiteness-indefiniteness of the noun phrase,
- the extent to which the object is involved in the event,
- the completedness versus non-completedness of the event,
- whether the sentence is affirmative or negative.

Wickman (1955:14), in discussing the FINNISH case, proposes that the correct generalization for this language is that objects of non-resultative actions are in the partitive and those of resultative actions in the nominative or genitive. If the attribute "resultative" is applied to an action that does take place, that does involve a specific thing for its non-agentive participant that is actually affected by the action and it is affected with respect to its total quantity or extension, Wickman's proposal provides an informal but basically correct way of capturing the semantic conditions that correlate with the accusative/nominative-partitive case alternation in all the examples discussed above.

2.4 Accusative and nominative

In some languages there is a cross-sentential alternation between marking an object as accusative and marking the semantic case-functionally same object as nominative -- that is, as the subject of

a transitive sentence. There are two distinct types of sentences in which objects appear marked as a transitive subject: in sentences which do not also include a transitive subject and in sentences which also include a transitive subject. The following examples illustrate these two sentence types.

- LATIN:

puer puellam amat	"boy-nom. girl-accus. loves" 'The boy loves the girl.'
puella a puero amatur	"girl-noml by boy-ablat. is-loved" 'The girl is loved by the boy.'
puella amatur	"girl-nom. is-loved" 'The girl is loved.'
puella beata est	"girl-nom. happy is" 'The girl is happy.'
- SPANISH:

el chico ve la nieve	"the-nom. boy sees the-nom. snow" 'The boy sees the snow.'
el chico ve a esa chica	"the-nom. boy sees accus. this girl" 'The boy sees this girl.'

Case-functionally neutral noun phrases in these sentences are 'girl' in the LATIN examples and 'snow' and 'girl' in the SPANISH ones. Of the LATIN sentences the first has *puella* marked accusative and the others have it marked as nominative. Of the SPANISH sentences the first has the object -- *la nieve* -- marked nominative and the second has it (*esa chica*) marked accusative. The LATIN sentences that have the object marked as nominative do not also include another nominative -- they are passive or intransitive sentences. The first SPANISH sentence, however, that has the object marked as nominative also includes another noun phrase that is marked nominative -- the transitive subject of the sentence.

The semantic conditions correlated with the two kinds of marking variation of objects appear to be opposites of each other in that nominatively marked objects of intransitive sentences have more semantic properties in common with a "typical" transitive subject than accusatively marked objects in such sentences; but nominatively marked objects in transitive sentences have less in common with "typical" transitive subjects. In the LATIN sentences cited above,

for instance, the difference between what puellam in the first sentence and puella in the other sentences stand for is the same difference that also obtains between puellam and puer in the first sentence; or between a puero and puer in the second and first sentences, respectively; namely, the difference between the topic of the sentence and what is said about it. The nominative marking of objects in passive and other intransitive sentences which they share with transitive subjects thus appears to correspond to the shared semantic property of topicality between such objects and transitive subjects. Things are different in the SPANISH case. The conditions in SPANISH with which the differential case marking of objects correlates involve the animacy and the definiteness of objects: objects that are animate and definite (such as esa chica above) are accusatively marked but objects that are not animate and definite (such as la nieve above) are nominatively marked. But to the extent that a "typical" transitive subject is animate and definite, this means that in this case objects that are unlike transitive subjects are marked as transitive subjects; whereas in the LATIN case we saw that objects that were, in some sense, like transitive subjects were marked as transitive subjects.

These generalizations about the semantic correlates of accusative-nominative case marking alternations of direct objects in LATIN and SPANISH hold for other languages as well that do exhibit such alternations. Studies by Shopen (1972) and Keenan (1975b) have suggested that passive subjects do share semantic discourse function with transitive subjects in ENGLISH and in some other languages,⁴ and the correlation in transitive sentences between accusative marking and definiteness and/or animacy has been noted and illustrated for

⁴In FINNISH, as discussed by Timberlake (1975) and also in ESTONIAN (Raun and Saareste 1965: 32ff and Oinas 1966: 237-8), agentless passives constitute a class with two other constructions on the basis of the semantic object being marked nominative, rather than genitive as otherwise: these are imperative sentences and infinitives that are subjects of a sentence. Compare, for instance, an ordinary sentence where the object is marked genitive: mies sai kirjaa 'man-nom. gets book-accus.' 'The man gets the book.' and an agentless passive, imperative, and infinitive-subject sentence, respectively, where the object is marked nominative: sinne vietiin lahja 'there will-be-taken present-nom.' 'The present will be taken there;' saata tyttö kotiin 'take girl-nom. home' 'Take the girl home;' (minun) täytyy tehdä se '(I-gen.) is-necessary to-do it-nom.' 'It is necessary for me to do it.'

a number of languages by Blansitt (1973) and Hegedeos (1973). The interesting question, of course, is the distribution of these case-marking alternation patterns in the languages of the world. Whereas the first type of alternation may be universal -- in that perhaps all languages allow for the identical case marking of a topical object and a topical agent without at the same time also allowing for the identical marking of any other topical constituent as well -- the second type is not universal in that not all but only some languages case-mark animate and/or definite objects of transitive sentences one way and inanimate and/or indefinite ones in another way. In what follows, therefore, I will list and possibly illustrate such case alternations in all the languages where I know that it occurs.

Languages in which the conditions that correlate with the differential marking of direct objects in transitive sentences include both conditions related to definiteness and also conditions related to animacy or some other type of natural gender distinctions include some INDO-EUROPEAN languages such as SPANISH, RUMANIAN, ALBANIAN, BENGALI, HINDI and OSSETIC, some FINNO-UGRIC ones such as PERMIAN, and some ALTAIC ones such as BURIAT and MONGOLIAN. The more particular semantic classes in terms of which object marking rules can be stated for these languages are these: personal pronouns, proper names, human nouns, animate nouns, definite noun phrases, singular noun phrases. In addition, in ALBANIAN the semantically not fully characterizable classes of grammatically masculine and feminine versus neuter nouns are significant in this respect. In all of these languages, with the possible exception of ALBANIAN, there is free -- that is, both semantically and grammatically unconditioned -- variation between accusative and nominative marking within at least one of the above-mentioned semantic classes of objects. The pattern that I found most frequent in this small sample is obligatory accusative marking for definite and animate noun phrases; optional choice between accusative or nominative markings for definite and inanimate noun phrases; and nominative marking for noun phrases that are indefinite regardless of whether they are animate or not. This appears to be the rule for BENGALI, HINDI, OSSETIC and MONGOLIAN. Sentences to illustrate this from HINDI are these:

Ram Sita ko marta he	"Ram Sita accus. beat aux."
	'Ram beats Sita.'
chwri ko law	"knife accus. bring"
	'Bring the knife!'
chwri lao	"knife bring"
	'Bring a knife!'

Omission of ko in the first sentence would be ungrammatical; the respective omission and addition of ko in the second and third sentences would alter the meaning. In HINDI, however, two additional qualifications have to be added, one restricting the class of contexts where the accusative marking is used and one widening it. First, if the sentence includes a dative, then the dative receives the accusative marking and the object does not regardless of its definiteness and animacy status; and second, the accusative marker can apparently also be used with indefinite inanimate objects if the sentence would otherwise be ambiguous as to which of the two noun phrases is the agent and which is the object; such as in the sentence hira jife ko katta hay where ko is the accusative marker distinguishing jife from hira as being the object and which means 'A diamond cuts glass.'⁵ The rule in BURIAT is also the same as in BENGALI, HINDI and OSSETIC except that in this language the accusative-nominative alternation also has to do with the completedness of the action as the following examples indicate:

modo sabšaa	"wood/tree cut-he" 'He chopped wood.'
modiiji sabšana	"wood/tree-accus. cuts-he" 'He cuts the tree.' (where it is assumed that he will get it cut)(Poppe 1960 - Hegedeos) ⁶

The class of objects marked in RUMANIAN is somewhat smaller in that the use of the accusative preposition pe is not obligatory with all animates but only with humans and it is optional with other non-human animates, and in that pe does not appear to be used at all with inanimate objects even if they are definite (Seiver 1953 - Hegedeos). The rules for PERMIAN (Wickman 1955) and SPANISH, beyond the understanding that they involve both animacy and definiteness, are not sufficiently clear to me to enable me to compare these languages with the ones mentioned above.

⁵ For case-marking in HINDI see Harley 1944, Allen 1950-51, Bender 1967, Saksena 1973. For OSSETIC see Abaev 1964 - Hegedeos; for BENGALI see Ray, Hai and Ray 1966 - Hegedeos, and Ferguson 1970.

⁶ In BURIAT the alternation is actually between the accusative and the "oblique stem" which in most cases has the same form as the nominative, except for a small class of nouns where the nominative has an -n suffix which, however, is dropped in the oblique stem (Poppe 1960 - Hegedeos).

ALBANIAN is the only one of these languages where the statement of the rule must involve reference to non-semantic lexical properties of the nouns involved. In this language the direct object has the same form as a nominative except if it is definite, singular, and either masculine or feminine grammatically (Mann 1932 - Hegedeos). The three gender classes of masculine, feminine and neuter are non-semantic classes at least to the extent that the masculine and feminine classes include inanimate nouns as well. Thus, given the three nouns mal - 'mountain,' deg - 'branch,' and djath - 'cheese,' which are masculine, feminine and neuter, respectively, the forms that differ in the accusative and in the nominative are only these:

<u>mali</u>	'the mountain-nom.'	<u>dega</u>	'the branch-nom.'
<u>malin</u>	'the mountain-accus.'	<u>degen</u>	'the branch-accus.'

Otherwise accusative and nominative forms are the same: mal means 'a mountain' in both cases, malet means 'the mountains' in both cases, male means 'mountains' in both cases; deg means 'a branch' in both cases, degat means 'the branches' in both cases, dega means 'branches' in both cases; and djatht, djath, djathnat and djathna mean 'the cheese,' 'a cheese,' 'the cheeses' and 'cheeses,' respectively, in both cases. Apart from the fact that the ALBANIAN rule involves reference to non-semantic classes of nouns, it also differs from the other languages in that the conditions that correlate with the alternation of accusative-nominative marking also correlate with alternation with respect to other cases. Thus, the dative and the ablative are not distinguished for singular indefinite masculine and neuter nouns but they are distinguished for definite singular neuter nouns obligatorily and for definite singular masculine nouns optionally. In contrast with this, in all the languages mentioned so far and that will be mentioned, the alternation correlated with definiteness pertains only to the accusative marking.

The basic rule that holds for BENGALI, HINDI, OSSETIC and MONGOLIAN suggests that of the two basic types of semantic conditions -- definiteness and animacy -- definiteness is the "stronger" one in that the contexts in these languages where accusative marking may occur at all and those where it must not occur can be defined by reference to definiteness and not by reference to animacy. The contexts, that is, where accusative marking occurs at all, whether obligatorily or optionally, are the contexts of definite objects and not those of animate objects; and those where accusative marking never occurs are the contexts of indefinite objects and not those of inanimate objects. Animacy enters only to define within the class of definite noun phrases those contexts where accusative marking must occur, as opposed to those where it may or may not occur.

This precedence of the definiteness condition is further suggested by the fact that in most of those languages where the accusative-nominative marking distinction for direct objects depends on a set of conditions that does not include both definiteness and animacy, this set of conditions includes definiteness only, and that, apart from a group of INDO-EUROPEAN languages, there are only a few cases where the condition is animacy only. Languages in which the choice between accusative and nominative marking correlates with the definiteness distinction but not with the animacy distinction include a number of ALTAIC languages (BASHKIR, MANCHU, TATAR, TURKISH), some FINNO-UGRIC languages (KAMASSIAN, LAPPISH, MORDVIN, VOGUL), some from the INDO-EUROPEAN family (PANJABI, PERSIAN, TAJIK, ARMENIAN), some SEMITIC languages (HEBREW, LEBANESE ARABIC, AMHARIC, TIGRE), some CUSHITIC ones (KEMANT, BILIN), some MALAYO-POLYNESIAN languages (MARANAO, TAGALOG, TANGOAN-SANGO, MALOESE); furthermore GĀ and TWI of the African languages and MANDARIN. Of these there are very few languages where the rule would simply say: all definite direct objects of transitive sentences are marked accusative and all indefinite ones are marked nominative. The only languages where I do not have any reason to doubt the validity of this simple rule are TURKISH, MANCHU, MARANAO, AMHARIC, KEMANT and BILIN. In all the others of the listed languages only some but not all definite nouns are marked accusative and/or some indefinite nouns are also marked accusative. Languages where definiteness is a necessary but not sufficient condition to predict accusative marking of objects in transitive sentences are these: PUNJABI, PERSIAN, TAJIK, TIGRE, TAGALOG, MANDARIN, GĀ, and TWI. The additional conditions which, taken together with definiteness, provide for a set of conditions that are sufficient to predict accusative marking differ in these languages. In PUNJABI only pronouns are obligatorily marked accusative, other definite noun phrases only optionally (Comrie 1973). In PERSIAN and TAJIK (Rastorgueva 1964 and Rastorgueva 1963 - Hegedeos), pronouns, proper names and possessed nouns are obligatorily marked as accusative and other definite noun phrases only optionally. In TIGRE some but not all direct objects are accusative-marked again and the conditions are not known to me (Leslau 1945). In TAGALOG, also, definite direct objects may but they do not have to be marked for accusative (Schachter and Otnes 1972). In MANDARIN all direct objects that cooccur with the preposition bǎ and have thus a form that is distinct from the form of nominative nouns are definite and they are either objects of simple verbs that require that their (definite) object should cooccur with bǎ, such as kàn 'regard' or mèng-dào 'dream of;' or they are (definite) objects of complex verbs such

as jiā wūdǐng 'add roof,' bāo pí 'peel skin;' or they are objects of verbs that express a completed action; or they are focussed. The latter two conditions are exemplified by the following:

ta sī le nèifeng xìn
 'he tear aspect that letter'
 'He tore up that letter.'

ta bǎ nèifeng xìn sī-diào le
 'he accus. that letter tear-completion aspect'
 'He tore up that letter.'

ta mài le tāde chē
 'he sell aspect his car'
 'He sold his car.'

ta bǎ tāde chē mài le
 'he accus. his car sell aspect'
 'He sold his car.' (with 'car' being the topic) (Thompson 1972)

Both in GĀ and in TWI preverbal direct objects and no postverbal direct objects are marked and all preverbal direct objects are definite; but not all definite objects are preverbal and thus marked and the conditions are not clear (Trutenau 1973; Stewart 1963, Christaller 1875).

Languages, on the other hand, where definiteness is a sufficient but not a necessary condition to predict accusative marking are BASHKIR, TATAR, LEBANESE ARABIC and HEBREW. In BASHKIR, TATAR and LEBANESE ARABIC definiteness is not a necessary condition in that in addition to all definite noun phrases, interrogative pronouns, too, are accusatively marked which are semantically indefinite (Poppe 1964, 1963, Koutsoudas 1967). In HEBREW the accusative preposition occurs with all definite direct objects but also with some indefinite ones such as indefinite and interrogative pronouns and indefinite nouns (Cole 1975). Finally, definiteness does not appear to be either necessary or sufficient to predict accusative marking in KAMASSIAN, LAPPISH, MORDVIN and VOGUL in that, according to Wickman (1955), although there is a tendency in all of these languages to mark definite noun phrases as accusative and indefinite ones as nominative, there are both definite noun phrases that are marked nominative and indefinite ones that are marked accusative, with the conditions being unclear.

The languages where, to my knowledge, the accusative-nominative marking alternation correlates with animacy distinctions and not

with definiteness are LUISEÑO, TELUGU and some INDO-EUROPEAN languages. In LUISEÑO the rule appears to be simple: animate nouns have an accusative marker and inanimate ones do not; compare, for instance, the word for 'lizzard' which is kasilla in the nominative and kasillay in the accusative and the word for 'basket' which is tukmal both in the nominative and in the accusative (Hyde 1971: 35f). In TELEGU, according to Rão (1967: 71-73), the accusative suffix ni/nu is not used usually if the object is "a lifeless thing." In MARATHI (Gupte 1975) the direct object is obligatorily marked if human, optionally marked if animate non-human and not marked if inanimate. Finally, in a great number of European languages such as ANCIENT GREEK, LATIN, GERMAN and RUSSIAN, grammatically masculine and feminine nouns, which include most naturally animate ones and some naturally inanimate ones, are differentiated for nominative and accusative, but grammatically neuter ones are not.

In sum: we noted that objects may be nominative-marked in intransitive sentences if they resemble transitive subjects by functioning as topics, and that they may be nominative-marked in transitive sentences if they are unlike "typical" agentive transitive subjects in that they are inanimate or indefinite or both. The particular categories along which the accusative-nominative alternation patterns include the following:⁷ human nouns, personal pronouns, proper names, animate nouns, definite nouns, possessed nouns, topical nouns, completed action. In addition other factors are lexical properties of the verb, grammatical number, grammatical gender. In some cases the choice of the two markings depends on whether the sentence also includes a dative phrase or not; and on whether the sentence would be ambiguous if the object were not distinctively marked from the nominative or not. We also noted that although

⁷ There are also some languages for which my sources said the use of the accusative marker was simply optional — that is, the choice between marking or not marking an object is semantically and otherwise unconditioned. This is the case for MALAGASY (Keenan 1975a) where the dative-prefix can apparently be optionally used to mark a non-dative object; compare: naname vola an-sRabe aho 'gave money accus. -Rabe I' 'I gave money to Rabe;' nahita an-sRabe Rakoto 'saw accus. -Rabe Rakoto' 'Rakoto saw Rabe.' Optionality is claimed for the use of the object marker -si in KUNAMA as well (Tucker and Bryan 1966: 340). In LAHU the object marker (Matisoff 1973: 155ff) and in KANURI (Lukas 1937) both subject and object markers are said to be used optionally and are obligatory only if ambiguity would otherwise arise.

there are both languages where definiteness is the crucial semantic property and animacy is irrelevant and also languages where animacy is critical without definiteness, in those languages where both are relevant, definiteness is the more significant of the two properties since the property of animacy separates only those cases where accusative marking is obligatory from those where it is optional, whereas definiteness separates those where accusative marking occurs at all from those where it does not. To the extent that definiteness and completedness of action figured among the relevant semantic conditions, the general nature of the accusative-nominative alternation can be seen to be similar to the general nature of the accusative-adverbial and accusative-partitive alternation examined earlier.

2.5 Accusative and topic

The most basic shared property of all case alternations of objects — except for one class to be mentioned presently — that we have surveyed so far is that the intuitively felt semantic markedness relation between the semantic classes that corresponded to the class of accusatively marked and to the class of otherwise marked noun phrases was always such that the semantically marked class corresponded to the accusatively marked class, and the semantically unmarked class correlated with the non-accusative marking. Thus, affected and not unaffected, totally involved and not partially involved, definite and not indefinite, and animate and not inanimate noun phrases were accusatively marked. The class of alternations that constitutes an exception to this generalization is the alternation of the accusative with the nominative case in sentences which do not include a transitive subject since, as it was noted, here the non-topical (or unmarked) objects are accusatively marked and the topical (or marked) ones are in the nominative. The last class of case-alternations of direct objects that I will now turn to is unlike the accusative-adverbial, accusative-partitive and one class of the accusative-nominative alternations, and it is like this other class of accusative-nominative alternations in that the semantic class of accusatively marked noun phrases will be seen to be unmarked in comparison with the semantic class of non-accusatively marked noun phrases. The case in question whose alternation with the accusative will be discussed is the topic case. A topic case marker is a segment sequence associated with members of a class of noun phrases whose membership is case-functionally unrestricted — it may include noun phrases of any possible semantic case function — and it is definable instead by all members sharing the semantic property of topicality.

I hope that the data and informal generalizations presented in this paper will be of use in constructing and testing general theories about the correspondence relation between semantic case function and sentence form in natural human languages.

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