

snippets

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Gestures and nonlinguistic objects are subject to the Case Filter

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Gestures can be merged into, and moved within, syntactic structures (see Jackendoff 1984, 2011, Joutteau 2004, Postal 2004). This squib shows further that they can appear in DP positions, and when they do, the relevant DPs need Case (Vergnaud 1977/2008). (Gestures in non-DP positions (Schlenker to appear) do not need Case.)

What does this predict?

First, a gesture *G* should complement Case-assigning Vs/Ps. In (pseudo)passives, $T_{[+FIN]}$ should Case-license *G* and raise it to [Spec,TP]. If *G* stays in [Compl,VP/PP], and $T_{[+FIN]}$ Case-licenses expletive *it* instead, *G* will be Caseless, producing unacceptability. This is correct:

- (1) Speaking of gestures,
 - a. we're discussing/talking about *G*.
 - b. *G* is being discussed/talked about.
 - c. *it's being discussed/talked about *G*.

Second, *G* should receive Case in ECM/raising-to-object structures. When the ECM/raising-to-object verb passivizes, $T_{[+FIN]}$ should Case-license *G* and raise it. If $T_{[+FIN]}$ Case-licenses *it* instead, *G* will be Caseless, yielding unacceptability. This is correct:

- (2)
 - a. People consider *G* (to be) a threatening gesture.
 - b. *G* is considered (to be) a threatening gesture.
 - c. *It's considered *G* (to be) a threatening gesture.

Third, a gesture *G* in [Spec,TP] in a raising infinitival should receive Case from a higher $T_{[+FIN]}$ and raise. If it doesn't, and $T_{[+FIN]}$ Case-licenses *it*, *G* will be Caseless, causing unacceptability. This is correct:

- (3)
 - a. *G* seems to be a threatening gesture.
 - b. *It seems *G* to be a threatening gesture.

Fourth, a gesture *G* in [Spec, $T_{to}P$] should be Case-licensable by *C-for*. If *for* is absent, *G* will be Caseless, producing unacceptability. This is correct:

- (4)
 - a. For *G* to be considered a threatening gesture would be unsurprising.
 - b. **G* to be considered a threatening gesture would be unsurprising.

Fifth, if *G* complements an N/A with no mediating P, it will be Caseless, producing unacceptability. P-insertion should rescue it. This is correct:

- (5) Speaking of gestures, {I'm a fan *(of) *G*/
I'm partial *(to) *G*}.

Of course, *partial* in that sense selects *to*, and *[*partial* G] violates that requirement, ruling it out independently. But G cannot complement any A/N without a mediating P, as predicted:

- (6) {fond *(of) / reminiscent *(of) / suggestive *(of) /
condemnatory *(of) / similar *(to) / reliant *(on)} G
- (7) {discussion *(of) / condemnation *(of) / promotion *(of) /
fondness *(for) / similarity *(to) / prohibition *(on) / reliance *(on)} G

Sixth, G should bear morphological case in relevant languages. This is correct for Japanese:

- (8) Jesuchaa to ie-ba (watashi-wa) G-*(ga) suki.
gesture C say-if (I-TOP) G-*(NOM) like
'Speaking of gestures, I like G.'
[One speaker. For another speaker: *G-ga, **G (without -ga).]

Nonlinguistic objects in syntactic structures, like the arrow below, also need Case:

- (9) ↑ is an arrow.

In (9), T_[+FIN] Case-licenses ↑. A Caseless ↑ produces unacceptability: **It seems ↑ to be an arrow*.
In needing Case, gestures and nonlinguistic objects resemble quotes (cf. Bruening 2016:141):

- (10) {Olivia/*It was} whispered, "Donuts!" (to Mike).

If needing Case is a DP property, this suggests that gestures, quotes, and nonlinguistic objects complement (possibly different) Ds (silent in English). These Ds are promiscuous: they must take a complement, but it can be almost anything.

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