Contents

1. Wm. G. Bennett. Subject-Auxiliary inversion in interrogative complex NPs.
3. Erik Zyman. Gestures and nonlinguistic objects are subject to the Case Filter.
4. Erik Zyman. Interjections select and project.
Gestures and nonlinguistic objects are subject to the Case Filter

Erik Zyman · University of California, Santa Cruz

DOI: http://dx.doi.org/10.7358/snip-2017-032-zyma

Gestures can be merged into, and moved within, syntactic structures (see Jackendoff 1984, 2011, Jouitteau 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 \([\text{Spec,TP}]\). If \( G \) stays in \([\text{Compl,VP/PP}]\), 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 \([\text{Spec,TP}]\) 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 \([\text{Spec,T} to P]\) 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)/ \hfill \\
                   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.

References


Many thanks to Hitomi Hirayama and Maho Morimoto for the Japanese data. This material is based upon work supported by the National Science Foundation Graduate Research Fellowship Program under Grant No. DGE-1339067. Any opinions, findings, and conclusions or recommendations expressed in this material are those of the author and do not necessarily reflect the views of the National Science Foundation.

Erik Zyman
ezyman@ucsc.edu
Department of Linguistics
University of California, Santa Cruz
1156 High Street
Santa Cruz, CA 95064
USA