

Case

Nominative: subject of the sentence

Accusative: direct object

Dative: indirect object

Genitive: possessor, *of*

Russian:

(1) a. Èta devo•ka s•astlivaja.
this.NOM girl.NOM happy

‘This girl is happy.’

b. Ja v•era videla ètu devo•ku.
I.NOM yesterday saw this.ACC girl.ACC

‘Yesterday I saw this girl.’

c. Ja dala svoju knigu ètoj devo•ke.
I.NOM gave self’s book.ACC this.DAT girl.DAT

‘I gave this girl my own book.’

d. Kniga ètoj devo•ki
book.NOM this.GEN girl.GEN

‘this girl’s book’

Latin

(2) a. Caesar omnes druides in Galliaa interfecit.
Caesar.NOM all.ACC druids.ACC in Gaul.ABL killed

‘Caesar killed all the Druids in Gaul.’

b. Caesarem Romam redire populus voluit.
Caesar.ACC Rome-to return people.NOM wanted

‘The people wanted Caesar to return to Rome.’

c. Senatus Caesari provinciam dedit.
senate.NOM Caesar.DAT province.ACC gave

‘The senate gave a/the province to Caesar.’

d. Legiones Caesaris multas gentes subegerunt.
legions.NOM Caesar.GEN many.ACC peoples.ACC subjugated

‘Caesar’s legions subjugated many peoples.’

e. Caesare absente, tota Gallia quiescebat.
Caesar.ABL gone all.NOM Gaul.NOM was-peaceful

‘While Caesar was gone, all Gaul was peaceful.’

Finnish

(3) a. Kirja on pöydällä.
book.NOM is table.ADESSIVE

‘The book is on the table.’

b. Pekka osti jonkin kirjan.
Pekka bought some.ACC book.ACC

‘Pekka bought a book.’

(4) a. Todennäköisesti hän etsi sitä kampa.
probably (s)he.NOM looked-for that.PART comb.PART

‘It was pretty clear that (s)he was looking for that comb.’

b. Hänellä on vihreät silmät.
(s)he.ADESSIVE is green.NOM.pl eye.NOM.pl

‘(S)he has green eyes.’

c. Heti oven takana rappukäytävässä
at-once door.GEN behind staircase.INESSIVE

häneltä putosise pullo.

(s)he.ABL dropped bottle.NOM

‘(S)he’d just stepped out onto the staircase behind the door when(s)he dropped the bottle.’ (Lit.: ‘from her/him dropped the bottle.’)

Ergative: subject of a transitive verb
Absolutive: direct object or subject of intransitive verb

Case morphology may be null

Basque

- (5) a. Mari joan da.
 Mary.ABS left has
 ‘Mary left.’
- b. Marik liburua erosi du.
 Mary.ERG book-the.ABS bought has
 ‘Mary bought the book.’
- c. Nik diot Mariri trikota ez eman.
 I.ERG have Mary.DAT sweater-the.ABS not given
 ‘I did not give the sweater to Mary.’

- (6) a. Ez da inor etorri.
 no has anybody.ABS come
 ‘Nobody came.’
- b. Ez dio inork Iboni etxea eman.
 no has anybody.ERG Ibon.DAT house-the.ABS given
 ‘Nobody gave the house to Ibon.’
- c. Ez dio Ibonek inori etxea eman.
 no has Ibon.ERG anybody.DAT house-the.ABS given
 ‘Ibon didn’t give the house to anybody.’

Dyirbal

- (7) a. Bayi yara baninu.
 there_I.ABS man.ABS coming
 ‘A/the man is coming.’
- b. Balan dugumbil baninu.
 there_{II}.ABS woman.ABS coming
 ‘A/the woman is coming.’
- c. Balan dugumbil bangul yarangu balgan.
 there_{II}.ABS woman.ABS there_I.ERG man.ERG hitting
 ‘The man is hitting the woman.’
- d. Bayi yara bangun dugumbiru balgan.
 there_I.ABS man.ABS there_{II}.ERG woman.ERG hitting
 ‘The woman is hitting the man.’
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Russian