

WHAT CASE IS THIS CASE?

AN APPLICATION OF SEMANTIC CASE IN BIBLICAL EXEGESIS

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It is clear that biblical scholarship has entered a new stage and that it can no longer stand alone. While the validity of traditional methodologies has remained in many respects, it is strongly emphasized that interdisciplinary research across various fields relating to biblical knowledge must not be neglected for by it we can gain fresh insights and revitalise our research methodology. In line with this spirit, the present paper follows the trend pioneered by James Barr in his *The Semantics of Biblical Language*,¹ that modern linguistics has a definitive contribution not only in our understanding of the biblical languages but also in the exegesis of the biblical text.

For anyone familiar with the recent history of modern linguistics, the title of this paper brings to mind of Charles J. Fillmore's landmark publication in 1968 "The Case for Case"² and his subsequent article in 1977 "The Case for Case Reopened."³ Whilst in most traditional grammars of the Indo-European languages, "case" refers to the case forms on the surface characterized by each different grammatical ending, in Case Theory it refers to the underlying semantic roles, independent of the surface form. Already in the 1960's, J.P. Louw in his article entitled "Linguistic Theory and the Greek Case System,"⁴ lamented the irresponsible and oftentimes self-contradictory discussions on the meanings of cases. Many grammarians (such as *Robertson*,⁵ *Dana and Mantley*⁶), relying on the so-called "local theory," endeavored to explain all cases and their usages in terms of spatial relationship without

¹Oxford University, 1962.

²In *Universals in Linguistic Theory*, ed. E. Bach and R.T. Harms (New York, NY: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1968), 1-88.

³In vol.8: *Syntax and Semantics: Grammatical Relations*, ed. P. Cole and J.M. Sadock (New York, NY: Academic, 1977), 59-81.

⁴*Acta Classica* 9 (1966): 73-88.

⁵A.T. Robertson, *A Grammar of the Greek NT in the Light of Historical Research*, 4th ed. (Nashville, TN: Broadman, 1934); henceforth, *Robertson*.

⁶H.E. Dana and J.R. Mantley, *A Manual Grammar of the Greek NT* (New York, NY: Macmillan, 1955); henceforth, *Dana-Mantley*.

recognizing the fact that the figurative extension of the case has already shown significant departure from its proper domain -- if it ever existed. In this pioneering article, Professor Louw suggests three levels of meaning of a case. The semantic level indicates the fundamental meaning of the case itself which denotes its potentiality to be in a position in the constructional chain; the syntactic level indicates its position in the structure of the sentence,⁷ and the constructional role it fulfils; the contextual level indicates the specific connotation a particular case conveys.⁸ Louw's suggestion, which shows much sensitivity and sophistication with regard to the complexity of meaning, represents a methodology far beyond the climate of his day. However one must still ask, is it at all possible to come up with a definition of, say, the genitive case or dative case? Or, can the definition truly escape the ghost of historicism? Or, if it is to be descriptive by nature, would the definition be so generic that it offers little to exegesis? No wonder, most grammarians have shown little interest in the detailed study in the meaning of each case, focusing rather on its various contextual usages (e.g. *BDF*,⁹ *Zerwick*,¹⁰ *Moule*,¹¹ and *Brooks-Winbery*¹²).

Without being restricted by the long-standing controversy about the proper or "fundamental" meaning of each case, the present paper seeks to focus on the *semantic function* of each case in language

⁷Syntactically speaking, all cases are related either adverbally, i.e. pertaining to the verb (wrongly put as "adverbial" in *BDF* [see below], 93) or adnominally (i.e. pertaining to the noun). Very often Greek prepositions are used merely to increase the precision of either of these relationships.

⁸The original statements runs: "In a sentence the *semantic level* indicates the connotation embodied in the case itself, on its own, and thus denotes its potentiality; the *contextual level* indicates the specific denotation." I take the liberty to alter the original words "connotation" and "denotation" which seem to fit better with our common understanding of their meaning.

⁹F. Blass and A. Debrunner, *A Greek Grammar of the NT and Other Early Christian Literature*, trans. R.W. Funk (Chicago: University of Chicago, 1961); henceforth, *BDF*.

¹⁰M. Zerwick, *Biblical Greek* (Rome: Pontifical Biblical Institute, 1963); henceforth, *Zerwick*.

¹¹C.F.D. Moule, *An Idiom Book of NT Greek*, 2nd. ed. (Cambridge: Cambridge University, 1908); henceforth, *Moule*.

¹²J.A. Brooks and C.L. Winbery, *Syntax of NT Greek* (Washington, DC: University of America, 1979); henceforth *Brooks-Winbery*.

communication. By employing Case Theory, a model which is more consistent, we can account for various usages across different grammatical cases. This allows a more universal description of various semantic intrapositional relations which are then readily transferable to other languages. While the traditional appellations of cases, though descriptive by nature, overlap in essence and are superficial in function, a semantic description of the relationship between the case, whether explicated in a noun or other substantive form such as participle, and its head word is more helpful and indeed necessary to the discovery of the meaning of a text.

Case Theory

The emergence of Charles Fillmore's Case Theory (1968) represents a strong expression of dissatisfaction with the then dominant Chomskyeian school, that semantic component is "purely interpretative" in nature.¹³ Pursuing a semantic-generative approach, Fillmore introduced a "semantic case category" of description as a means of representing a semantic-based deep syntactic structure of grammar. In his 1968 article, for the first time Fillmore proposed a universal underlying set of case relationships, based on the *centrality of semantics*, between surface syntactic and semantically relevant deep structures found in all languages.¹⁴ By "universal", Fillmore refers to semantic case relations which occur in any language, although the choice of relations of a particular verb, the optionality of the complements, and their syntactic realizations are language-specific. To use Fillmore's own words, semantic cases are:

a set of universal, presumably innate, concepts which identify certain types of judgments human beings are capable of making about the events going on around them, judgments about such matters as who did it, who (sic) it happened to, and what got changed.¹⁵

The choice of the term "case" to represent the semantic relation between the verbal and nominal element is a right one. It brings a clear contrast between our traditional understanding of syntactic cases and

¹³A.N. Chomsky, *Aspects of the Theory of Syntax* (Cambridge, MA.: MIT, 1965), 16.

¹⁴Fillmore, "The Case for Case," 1-5; also see T.J. Quain "Evolution of the Theory of Case Grammar: Concepts and Applications," (Ph.D dissertation, Middle Tennessee State University, 1986), 36-37.

¹⁵Fillmore, "A Case for Case," 24.

here, semantic cases. Each of these semantic cases is capable of filling a number of different surface positions, such as subject, direct object, and prepositional phrase. This can be illustrated in the following sentences:

1. John opened the door.
2. The door was opened by John.
3. The key opened the door.
4. John opened the door with the key.

From these sentences, we realize that John (as AGENT being the one who initiates the action), door (as PATIENT being the object being affected), and key (as INSTRUMENT being the entity by means of which the action is enacted) are all in different syntactic positions with the same semantic relationship with the verb open. In Greek, all these different words (i.e. nouns) are represented at surface level by different cases such as nominative, dative, accusative, and even a prepositional phrase introduced by ὑπό. In a sense, Fillmore has *upgraded* the traditional understanding of “case” as a syntactic notion into a level where “case”, being a semantic notion, becomes a finite set of innate language universals.¹⁶

Centrality of Activity

One major improvement in the development of Case Theory, in my opinion, is the notion of centrality in case analysis. W.L. Chafe in his 1970's monograph *Meaning and the Structure of Language*,¹⁷ while not using the phrase “Case Theory,” nevertheless echoes the fundamentals of Case Theory. Chafe views language as a system which links “the

¹⁶Nonetheless, one has to acknowledge the fact that, although Fillmore was often thought of as the originator of Case Theory, we are reminded by J. Panevová (“On Verbal Frames in Functional Generative Description, Part I,” *The Prague Bulletin of Mathematical Linguistics* 22 [1974]: :3-40) that, already in the early 1940's, Czechoslovak linguists under the leadership of E. Pauliny (in 1943), had tried to classify verbs from a semantic point of view. Pauliny's theory was extended and applied to the description of Slovak languages by his successors. For a more detailed survey of the development of Case Theory, see Quain (“Evolution of the Theory of the Case Theory”) and S. Wong (“A Classification of the Semantic Case-Relations in the Pauline Epistles,” [D.Litt. Dissertation, University of Pretoria, South Africa, 1990], chapter two).

¹⁷W.L. Chafe, *Meaning and the Structure of Language* (Chicago: University of Chicago, 1970).

universe of meaning to the universe of sound.”¹⁸ Thus he explains any language communication as a one-way development process from deep (i.e. semantic) structure to surface structure through different steps such as symbolization and phonological processes, which could well be described as grammaticalization. While for Fillmore, it is obvious that it is the “noun” which has the governing effect and thus selects the verb, Chafe points out that the semantic structure of a language is a set of relationships between a central verb and a series of nouns “each of which stands in some particular semantic relation to the verb.”¹⁹ It is the nature of the verb which “determines what the rest of the sentence will be like ... what nouns will accompany it, what the relation of these nouns to it will be, and how these nouns will be semantically specified.”²⁰

Chafe's emphasis on the “centrality of verb” was enthusiastically echoed by W.A. Cook,²¹ one of the most active advocates of Case Theory, who argues that, because of the verb's centrality, the nouns in the proposition are not cases but “case candidates.”²² This hypothesis, no matter how tentative it may be, has acquired much experiential support from actual linguistic analysis done by many of Cook's students and others in different language groups.²³ However, one must ask, is it the

¹⁸Chafe, *Meaning and the Structure of Language*, 15.

¹⁹Chafe, *Meaning and the Structure of Language*, 144.

²⁰Chafe, *Meaning and the Structure of Language*, 97; J.M. Anderson, *The Grammar of Case: Towards a Localistic Theory* (Cambridge University, 1971), 10; J.B. Buyschaert, “Subject and Predicate,” *Communication and Cognition* 8 (1, 1975): 69-92.

²¹W.A. Cook, S.J., “A Set of Postulates for Case Grammar,” *Language and Linguistics: Working Papers* (Washington: Georgetown University, 1972), 4:36-49; also “A Case Grammar Matrix,” *Language and Linguistics: Working Papers* (Washington: Georgetown University, 1972), 6:15-47; for a collection of Cook's contributions on Case Grammar, see his *Case Grammar: Development of the Matrix Model 1970-1978* (Washington: Georgetown University, 1979).

²²Cook goes further and suggests that it is only when these nouns are used in a proposition, that the case features are read in and imposed upon the noun by the verb, because of its meaning and selectional features. If there is a close fit between the case features and the noun features, then we have a typical “literal” reading of the noun in its case role, otherwise, the reading is less literal and tends to be idiomatic or metaphorical.

²³For a brief survey, see Wong, “Classification of Semantic Case-Relations,” 19-22.

“verb” as a pure grammatical class that Cook (and Chafe) wished to talk about? Sgall observes that the notion of Case Theory is “a way of accounting for the relationship between the cognitive content (factual knowledge) and the meaning of linguistic structures.” As a result, “it is not the verb that is assigned a case frame; rather it is the action as such,” i.e. the corresponding concept underlying the individual images in cognition or memory.”²⁴ Such an understanding of Case Theory in terms of Relational Grammar developed mainly in the Continent is typical and has influenced what is now understood by Case Theory, viz. “what there is in the world” or what J. Lyons calls the “naive realism.”²⁵ Here, we experience a fusion between syntactic and semantic categories. It is obvious that Chafe, Cook, and many grammar practitioners do not understand “verb” as a pure syntactic class, but *almost* like a semantic class, Activity.²⁶ Such a clarification is important in order to appreciate the notion of the so-called “cognitive validity” in Case Theory. What happens in language communication is the grammaticalisation of the events which happen in the real world (or better, the discourse world). For this reason, selection is twofold: syntactically, it is the verb class which chooses what surface realization such as noun phrase, or prepositional phrase, etc., should accompany it; but on a deeper level, it is the cognizance of Activity which motivates the speaker to make such choice. The essence of a verb lies not in its morphological characteristics but in its semantics (i.e. meaning). Such an understanding helps to enhance the utilization of semantic cases, not only on the propositional level, but also on the lexical, especially the semantically complex verbal compounds which I have attempted to show elsewhere.²⁷

²⁴P. Sgall, “Case and Meaning,” *Journal of Pragmatics* 4 (1980): 525-536. See Wong (“Classification of Semantic Case-Relations,” 10-11) for more detailed evaluation of the notion of “cognitive validity.”

²⁵J. Lyons, *Semantics*, 2 vols. (Cambridge University, 1977), 442.

²⁶The other semantic classes, besides Activity, are: Entity, Relational, and Qualificational. These four classes, according to J. Beekman and J. Callow (*Translating the Word of God* [Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1974], 68), were developed as early as 1776 by G. Campbell's *The Philosophy of Rhetoric*. These terms are originally called Thing (sometimes, Object), Event, Abstract (sometimes, Attribute), and Relation. Those given in the text represent the latest version of J.P. Louw and E.A. Nida in *Lexical Semantics of the Greek NT* (Philadelphia, PA: Fortress, 1992).

²⁷S. Wong, “Some Observations on the Semantic Structure of Verbal

Before we compare in detail the semantic cases with the grammatical cases, and their application in biblical exegesis, we must first define what these semantic cases are.

Definitions of Semantic Cases

One pertinent problem which hinders the development of the Case Theory is the differences in the definition of each semantic case. Different scholars often have used different terms to represent the same notion, and the same term for different notions.²⁸ Without minimizing the confusion caused by having different case labels, what is important is the consistency of the practitioners. The different case labels used by grammarians may only reflect different ways of dividing the *same* cake, viz. the *continuum of semantic reality*.²⁹ It depends how finely one wishes to differentiate semantic categories.

Except for a few minor revisions, all the definitions of semantic cases listed in the Appendix are identical to those defined in Chapter Three of my dissertation, "A Classification of Semantic Case-Relations in the Pauline Epistles."³⁰ Comparatively, this study employs more case roles than other studies, having a total of fifteen cases. The reason for this larger number is to avoid overloading the content (i.e. definition) of each case (such as Cook's Object or Longacre's Goal and Source³¹

Compounds in Greek," in *Hupomnema: Feesbundel opgedra aan Prof. J.P. Louw*, 370-383; eds. J.H. Barkhuizen, H.F. Stander, and G.J. Swart (Department of Greek, University of Pretoria, 1992).

²⁸To take Fillmore as an example: in his 1968 article, he identifies six basic cases to classify the verb types: Agent, Instrument, Dative, Factitive, Locative, and Object. But in a later version in 1971, he postulated nine cases as deep structure categories: Agent, Experiencer, Instrument, Object, Source, Goal, Location, Time, and Benefactive.

²⁹W.A. Cook, "A Case Grammar Matrix model," in *Valence, Semantic Case and Relational Grammar*, ed. W. Abraham (Amsterdam: John Benjamins, 1978), 1: 302.

³⁰The only major area of revision is the case "Range," which I previously call "Complement." As I come to be more convinced by the theory of the discourse grammar set forth in Longacre's work (1977, 1983; see below), I find it necessary to separate the two levels more clearly: level of case relations in proposition, and of propositional relation. The case of Time is taken out of the Modal cases, which should be distinguished from the HEAD-Time relation.

³¹R.E. Longacre, *An Anatomy of Speech Notions* (Lisse: Peter de Ridder, 1976);

do), and to present an inventory of cases which can describe the semantic function of Greek verbs in a more specific and transparent fashion.³² Since case analysis is applied only to the level of proposition, my application would follow a strict distinction between intra-propositional and inter-propositional relationships. Suffice it to say that there are two kinds of propositions: Entity propositions and Activity propositions. An Entity proposition is primarily used in identification and attribution of an entity,³³ and is often filled with copula verbs with no Activity involved. On the contrary, Activity propositions consist of one and only one Activity. Activity propositions have more variety than the Entity propositions and can generally be grouped according to the presence of prominence.³⁴ Such a distinction clarifies the fact that certain cases, such as Complement (or Factitive), should not be considered as case relationship but propositional relationships.

The cases, Agent, Experiencer, Instrument, Range³⁵ and Measure are defined along the lines of Longacre's definition.³⁶ Instead of using one single label "Locative", as in Cook's model, I find it necessary to specify different aspects of locales: Source, Path, and Goal. These three cases can be considered as *sub*-cases of Locative, and being different from Longacre, these cases are restricted only to locality. Cook's Benefactive is employed here with no distinctive change. Since the case

Grammar of Discourse (New York: Plenum, 1983).

³²On the other hand, an inventory such as this may also cause overlaps in some cases; in this situation the decision is based on the focus of the case and the verb. For example, in the verb ὁρέγομαι "strive to attain a goal" (1 Tim 3.1, 6.10), the subject can be semantically analyzed as both Benefactive and Agent, but since the focus of the verb seems to be on the notion of "striving, making effort," it is marked as Agent only.

³³Examples for such relationships are: "Peter is a student" (Identification), "Peter is hungry" (Attribution), "Peter is in the school" (Location), "Peter has a dog" (Association), "Peter is my cousin" (Relationship).

³⁴Non-prominent relationships may be subdivided into chronological and non-chronological relationships. Prominent relationships include mainly qualificational and logical relationships.

³⁵This should be distinguished from Chafe's "Complement" (*Meaning and Structure of Meaning*, 156) and Fillmore's "Factitive" ("The Case for Case"), which often include the content of cognitive activities.

³⁶Longacre, *Grammar of Discourse*, 155.

Patient always lacks a more sharply-defined semantic content³⁷ and thus often gives an impression of being a “wastebasket” case, we have restricted the case greatly. A new case Reference is postulated.

Most of the cases mentioned here are primary cases in our classification and would pertain also towards a universal semantic description of other languages. There are other cases, which are considered as secondary to our classification, usually called “Peripheral cases.” Among them are Path, Instrument, Comitative, Manner, Measure, Time; these cases are seldom found as the surface Subject. They are generally, though not always, optional to the clause structure, and are not obligatory to the semantic function of the verbs. However this distinction is often not all that clear; it seems that there are some verbs which would require these cases in order for the clause to be semantically well-formed. Similarly, it should also be remembered that almost all of the primary cases may also be found as peripherals when they occur with certain verbs.³⁸ For example: 2 Tim 2.2, “καὶ ἃ ἤκουσας παρ’ ἐμοῦ ...,” the expression “παρ’ ἐμοῦ” is marked as Agent, but is actually not required by the structure of the verb ἀκούω. The peculiarity of Instrument is that Instrument is not obligatory, yet it cannot be considered as a free adjunct, since it sometimes occurs as surface Subject when Agent does not occur. Agent and Instrument, are the two most controversial cases in Case Theory. The distinction lies primarily in such notions as direct, indirect cause, animate and inanimate agency, purpose, intention, and volition.

While the propositional cases are required by the verb, and are thus considered as part of the predictably inherent semantic features of the verb, it seems that the peripheral cases, being additional to the semantic structure of the verb, are *unpredictable* and may function as indicators of marked information. Compare these two sentences:

5. Colin kisses Helen

6. Colin kisses Helen with his greasy lips

The verb kiss is highly specific, because it predicts the Instrument

³⁷See Patient in Chafe (*Meaning and Structure of Meaning*, 98, 100), or Object in Cook (“A Case Grammar Matrix,” 17) and C. Fillmore, “Some Problems for Case Grammar,” in *Twenty-Second Annual Roundtable Monograph*, ed. R.J. O’Brien (Washington, DC.: Georgetown University, 1971), 32.

³⁸Panevová, “On Verbal Frames in Functional Generative Description, Part I,” 4-5.

namely the lips, and thus usually remains unmentioned, as in (5), but if the author wants to stress that the lips are greasy and thus signals a rather inappropriate behaviour by Colin, the author would mark the predictable Instrument, as in (6). In these two sentences, one may conclude that the latter is more marked than the former because of the additional Instrument, with his greasy lips. A more detailed study in the function of peripheral cases may enhance our understanding of the notion of markedness.

The basic principle of these cases is similar to the question: for what purpose does who do what to whom with what for what reason on what ground in what manner at what time at what place? As far as exegesis is concerned, while such question(s) may seem simple enough, it forces exegetes to center on the activity cognitively and to reexamine how the linguistic text (or, the cotext) may foreground or background some of the semantic cases. To anticipate my application of Case Theory in Bible translation, suffice it to say that such question(s) heightens the sensitivity of the translators to different potential semantic components of the Target language.

Grammatical Cases Vis-A-Vis Semantic Cases

Though not considered the most intriguing aspect of Greek grammar, the problem of Greek cases is aptly highlighted in the opening statement of A.T. Robertson in his discussion of the subject: “Perhaps nowhere has confusion been worse confounded than in the study of the Greek cases.”³⁹ Such a statement is no exaggeration because grammarians cannot even agree on the number of cases in Greek. In this section, we would like to examine in brief traditional descriptions of different “usages” of the Greek cases found in most standard Greek grammars, and how the notion of semantic cases may help to achieve a more adequate and consistent description.

The Evolution of Cases

Chiefly represented by Robertson himself, some grammarians still assert that the Greek of the NT should be studied in the light of comparative grammar. Consequently, as most of the ancient Indo-European languages such as Sanskrit, Zend and Persian, and even the Indo-Germanic languages illustrate the eight cases, it is *suggested* that NT Greek should be studied under the same system. The term

³⁹Robertson, *Grammar*, 446.

“suggested” is not to diminish the scientific endeavor of these grammarians but it does reflect the tendency to try to accommodate all data under one single system. While one may still find traces of ablative, locative, or instrument cases in some ancient Greek dialects such as the Cypriot or Arcadian, nevertheless by the time of Hellenistic period, these cases are formally indistinct from the genitive and dative cases respectively. This is so regardless of whether one wants to describe the situation as coalescence or identification. If, however, cases are understood not as a formal but functional or semantic category (as in Robertson and Brugmann's *Griechische Grammatik*), one wonders, are there only eight uses of the five endings? Surely, by this standard, one may well cite a greater number of cases than eight. It is my assumption that, if the Greek case-system which is to be understood as a formal category functions as marking various relations between the case-bearers and the verbs or non-verbs (such as prepositions or other substantives), the Greek of the NT (and Hellenistic Greek as well) manifests only five cases.

Another difficulty in the discussion of Greek cases is that there are some major shifts in the uses of Greek cases in the different periods. Jannarius⁴⁰ points out some major changes throughout the historical development of Greek cases. Such changes begin as early as Homeric times and probably become most pertinent in the Greco-Roman period. Of the five cases used in the Classical period, only the nominative and vocative⁴¹ retain their full function by the Byzantine period (c. 600 C.E.), while the accusative case has become preferred. For instance, the dative disappears totally, while the accusative, whenever it is more or less equivalent to either or both of the other oblique cases, gradually

⁴⁰A. Jannarius, *An Historical Grammar of the Greek Language* (New York: Macmillan, 1897), #1242.

⁴¹S.E. Porter (*Idioms of the Greek New Testament* [JSOT, Sheffield University; 1992], 82), quoting Louw (“Linguistic Theory and the Greek Case System”) and others, suggests that nominative is the fundamental or foundational case in the Greek case system, while the other cases such as accusative, genitive and dative (the so-called oblique cases) are to be distinguished from the nominative case, among which the accusative is the primary one. However, by “fundamental” or “foundational,” does he refer to the case being “oldest” or “persistent”? According to ancient (such as Aristotle) and modern grammarians (such as Robertson), the nominative case does not fall into the definition of case (ὡς ἀπὸ τοῦ ὀνόματος πεπτωκυῖα), and it is the accusative which is the oldest case. Porter's description is not clear.

comes to take their place. Verbs which were regularly associated with either the genitive or dative, or with no case attached, were drawn into the accusative construction, e.g. ἀλογέω, διαφέρω, ἐντρέπομαι, ἐπιβαίνω, προσέχω, στρατεύω τινά, ὑπερηφανέω τινά. Certainly one great impulse which gives rise to the ascendancy of the accusative is the alternative of taking a preposition with its case.⁴² The final outcome of such a long struggle, as grammarians observed, was that the accusative, being the commonest and most familiar case, has gradually replaced the dative and genitive except those of the so-called “genitive proper” (i.e. subjective and objective genitive).⁴³

The evolution of Greek cases shows that to rely on the different usages of Greek cases is impractical. Does the disappearance of the dative case along with all its usages such as dative of interest (advantage or disadvantage), of respect and others, imply that some usages or even meanings have vanished? Or, is it simply that the surface representation of the usage has changed from dative to accusative? For exegetes, it is important to turn the focus away from certain formal features and look at the meaning the formal representation indicates. In this respect, it is not to say that one case is used for another (*enallage casuum*, as Winer strongly objected); rather in some contexts, two cases may be used in the same connexion equally correct, when the semantic function of the case exhibits the same relation with the head word, e.g. προσκυνέω τινί (“to show reverence”) and προσκυνέω τινά (“to reverence”), καλῶς ποιέω τινά and τινί (Act. Thom. 38), ἔνοχος τινι and τινος (Matt 5.21 and 26.66), ὁμοίος τινος and τινι --- a situation proven in the history of the language. Without assuming the “Grundbedeutung” (“Grundbegriff”),

⁴²As the burden upon the cases grew too great, the use of prepositions was increased in order to make clear the meaning of the case. Such a tendency has already been current in ancient prose and become more characteristic in Hellenistic Greek. For example: δίδωμι ἐκ (δίδωμι), ἐσθίω ἀπό (ἐσθίω), μετέχω ἐκ (μετέχω τινός), πολεμέω μετά τινος (... τινί), κατηγορέω and ἐγκαλέω κατά τινος (Lk 23.14; Rom 8.33) (G.B. Winer, *A Treatise on the Grammar of NT Greek*, trans. W.F. Moulton [Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1882], 224.

⁴³One possible explanation for the dominance of the accusative case is that the accusative by nature denotes a relation to the constructional chain without defining the relation (Louw, “*Linguistic Theory*,” 80). This may allow more flexibility for the case to accommodate other uses as the language is in the process of simplification.

or even “Gebrauchsumfang”⁴⁴ through the comparative-historical method based on the analysis of the contextual variations of usage,⁴⁵ there may not be any objectively detectable differences among the various surface representations as far as exegetes are concerned.

Semantic Cases of Cases

In describing the semantic functions of the Greek cases, it is necessary to distinguish the different *causae* of the cases. In principle, Greek case by nature is dependent; that is, cases are said to express word-relations between different kinds of words; these relations may either be adnominal⁴⁶ or adverbial.⁴⁷ Prepositional cases are excluded from this categorization because the semantics of the cases are directed by the prepositions per se. As our analysis shows below, many adnominal or adverbial cases coalesce with the prepositional cases.

Let us take as our starting point the genitive case, which has already invited much scholarly discussion.⁴⁸ The following table gives a glimpse of what the standard NT Greek grammars (BDF, ROB, TURNER,⁴⁹

⁴⁴This term is more correct than the previous two which reflect a confusion between the diachronic and synchronic approaches. According to Louw, the term was first used by K. Brugmann in *Griechische Grammatik* (Munich 1913; par 436), and was subsequently adopted in Schwyzer-Debrunner's *Griechische Grammatik*, Vol. II (Munich 1959).

⁴⁵Louw, “*Linguistic Theory*,” 75.

⁴⁶For the sake of convenience, cases determined by certain adjectives (e.g. ἄξιος + gen.) or adverbs (e.g. ἐγγύς + gen.) are also included here.

⁴⁷Case usages expressing place and time, such as the genitive, dative and accusative, are grouped under adverbial because semantically these usages modify the Activity of the proposition. Similarly, the nature of comparison should be treated as prepositional relationship and thus as adverbial use.

⁴⁸A.W. de Groot (“Classification of the uses of a case illustrated on the genitive in Latin,” *Lingua* VI [1957], 8-66), in particular, has made an endeavor to identify no less than 30 different uses such as possessive genitive, genitive of quality, partitive genitive. Turner's remark seems to the point (.207; see below): “The relationship expressed by the gen. is so vague that it is only by means of the context and wider considerations that it can be made definite. For practical purposes perhaps the only real division among the genitives is that between subjective and objective [Zerwick #25]”

⁴⁹N. Turner, *A Grammar of NT Greek. III. Syntax* (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark,

PORTER) have included in their descriptions of the case usages, among which S.E. Porter's *Idioms of the Greek New Testament* represents the most up-to-date and recent study of the subject. All grammars show considerable agreement on adverbial usages. They include comparison, place or time, and verbal collocation, such as sensation, emotion, sharing, partaking and filling, ruling, etc., which Porter summarily calls "object", though he distinguishes verbs indicating value and price. As for the adnominal usages, scholars vary among themselves, even for the same or similar appellation (see Table 1 below).

TABLE 1

	BDF	ROB	TURNER	PORTER
possessive		ROB	TURNER	PORTER
origin and relationship	BDF	ROB	TURNER	PORTER
partitive	BDF	ROB	TURNER	PORTER
quality / attributive	BDF	ROB	TURNER	PORTER
subjective	⁵⁰	ROB	TURNER	PORTER
objective	BDF	ROB	TURNER	PORTER
direction / purpose	BDF			
content / apposition	BDF	ROB	TURNER	PORTER
predicative	ROB			
concatenation with different meanings	BDF		ROB	

For instance, *Robertson's* (or, ROB) attributive genitive (p.496) and *Turner's* possessive genitive (p. 207f), though similar to *BDF's* genitive of quality (#165), actually overlap more with the genitive of origin and relationship (#162). *BDF* discusses possessive genitive under "possessive pronouns" (#284), simply because it is found only with the personal

1963).

⁵⁰*BDF's* comment on subjective genitive (#163) that "The division of the genitive into objective, subjective, etc. is really only an attempt to set off several special types among the manifold possibilities of the general function of the adnominal genitive, which is to denote a relationship," seems to be self-defeating --- after all, is this what most grammarians including *BDF* (also *ROB* and *Turner*) are intending?

pronoun, otherwise it will be classified as the genitive of origin, or even partitive genitive. ROB's discussion of the possessive genitive (p. 496), as usual, is entirely unnecessary and long-winded. Although the genitive of relationship (or "genitive of membership") is described in ROB (p.501) as a special kind of possessive genitive with the substantive supplied in the context, it refers almost exclusively to human relationship. BDF (#162), however, includes other figurative usages of *υἱός* and other types of attributive relationship (see [6] to [8]) which would otherwise be grouped in ROB's predicate genitive (p. 497). Thus, for example, 1 Thess 5.5 *υἱοὶ φωτός ἐστε καὶ υἱοὶ ἡμέρας* "you are sons of light and sons of day" and Heb 10.39 *οὐκ ἐσμὲν ὑποστολῆς* "you are not shrinking back (lit)" are listed as predicative genitive in ROB and as genitive of origin in BDF. Note also that Robertson's definition of predicative genitive is purely grammatical, depending on the presence of the predicate verb such as *εἶμί*, *γίνομαι*, etc, otherwise, this case would be identical to the partitive genitive. Turner,⁵¹ on the other hand, though using the same appellation as Robertson, restricts it to a special Pauline usage which almost exclusively applies to *θεοῦ* and *Χριστοῦ*. Sometimes, the classification is based on pure syntactic peculiarity exhibited in word order, such as the concatenation (BDF #168; ROB p. 503), and even the discussion on the special position of the genitive (e.g. *Ἑλλήνων πολὺ πλῆθος* "a great multitude of the Greeks" in Acts 14.1) in ROB (p. 502; similarly Turner [p. 218]) --- but is it truly a kind of genitive usage on a par with the others? Porter rightly omits these sections in his discussion.

Most of these classifications have neglected the semantic classes of the words involved. For instance, all the genitive relations expressing possession, origin and relationship, partitive, and quality have either Entity-Entity, Entity-Feature or Feature-Feature relations and should be considered as Entity-proposition, e.g. *τοῦ Μωϋσέως σῶμα* "body of Moses" (Jude 9), *τῶν ἵππων τοὺς χαλινούς* "the mouths of horses" (James 3.5), *τό χρηστόν τοῦ θεοῦ* "the kindness of God" = "God is good" (Rom 2.4), *τὸν Ζαχαρίου υἱόν* "Zechariah's son" (Luke 3.2), *ὁ πλοῦτος τῆς χρηστότητος αὐτοῦ καὶ τῆς ἀνοχῆς* "the riches of his kindness and patience" = "he is very kind and patient" (Rom 2.4). On the other hand, the genitive construction involving Activity is more complicated and is often treated as Activity proposition. Basically all the rest of the genitive relations mentioned in the above table are in this relationship. The genitive case word may express Agent as *Ἰωάννης* in

⁵¹Turner, *Syntax*, 212.

τὸ βαπτίσμα τοῦ Ἰωάννου = “the baptism of John” = “John baptized people”, Experiencer ἡμῶν in ἡμῶν σωτηρίας “the salvation of us” = “(God) has saved us”, Time μεγάλης ἡμέρας in κρίσις μεγάλης ἡμέρας in “judgment of the great day” = “God will judge (people) on that great day”, Manner τῆς χάριτος in λόγοι τῆς χάριτος “the words of grace” = “he spoke graciously”. Sometimes, it may even express interpropositional relationship, e.g. Intention-Purpose relationship: πρόβατα σφαγῆς “sheep for slaughter” (Rom 8.36), ὁδὸν σωτηρίας “road to salvation” (Acts 16.17), Means-Result: δικαιοσύνη πίστεως “righteousness by means of believing ...” (Rom 4.13), Circumstance: κρίσις βλασφημίας “judgement of blasphemy (reviling)” = (Michael) judged (the devil) in reviling (i.e. at the same time Michael reviled him) (Jude 9).

The importance of recognizing these semantic case is that the same case may have different surface realizations, and thus be represented by different grammatical cases. Thus, while the genitive case may indicate Instrument and Manner,⁵² so also may the dative case. For example, ἀνεῖλεν δὲ Ἰάκωβον ... μαχαίρῃ “He killed James with the sword” (Acts 12.2), φωνῇ μεγάλῃ ἐκραύγασεν “He cried out with a loud voice” (John 11.43), οὐ κατὰ κύριον λαλῶ “I do not speak in the manner of the Lord” (2 Cor 11.17). The dative is also capable of expressing other interpropositional relations such as Reason-Result, e.g. τῇ ἀπιστίᾳ ἐξεκλάσθησαν “Because of unbelief, they were broken off” (Rom 11.20).

However, according to my analysis of the case-relations in the Pauline Epistles (1990), I find that Agent, when not being the grammatical subject, is always represented syntactically by either a dative noun phrase or a prepositional phrase. Patient occurs more often in an accusative noun phrase, although other forms such as a dative noun phrase or prepositional phrase, can also occur. It is interesting to note that a

⁵²Porter (*Idioms*, 98) groups *BDF*'s Agent, Cause, Means and Manner (with Instrument) under one heading, and point out that “... it is in fact difficult to establish a specific difference in most instances. They all label a relationship by which (normally) a thing (and occasionally a person) brings about or enters into an action with respect to something else.” It is clear that Porter himself is insensitive to any distinction between intra-propositional (e.g. Agent and Manner) and inter-propositional relationships (Cause and Means), and the fact that semantically the notion of intentionality is significant to the distinction between Agent and Instrument. It would be rather difficult to appreciate the similarity found in the two dative cases in the following sentences: λαθρᾶ ἡμᾶς ἐκβάλλουσιν (Acts 16.37) and ἐλυτρώθητε ... τιμίῳ αἵματι (1 Pet 1.18-19).

noun phrase in the dative case (e.g. *δίδωμι* “appoint”) in 1 Cor 3.5, and *ἀντιστρατεύομαι* “actively oppose” in Rom 7.23 which represents a Patient, is usually [+animate]. Instrument, when not being the subject, is often converted into a dative noun phrase or a prepositional phrase (with *ἐν* or *διὰ*). Manner is represented mainly by a prepositional phrase and seldom by a noun phrase (cf. John 11.43). Comitative is often a prepositional phrase or noun phrase in the dative case.

One of the most interesting findings of this classification is that the various surface forms for the semantic cases shows how a particular semantic notion such as a specific case can be realized in the syntactic structure by means of a variety of constructions. This is in line with the general tendency of all languages to have numerous syntactic forms for a particular semantic content. This is especially important for style without which language loses much of its flavour and subtleties. On the other hand it also makes interpretation difficult due to the complexity of the syntactical possibilities. The importance of Case Theory is seen especially in this respect since it sharpens the reader's awareness of the roles of Entities and Activities (as semantic classes) which is perhaps the most intrinsic aspect of semantics. This is precisely how we make meaning out of a syntactic structure. Case Theory is a way of accounting for what we do almost sub-consciously. This is not to say that the traditional way of labelling some of the syntactic cases, say, dative as dative of possession, of agent, of association, of respect, etc., already points to the fact that syntactic cases seem to have different meanings. Unfortunately, these assumptions are very often quite misleading since they are based purely on the surface structure. Both surface and deep structure features should be considered in conjunction to determine the meaning of an utterance. Yet, since syntax and semantics do not match each other in a one-to-one relationship, the question of meaning is quite complex. The semantics of case relations is different and yet dependent on syntax. Case Theory, therefore, should be based on proper syntactic considerations in order to arrive at proper semantic interpretations. Since no one seems yet to have done any systematic and exhaustive categorization and semantic classification in this area, the kind of semantax mapping between both the surface and the semantic level could prove helpful for further research.

Appendix

For each label, an abbreviation is given in parenthesis. A concise, main definition of each case will be given first, followed by a more detailed elaboration of the usages of the case with examples taken from the Greek NT.

1. AGENT (A)

Agent is basically defined as the animate entity (including deity, and thus also natural forces) which intentionally instigates an event. Since the distinction between different kinds of Agents, such as Causative and Immediate, is not always clear, our framework does not intend to make this further distinction.

1. 1 Thess 2.14-15 ... τῶν Ἰουδαίων (A), τῶν καὶ τὸν κύριον ἀπεκτεινάντων Ἰησοῦν καὶ τοὺς προφῆτας ...

“the Jews who killed both the Lord Jesus and the prophets ...”

2. Rom 11.3 ... τὰ θυσιαστήριά σου κατέσκαψαν (A), ...

“... they tore down your altars, ...”

a) the two features, *animate* and *intentionally* are crucial to this definition. Thus, any animate entity which stimulates, or conditions change, but which has no explicit intention is not considered an Agent, but an Instrument. In Acts 12.23, although “σκωληκόβρωτος” in the clause lexically functions as the subject which performed the killing, the immediate context is made explicit by “ἐπάταξεν αὐτὸν ἄγγελος” so that, semantically, the worm is only an Instrument and the true Agent is the angel.

3. Acts 12.23 ... καὶ γενόμενος σκωληκόβρωτος (I) ἐξέψυξεν

“... and he was eaten by worms and died.”

b) in many instances, natural forces are considered superordinate to the animate Entity. Furthermore, from the viewpoint of a first century person, it would be natural to think of these natural forces as deity. Some scholars propose a separate deep case, “Force”, to cover such things as “natural Agents”.

4. Luke 8.23 καὶ κατέβη λαίλαψ ἀέμου (A) εἰς τὴν λίμνην

“A storm of wind came down on the lake...”

It is important for the analyst not to transport information from the immediate context into the verse. In Jonah 1.4b “such a violent storm arose that the ship threatened to break up”; the “violent storm” remains the Agent although in the previous clause we are told that the storm is sent by the Lord (1.4a).

c) as is usual in many literatures, non-animate Entities can take the semantic role of Agent for a certain rhetorical effect, such as synecdoche, or personification.

5. Rom 3.15 ὄξει οἱ πόδες αὐτῶν (A) ἐκχέει αἷμα

“Their feet are swift to shed blood”

6. 1 Cor 12.16 καὶ ἐάν εἴπῃ τὸ οὖς (A) ὅτι οὐκ εἰμι ὀφθαλμός ...

“And if the ear says, ‘because I am not an eye ...’”

2. EXPERIENCER (E)

Experiencer is to be defined as an animate being which experiences the effects of an action. The focus of Experiencer is on that being’s awareness, which is activated by the nervous system, especially in any cognitive activity,

such as learning, knowing, seeing etc.. Experiencer can, for example, be one of the following:

a) the one simply reacting to a physiological condition:

7. Luke 4.2 ... συντελεσθεισῶν αὐτῶν ἐπεινασεν (Ἰησοῦς) (E)

“when they (the days) were ended, Jesus was hungry”

b) the one to whom an emotional state is ascribed:

8. Phil 1.18 ... καὶ ἐν τούτῳ χαίρω (ἐγώ) (E)

“...and because of this, I rejoice”

c) the one who experiences, or is affected by an emotion such as desire, love, hate, desire etc..⁵³ This differs from Longacre's Experiencer, as there is no co-reference with Goal in our definition since Goal is restricted to locality only:

9. Rom 9.13 τὸν Ἰακώβ ἠγάπησα (E), τὸν δὲ Ἡσαῦ ἐμίσησα (E)

“I loved Jacob, but hated Esau”

10. Phlm 4 εὐχαριστῶ τῷ θεῷ (E)

“I give thanks to God”

11. Rom 14.3 ὁ ἐσθίων τὸν μὴ ἐσθίοντα μὴ ἐξουθενείτω (E)

“let the one who eats not despise the one who does not eat”

d) the one who knows something or someone, or the one who is given knowledge:

12. Rom 1.21 διότι γνότες (E) τὸν θεὸν οὐχ ὡς θεόν

“because they do not know God as God”

13. Gal 1.11 γνωρίζω γὰρ ὑμῖν (E), ἀδελφοί, τὸ εὐαγγέλιον

“for I make known to you the Gospel, brothers”

e) the recipient of the verbs of speech, or messages:

14. 1 Thess 4.15 τοῦτο γὰρ ὑμῖν (E) λέγομεν ἐν λόγῳ κυρίου

“for this, we declare to you by the word of the Lord”

15. Acts 23.16 ἀκούσας δὲ ὁ υἱὸς (E) τῆς ἀδελφῆς Παύλου τὴν

ἐνέδραν

“as the son of Paul's sister heard of the ambush”

f) some non-animate Entities, such as “συνείδησις” (1 Cor 8.12), “τὸ ἐμὸν πνεῦμα” (1 Cor 16.18), “μου τὰ σπλάγχνα” (Phlm 20), “τὴν κεφαλὴν αὐτοῦ” (1Cor 11.4), “τὸ ὄνομα τοῦ κυρίου” (2Thess 1.12) can also be the Experiencer, if they are used figuratively, as synecdoche or metonym:

16. Phlm 7 ...τὰ σπλάγχνα τῶν ἁγίων (E) ἀναπέπαιται διὰ σοῦ

“the hearts of the saints have been refreshed through you”

g) collective nouns for a group of people can also be a substitute for the people themselves:

17. 1 Tim 5.16 ... μὴ βαρεῖσθω ἡ ἐκκλησία (E) ...

⁵³By definition, the one who arouses emotion of this kind can also be interpreted as Agent, just as in verbs of knowing and learning; however what should be taken as a guideline is whether the particular semantic component which gives such a connotation of a certain case is *marked* or not. Sometimes the notion of *markedness* is based on the analyst's personal interpretation, and different analysts may analyze the notion of markedness differently.

“... let the church not be burdened, ...”

3. PATIENT (P)

Patient is to be defined as the entity of which one either predicates something or represents as undergoing a change of state or location.

18. Tit 3.13 ἡ μαρτυρία αὕτη (E) ἐστὶν ἀληθής

“This testimony is true”

19. 2 Tim 4.20 Ἐραστος ἔμεινεν ἐν Κορίνθῳ

“Erastus remained at Corinth”

20. 1 Cor 10.16 τὸν ἄρτον (E) ὃν κλῶμεν ...

“the bread which we break ...”

a) the entity may be what is being possessed, acquired, or exchanged:

21. Acts 9.2 ἠτήσατο παρ’ αὐτοῦ ἐπιστολάς (P)...

“he acquired a letter from him”

22. 2 Cor 6.10 ὡς μηδὲν (P) ἔχοντες καὶ πάντα (P) κατέχοντες

“as having nothing, and yet possessing everything”

23. Rom 1.25 οἵτινες μετήλλαξαν τὴν ἀλήθειαν (P) τοῦ θεοῦ

“they exchanged the truth about God (for a lie)”

b) although most Case Theory analysts would consider the object of verbs of seeing or knowing as Patient, they are actually non-Entity but one single or a series of embedded propositions. For instance, in John believes in Christ, in Christ is a phrase expressing Activity rather than Entity, i.e. John believes that Christ existed once in human history, had done certain things, and that John had certain relationship to him. The use of in Christ instead of the lengthy and elaborated clause(s) serves as an abbreviated core concept. Similarly ἄνθρωπον in (24) and σε in (25) are not really affected by the subject at all; rather they should be treated as propositional relation (namely, Complement), for the word ἄνθρωπον and σε represent independent information (see section 4 on “Range”).

24. 2 Cor 12.2 οἶδα ἄνθρωπον (C) ἐν Χριστῷ

“I know a man in Christ” or “I know that there is a man in Christ”

25. John 1.48 ... εἶδόν (C) σε

“... I saw you” or “... I saw *that you are there*”

c) it is usually the surface object of many verbs which do not focus on the special feature of other cases, such as benefaction, experience, or locality:

26. 2 Tim 4.18 ῥύσεται με (E) ὁ κύριος

“the Lord will rescue me”

Note that, when a psychological event is ascribed as a predicative adjective, the subject is Experiencer, and not Patient:

27. Phil 3.26 ... καὶ ἀδημονῶν (E)

“...and he has been distressed”

4. RANGE (R)

RANGE is assigned to any surface structure noun which completes the predicate by specifying the information which is complementary to the predicate.

Very often, it is the product of the Activity of the verb.

28. Col 3.16 ... ψαλμοῖς ὕμνοις ψδαῖς πνευματικαῖς (R) ἐν χάριτι ἄδοντες...

“... and sing psalms and hymns and spiritual songs with thankfulness ...”

29. 2 Tim 4.7 τὸν καλὸν ἀγῶνα (R) ἠγώνισμαι, ...

“I have fought the good fight, ...”

Semantically, words like “ψδαῖς” and “ἀγῶνα”, which are sometimes called “cognate accusative” by some grammarians, are not required by the verbs ἄδω and ἀγωνίζω, for one can be perfectly well in saying Mary is singing now or The British fought the Chinese in 1898 in Greek without mentioning explicitly what Mary is singing, or in what kind of battle the British were engaged. Notice that the case role of the Chinese would be quite different from the good fight (in [29]) in that the former is actually the opponent and is thus affected by the Event, i.e. Patient, but the latter specifies what kind of fight Paul was involved in. Because Range is used to specify a certain nature or aspect of the Event, which is oftentimes implied in the meaning of the verb, the case may indicate the markedness of the words.

Range is best defined so as not to include the content of any cognitive activity, such as verbs of saying, thinking, remembering, and believing, which should be settled as a propositional relation, specifically, Complement:

30. 2 Cor 7.7 ἀναγγέλλων ἡμῖν τὴν ὑμῶν ἐπιπόθησιν (R)

“... as he told us of your longing ...” or

“... as he told us *that* (Complement)

31. 2 Cor 1.15 ἐβουλόμην (E) πρότερον πρὸν ὑμᾶς ἐλθεῖν ...

“I intend to come to you first ...” or

“I intend that (Complement) I come to you first ...”

32. Gal 1.23 μόνον δὲ ἀκούοντες ἦσαν (E) ὅτι ὁ διώκων ἡμᾶς ...

“And they only received news, namely `the one who persecutes ...” or

“And they only received news, namely (Complement) the one who persecutes ...”

Generally speaking, the chief principle in our distinction between Range and Patient is whether the surface element in question can be taken as a piece of independent information, as far as the language reality is concerned. Thus Range is often represented by a clause in the surface structure. However, in some instances the distinction is still not easy to make, see further discussion in 5.3.1. of Wong.⁵⁴

33. 1 Tim 5.13 ἅμα δὲ καὶ ἀργαὶ μαθάνουσιν ...

“Besides, they learn to be idlers ...” or

⁵⁴Wong, “A Classification of Semantic Case- Relations.”

“Besides, they learn how they can be idlers”

In (33), the word “ἀργαί” can be syntactically attributed as appositional to the subject of the verb. However it is quite clear that they are part of what the subjects were striving to become, thus indicating a later stage: i.e. “they learn something, namely, how to be idlers”.

5. REFERENCE (R)

Reference is assigned to a kind of nominal complement, or property, which “refers to” or “identifies” a *previously* mentioned Patient in the same predication. It indicates a *later state* of the case. When the case role is found among verbs of identification, it is the same as the Patient cognitively because both of them refer to the same entity.

a) Reference can be used to identify Patient:

34. Phil 2.15 ἵνα γένησθε (P) ἄμεμπτοι καὶ ἀκέραιοι (R)

“in order that you may be blameless and innocent”

35. Col 1.23 ἐγενόμην ἐγὼ (P) ... διάκονος (R)

“I, ... became a minister”

b) Reference can also be used to name a Patient:

36. Rom 9.26 κληθήσονται (P) υἱοὶ (R) θεοῦ ζῶοντος

“they will be called sons of the living God”

37. 1 Cor 7.22 ὁ (P) ἐλεύθερος ... δούλος (R) ἔστιν Χριστοῦ

“he who was free ... is a slave of Christ”

c) Reference can also be the nominal complement, which equates with the Patient:

38. Rom 10.9 ὁμολογήσης ... κύριον (R) Ἰησοῦν (P)

“you confess...that Jesus is Lord”

d) for verbs of comparison, Reference refers to the element being compared to:

39. Rom 9.29 ... ὡς Γόμορρα (R) ἂν ὁμοιωθῆμεν

“... we would be like Gomorra”

6. BENEFACTIVE (B)

Benefactive is the case which specifies the animate being in the state of possessing, or undergoing loss or gain in the transfer of an object. It should be noted that the feature of awareness would normally not be in focus.

40. Eph 1.17 ὁ πατὴρ τῆς δόξης, δώη ὑμῖν (B) πνεῦμα σοφίας ...

“may the Father of glory give you a spirit of wisdom ...”

41. Phlm 15 ... ἵνα αἰώνιον αὐτὸν ἀπέχης (B)

“... in order that you may have him forever”

On the features of “loss” in Benefactive, see the Introduction to Chapter 6 of Wong.⁵⁵

7. LOCATIVE (L)

⁵⁵Wong, “A Classification of Semantic Case- Relations.”

Locative is defined as the locale of a predication. It is the place where the predication takes place without implying any kind of motion.

42. 1 Thess 3.1 καταλειφθῆναι ἐν Ἀθήναις (L)

“(we were willing) to be left in Athens”

An animate can be represented as Locative when it marks a location:

43. 1 Tim 6.13 ... Ἰησοῦ τοῦ μαρτυρήσαντος ἐπὶ Ποντίου Πιλάτου (L)

“Jesus who witnessed in front of Pontius Pilate”

Figurative usage of the case role often occurs in the Pauline Epistles to refer to some kinds of metaphysical state:

44. Eph 3.17 κατοικῆσαι τὸν Χριστὸν ... ἐν ταῖς καρδίαις (L)

“Christ dwelled in your hearts”

8. SOURCE (S)

Source is defined as the origin or source of a predication which involves shifts of locale.

45. Phil 3.4-5 ἐγὼ ... φυλῆς Βενιαμὴν (S)

“I ... from the tribe of Benjamin”

46. 2 Cor 11.9 οἱ ἀδελφοὶ ἐλθόντες ἀπὸ Μακεδονίας (S)

“the brothers coming from Macedonia”

9. GOAL (G)

Goal is defined as the locale which is the point of termination for a predication.

47. 2 Tim 4.12 Τύχικον δὲ ἀπέστειλα εἰς Ἐφεσοῦς (G)

“I sent Tychicus to Ephesus”

Sometimes an animate can also take the role of Goal:

48. Tit 3.12 σπουδάσον ἐλθεῖν πρὸς με (G) εἰς Νικόπολιν

“hurry to come to me at Nicopolis”

10. PATH (PA)

Path is defined as the locale which entails the transition in a motion.

49. Luke 13.22 διεπορεύετο κατὰ πόλεις καὶ κώμας (PA)

“He went on his way through towns and villages, ...”

Although it is true that Path is often found with compound verbs of which the prepositional prefix (thus, a separate morpheme) has already predicted the case (κατὰ + accusative in [49]), one should be reminded that the purpose of Case Theory is to account for the semantic relationship between verbals and nominals, irrespective of the individual morphemes. The same consideration is also applied to Comitative in section 12.

11. INSTRUMENT (I)

Instrument is defined as an unintentional animate (see section 1 “AGENT”), or an inanimate entity or body part which an Agent uses to accomplish or instigate an Event:

50. Luke 22.49 κύριε, εἰ πατάξομεν ἐν μαχαίρῃ (I)

“Lord, should we strike with the sword”

51. Rom 7.5 ... τὰ διὰ τοῦ νόμου (I) ἐνηργεῖτο

“(our sinful passions), aroused by the law”

a) sometimes, the Instrument may be lexicalized:

52. 2 Cor 11.25 τρις ἔραβδίσθην, ...

“Three times I have been beaten with rods ...”

b) an inanimate entity may even be something which conditions or triggers a change in an emotional or physical state; thus serving as a stimulus or means to the predication.

53. 1 Thess 3.7 παρεκλήθημεν ... διὰ τῆς ὑμῶν πίστεως (I)

“we have been comforted ... through your faith”

In some circumstances, Instrument and the related “cause” on the discourse level may be indistinguishable. Thus the Instrument which is used to accomplish a task can be seen as the cause of the accomplishment. In my observation, it seems that cause is very often, though not exclusively, expressed syntactically by an explicit clause, whereas Instrument is usually indicated by a prepositional phrase, which may be a result of nominalization. Furthermore causal relations can also overlap with Benefactive, for example: in 1Cor 11.9 “οὐκ ἐκτίσθη ἀνὴρ διὰ τὴν γυναῖκα” the expression “διὰ τὴν γυναῖκα”) can be taken either as indicating a causal relation or as Benefactive.

12. COMITATIVE (CO)

Comitative is defined as the case which marks the associative relationship with the verb. In most instances, the case roles apply to animate beings. See also discussion in section 10 on “PATH”.

54. 1 Pet 3.7 Οἱ ἄνδρες ὁμοίως, συνοικοῦντες ... τῷ γυναικείῳ (CO)

“Likewise you husbands, live with your wives ...”

13. MANNER (MA)

Manner is assigned to the case role which completes a predication by stating the quality and manner of certain verbs, such as appear, look, smell, and behave.

55. 1 Tim 2.2 ... διάγωμεν ἐν πάσῃ εὐσεβείᾳ καὶ σεμνότητι (MA).

“... in order that we may live godly and respectfully in every way.”

14. MEASURE (ME)

Measure is assigned to the surface structure nominal which completes a predication by quantifying it, usually indicating the price in a transfer.

56. Matt 27.3 μεταμεληθεὶς ἔστρεψεν τὰ τριάκοντα ἀργύρια (ME)

“he repented and paid back the thirty silver coins ...”

It may be argued that the case roles Measure and Manner may be accommodated into Range. However, as far as my interpretation is concerned, the notional structure of these two cases with their corresponding verbs functions more specifically than that of the Range. Furthermore, these cases often appear as adverbial adjuncts (as peripherals) with many different kinds of verbs, to include Measure and Manner, as Range would somehow minimize the descriptive specification of the semantics of the clause.

15. TIME (TM)

Time is assigned to the case role which completes a predication by giving the time indication. Very often, Time expressions are contextually specified, but on the other hand, verbs such as spend would naturally include the Time case.

57. Luke 24.21 ... τρίτην ταύτην ἡμέραν ἄγει

“Jesus is spending the third day ...”

ABSTRACT

This paper applies a modern linguistic theory called Case Theory to demonstrate the usefulness of semantic case in the analysis and description of different grammatical cases of the Greek language. Because the focus of the semantic cases is not on the different usages of the grammatical endings (i.e. language specific), but the semantic relationship of different components of a proposition, which is language universal, one could readily transfer these semantic relationships across different languages. The nature of all the semantic cases may be summarized in the following question: “for what purpose does who do what to whom with what for what reason on what ground in what manner at what time at what place?” The importance of the study on semantic cases is that different cases may be represented by various and different grammatical components. Case Theory may help a reader to scrutinize the different semantic relationship between the two semantic classes, namely, Entities and Activities, which are the two most intrigue elements in the study of meaning. For this reason, the study of semantic cases proves itself useful both in inter-lingual translation and exegesis.

撮要

本文依據一近代語言學理論「格的理論」(Case Theory) 說明語意格 (semantic case) 能夠有效地研究希臘文的不同格 (grammatical case) 的各種語意功能。語意格的目的，並非將焦點放在不同變格詞尾 (grammatical endings)，而是有別於全面評估和重整文法格的不同用途，從而探討在一命題組合上的語意關係。由於這些語意關係已脫離了文法層面 (即是語文的特殊性)，我們可以將之轉換到不同的語言上。總而言之，所有語意格的本質，都可以變成以下一個問題：「在甚麼時候、甚麼地方、哪一個人以甚麼理由、爲了甚麼目的、基於甚麼緣故、向甚麼人做了甚麼？」確定這些語意格的重要性，在於不同的語意格可以不同的文法層面上表達出來。格的理論可以幫助讀者更能意識到兩組語意類別 (Classes) 上實體 (Entities) 及事情 (Activities) 的不同關係，而此實乃語意的關鍵部分。因此對語意的研究有助於深入研經及翻譯的工作。