24.902 Homework #5: Case
[Due Wednesday 10/22/03]

Part 1:

Explain, referring specifically to principles of case assignment, how each NP in the following sentences does or does not get assigned case. This means, for NPs that are OK, name the case assigner and draw a tree or relevant tree fragment to show the structural configuration of case assignment. For NPs that are not OK, find the nearest imaginable case assigners and explain why case is not assigned.

a. Mary has placed a star near the sentence.
   b. I consider sushi to be delicious.
   c. Tom arranged for Sue to leave.
   d. *It is believed [John to have died].
   e. *[his destruction Rome] failed.
   f. *I am eager [John to leave].

Part 2: Passives and Case in Icelandic

To do this problem, you must have a good grasp of case theory and how it applies to passive constructions in English. This problem set takes you beyond what we did in class. What we did in class is background, but this problem set leads you to discover something new -- something new and simple. If your answer is too complex, you're on the wrong track.

Note: A few of the forms in this problem set might be wrong. In some cases, this might be due to a typo (e.g. an accent mark omitted). In other cases, I made up some verb forms on analogy with other forms. My guesses are probably right, but there might be a few errors. However, the glosses always point you in the right direction.

Icelandic is a head-initial language. Please assume that it has more or less the phrase structure of English, including phonologically null I where you don't hear an "I" word. Don't worry about verb movement, though in reality there is verb movement. For the purposes of this problem set, assume all verbs stay put.

Eventually, we will talk about movement in passive constructions. The examples involving movement (and other, so-called quirky case marking) to English. Assume Icelandic is exactly like English except where it is obviously different.

1. Now look at examples (5)-(12). What modifications or additions to the statements above are motivated by examples (5)-(12)? Be explicit, and very clear, referring to specific examples.

(2) a. Hann telur Jón hafa kysst Maríu.  
    he believes John to-have kissed Mary
    NOM  ACC

   b. *Hún reyndist Jón hafa kysst Maríu.  
    she tried John to-have kissed Mary
    NOM  ACC

(3) a. María var kysst (af Jóni).  
    Mary was kissed (by John)
    NOM

   b. *Pað var kysst María/Maríu (af Jóni).  
    it was kissed María/Maríu (by John)
    NOM/ACC

(4) a. María er tallið hafa kysst Jón.  
    Mary is believed to-have kissed John
    NOM

   b. *Pað er tallið María/Maríu hafa kysst Jón.  
    it is believed María/Maríu to-have kissed John
    NOM/ACC

However, a significant number of Icelandic verbs require their subject or object to bear some other, so-called quirky case marking. In this problem set, we see quirky DATIVE and ACCUSATIVE subjects and quirky DATIVE and GENITIVE objects. What is of particular interest to us is what happens to quirky subjects and objects in passive sentences.

1. Draw trees for each of the sentences in (2)-(4), explaining how each NP is or is not assigned case. This means, for NPs that are OK, name the case assigner and draw a tree or relevant tree fragment to show the structural configuration of case assignment, and why the (b) sentences are not. Please assume that believe and other verbs subcategorize for the same sorts of phrases in Icelandic as they do in English.

2. Consider the following statements, which do pretty well for examples from languages with overt case that we discussed in class:
   1. Nominative case on NP is assigned by finite I to the specifier of IP.
   2. If an NP bears nominative case, it bears nominative morphology.
   3. Accusative case on NP is assigned by a V that minimally c-commands it.
   4. If an NP bears accusative case, it bears accusative morphology.

Now look at examples (5)-(12). What modifications or additions to the statements above are motivated by examples (5)-(12)? Be explicit, and very clear, referring to specific examples.

Hint: Compare the patterns of acceptable and unacceptable NPs (as well as the patterns of movement) to English. Assume Icelandic is exactly like English except where it is obviously different.

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1. The letter Dðð is a voiced interdental fricative. The letter  ð is the voiceless counterpart. [The former should look like a D with a line through it, and the latter should look like a p whose lefthand vertical line extends above the curved part. This is a check to make sure the font downloaded to your printer correctly.]

2. The word Pað that occurs in a number of these examples is an expletive element in Icelandic that can occupy otherwise empty subject positions in several constructions. The examples involving Pað are given to demonstrate something about movement in passive constructions.
Quirky subjects.

(5) a. Mig langar að fara til Islands.
me longs to go to Iceland
ACC
b. Batinn rak á land.
the-boat drifted to land
ACC
c. Honum mælíst vel í kirkjunni.
him spoke well in church
DAT
d. Eldingu sló niður í húsið.
lightning struck down into the-house
DAT
e. Mér býður við setningafræði.
me is-nauseated at syntax
DAT

(6) a. Hann telur mig langa að fara til Islands.
he believes me to-long to go to Iceland
NOM
ACC
b. Hann telur batinn hafa rekið á land.
the-boat to-have drifted to land
ACC
c. Hann telur honum hafa malast vel í kirkjunni.
him to-have spoken well in church
DAT
d. Hann telur eldingu hafa slegið niður í húsið.
lightning to-have struck down into the-house
DAT
e. Hann telur mér bjóða við setningafræði.
me to-be-nauseated at syntax
DAT

Quirky objects.

(8) a. Deir björguðu stúlkunni.
they rescued the-girl
DAT
b. Deir luku kirkjunni.
they finished the-church
DAT
c. Stúlkan beðið min.
the-girl awaited me
GEN
d. Við vitjúðum Olafs.
we visited Olaf
GEN

(9) a. Stúlkunni var bjargað (af Jóni).
the-girl was rescued (by John)
DAT
b. Kirkjunni var lokíð (af Jóni).
the-church was finished
DAT
c. Mín var beðið (af Jóni).
me was awaited
GEN
d. Olafs var vitjað (af Jóni).
Olaf was visited
GEN
   it was rescued the-girl (by John)
   DAT

   b. *Pað var lokið kirkjunni (af Jóni).
   it was finished the-church
   DAT

   it was awaited me
   GEN

   d. *Pað var vitjað Olafs (af Jóni).
   it was visited Olaf
   GEN

By now you should have a pretty good idea of what’s going on. Make sure that your analysis also predicts the contrasts below (cf. the (4a-b) pair).

(11). a. Mig er talið langa að fara til Islands.
   me is believed to-long to go to Iceland
   ACC

   b. Batinn er talið hafa rekið á land.
   the-boat is believed to-have drifted to land
   ACC

   c. Honum er talið hafa mælast vel í kirkjunni.
   him is believed to-have spoken well in church
   DAT

   d. Eldingu er talið hafa slegið niður í húsið.
   lightning is believed to-have struck down into the-house
   DAT

   e. Mér er talið bjóða við setningafræði.
   me is believed to-be-nauseated at syntax
   DAT

   it is believed me to-long to go to Iceland
   ACC

   b. *Pað er talið batinn hafa rekið á land.
   the-boat to-have drifted to land
   ACC

   c. *Pað er talið honum hafa mælast vel í kirkjunni.
   him to-have spoken well in church
   DAT

   d. *Pað er talið eldingu hafa slegið niður í húsið.
   lightning to-have struck down into the-house
   DAT

   e. *Pað er talið mér bjóða við setningafræði.
   me to-be-nauseated at syntax
   DAT