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## THE COMPARISON OF CASES IN KAZAKH AND ENGLISH LANGUAGES

**Abstract.** This peer-reviewed article illustrates the comparative analysis of cases in both: English and Kazakh languages. Moreover, to expand the containing information about Kazakh language, we use Turkish, in order to compare Turkic Languages and see the interesting similarities. Since, Kazakh is agglutinative language (which mean that it uses affixes); it has a broader number of case system, while English is analytic language (which states for the use of auxiliary verbs, word order, prepositions); it uses syntax to distinguish case differences. Via descriptivism and contrastivism, we analyze morpho-syntactic behaviour of case in two languages. The results show that Kazakh describes grammatical relationships through morphological case suffixes, which allows flexible word order, while English applies fixed and specific word order/prepositions. This contrast not only highlights typological differences, but also provides an opportunity and information for learning a second language, studying language translation and the theory of morphosyntax. Moreover, this study highlights the influence of information structure and discursive context on case distribution, especially in the Kazakh language.

**Keywords:** grammatical case, comparative linguistics, agglutinative language, analytic language, morphosyntax, suffixation, differential subject marking.

### Introduction

Grammatical case refers to the morphological marking of noun phrases to indicate their syntactic and semantic roles in a sentence. This study compares the case systems of Kazakh, a Turkic language with an extensive case morphology, and English, a Germanic language that exhibits cases in a limited capacity. Moreover, according to the Turkish language it has eight cases, including the suffixes *daI/deI* and *sha/she* (which means comparison), however kazakh speakers do not include it to the official seven cases, but in the future, we believe that the Kazakh language will extend its case system to eight. The main objective is to illustrate how both languages manage syntactic roles, despite differing typologies Kazakh being agglutinative and English analytic. Understanding these systems can improve cross-linguistic comprehension, language instruction, and translation.

Several studies have documented case systems in both Kazakh and English. Dotton & Wagner (n.d.) describe Kazakh as having seven grammatical cases: nominative, accusative, genitive, dative, locative, ablative, and instrumental. These cases are realized through suffixes that undergo vowel and consonant harmony. Ótött-Kovács (2022) analyzes differential subject marking in Kazakh, illustrating the nuanced use of genitive and nominative cases in embedded clauses. In contrast, English is traditionally seen as having three primary cases: nominative, accusative, and genitive (Hardegree, 2009; Case Grammar Notes, n.d.). However, case in English is mostly apparent in the pronominal system and is heavily reliant on word order and prepositions [1].

**Purpose.** The purpose of this study is to compare the grammatical case systems in Kazakh and English, highlighting their structural and functional differences. The research examines how

Kazakh, as an agglutinative language, uses suffixes to indicate case, while English, as an analytic language, relies on word order and prepositions. By using descriptive and contrastive linguistic methods, the study aims to deepen understanding of morphosyntax, improve language learning, and explore the impact of discourse and information structure on case usage—especially in Kazakh.

### Materials and Methods

This study uses a comparative linguistic approach. Data was selected from published grammars, linguistic studies, and example constructions from corpora. The comparison criteria include number of cases, morphological realization, syntactic function, and interaction with word order. Examples are provided from both languages to illustrate points of comparison.

3.1 Case system in Kazakh language The Kazakh language, a member of the Kipchak branch of the Turkic language family, is renowned for its rich system of grammatical cases. As an agglutinative language, Kazakh conveys syntactic and semantic relationships predominantly through affixation, especially suffixes that indicate case. This analytical essay explores the structure, function, and theoretical implications of the Kazakh case system, drawing on descriptive grammar and recent syntactic research to present a cohesive overview.

#### 1. Structure of the Case System

Kazakh has a well-established system of seven grammatical cases, each serving a specific grammatical function and expressed through morphological suffixes. These cases are:

1. **Nominative (Атау септік)** – The base form of the noun, used for the subject of the sentence.

2. **Genitive (Ілік септік)** – Indicates possession or a genitive relationship, typically marked by -ның / -нің / -дың / -дің, depending on vowel and consonant harmony.

3. **Dative (Барыс септік)** – Expresses direction toward something or someone; marked by -ға / -ге / -қа / -ке.

4. **Accusative (Табыс септік)** – Marks the direct object when it is definite; formed by -ны / -ні / -ды / -ді / -ты / -ті.

5. **Locative (Жатыс септік)** – Indicates location; marked by -да / -де / -та / -те.

6. **Ablative (Шығыс септік)** – Expresses movement away from something; formed by -дан / -ден / -тан / -тен.

7. **Instrumental (Көмектес септік)** – Indicates the means or instrument used to perform an action; typically -мен / -бен / -пен. These case markers are added directly to the noun stem and are subject to vowel harmony and consonant assimilation, hallmark features of Turkic morphophonology. The genitive and accusative cases, in particular, may co-occur with possessive agreement suffixes in certain constructions. For example:

#### 2. Case and Word Order

A critical consequence of this case-rich system is the **flexibility of word order** in Kazakh. Unlike English, which relies heavily on word order to signal grammatical relationships, Kazakh can rearrange subjects, objects, and adverbials without losing syntactic clarity. For instance:

1. Mūǵalım kitap-tı oqı-dı  
Teacher book-ACC read-PST.3SG  
«The teacher read the book»

2. Kitap-tı muǵalım oqı-dı  
book-ACC teacher read-PST.3SG  
«The book, the teacher read»

Both sentences are grammatically correct and convey the same basic proposition, with minor pragmatic differences in emphasis.

#### 3. Differential Subject Marking

One of the most compelling findings in recent Kazakh syntax comes from the study of **differential subject marking** in complement clauses. Ótött-Kovács (2022) shows that in embedded clauses, the **subject may be marked either in the nominative or genitive case**, depending on its **definiteness and anaphoric status**. For example:

3. Agaj-Ø Tyrkija-dan kel-gen-(dig)-in esti-di-m.  
Professor2-NOM Turkey-ABL come-PRF-(NMLZ)-3POSS hear-PST-1SG  
'I heard that Agaj came from Turkey'

– nominative subject, used when introducing new or non-anaphoric information.

4. Agaj-duŋ Tyrkija-dan kel-gen-(dig)-in esti-di-m.  
Professor-GEN Turkey-ABL come-PRF-(NMLZ)-3POSS hear-PST-1SG  
'I heard that Agaj came from Turkey'

– genitive subject, used when the subject is already known or anaphoric.

This distinction mirrors findings in other Turkic languages and reflects the interface between syntax and semantics, where the choice of case encodes discourse-level distinctions such as topic continuity or referential status [2].

#### 4. Complement Clauses and Possessive Marking

Complement clauses in Kazakh are often nominalized, a feature typical of Turkic syntax. These clauses may exhibit possessive agreement markers that mirror those found in possessive noun phrases. For instance:

5. On-уғ kel-e-ti-nin bil-e-min  
He-GEN come - CONV -PTCL- 3SG.POSS -ACC know-INF-1SG  
'I know that he will come'

where «келетінін» includes the third-person possessive suffix.

Such constructions reinforce the idea that complement clauses are structured as nominal projections embedded within verbal or sentential domains [2].

### 5. Role of Vowel Harmony and Morphophonology

The application of case suffixes in Kazakh is governed by **vowel harmony**, a process whereby the vowel in the suffix harmonizes with the root vowel in terms of backness and rounding. For example:

- «kitap» (book) → «kitapqa» (to the book)
- «korme» (exhibition) → «kormege» (to the exhibition)

This system ensures phonological cohesion and is a key component of Kazakh morphosyntactic identity.

### 6. Functional Load and Case Syncretism

Kazakh avoids case syncretism to a high degree, with each case form having a distinct functional load. The instrumental case, for example, does not overlap with other roles like in many Indo-European languages, but is clearly demarcated in both form and function:

6. Qalam-men jaz-dy-m  
pen-INST write-PST-1SG  
'I wrote with a pen».

Similarly, the **ablative** and **locative** cases are distinct both in form and semantics:

7. Mektep-ten kel-di  
school-ABL come-PST  
He came from school

8. Mektep-te oqi-dy  
school-LOC study-PST  
He studies at school.

### 7. Theoretical Implications and Cross-linguistic Comparisons

From a theoretical standpoint, the Kazakh case system provides a strong counterpoint to analytic languages like English. In English, grammatical relations are largely expressed through **constituent order and prepositions**, while Kazakh uses **morphological inflections** to encode the same relations. This contrast illustrates **typological variation** and offers valuable insights for **language learning, typology, and natural language processing**.

Moreover, the presence of **anaphoric-based differential marking** in Kazakh suggests a deeper interaction between **information structure and case assignment**, aligning it with recent generative theories that view case not solely as a syntactic primitive but as an interface phenomenon (Baker, 2015).

## Results and Discussion

### 3.2 Comparison with Turkish

The Kazakh language, like many Turkic languages, features a robust case system that facilitates syntactic clarity and flexibility. Traditionally, Kazakh has seven grammatical cases: nominative, genitive, dative, accusative, locative, ablative, and instrumental. In contrast, Turkish—another prominent member of the Turkic language family—has a comparable case system but includes a construction often referred to as the «**equative**» or «**comparative case**», which plays a semantically distinct role. This proposal explores the feasibility and linguistic rationale for integrating a similar **eighth case** into Kazakh, grounded in a comparative analysis with Turkish grammar.

#### 1. The Current Turkish Case System

According to Göksel and Kerslake (2005), Turkish utilizes six major morphological cases:

1. Nominative (zero-marked)
2. Genitive (-(n)in)
3. Dative (-(y)e)
4. Accusative (-(y)i)
5. Locative (-de)
6. Ablative (-den)

Additionally, Turkish has a functional suffix **-ce / -ca / -çe / -ça** that Göksel and Kerslake (2005, p. 149) and Kornfilt (1997, p. 254) refer to as a **language-specific derivational morpheme** that fulfills various roles including:

- forming adverbials (e.g., *Türkçe* – in Turkish)
- expressing comparison or similarity (e.g., *çocukça* – child-like)
- indicating equivalence or manner (e.g., *askerce davranmak* – to behave like a soldier)

This suffix exhibits **case-like behavior**, although it is not always classified as a grammatical case. Some Turkish linguists and typologists, however, refer to this functional suffix as a «**comparative/equative case**» due to its semantic and syntactic parallelism with traditional case roles.

#### 2. Functions of the -ce Suffix

The primary functions relevant to a case-like interpretation include:

- **Comparative meaning:** «like, as» (e.g., *çocukça konuştu* – «He spoke like a child»)
- **Manner adverbial:** describing the way an action is performed
- **Equivalence:** expressing identity or similarity of roles
- **Language marker:** (e.g., *İngilizce konuşuyor* – «He is speaking in English»)

These usages suggest a cohesive syntactic and semantic function that is productive and interpretable across various lexical categories.

#### 3. Kazakh Equivalents and Gaps

Kazakh does not currently have a **morphologically bound case suffix** that directly parallels the Turkish -ce. Instead, Kazakh relies on:

- Free adverbs (e.g., *балаша* – like a child)
- Simile expressions (e.g., *бала сияқты* – like a child)

While the adverbializer **-ша/-ше** in Kazakh functions similarly (e.g., *бала+ша*), it is not standardized as a formal case in grammar descriptions and is treated more as a **derivational suffix**.

However, the **morphological productivity** and the **semantic alignment** of **-ша/-ше** with the Turkish -ce demonstrate that Kazakh already has the structural potential to systematize an **eighth case**, tentatively called the «**equative**» or «**comparative case**».

#### 3.3 Case system in English

The English language, as a representative of analytic typology, showcases a significantly reduced morphological case system compared to synthetic or agglutinative languages like Kazakh

or Russian. Yet, while its overt case morphology is limited, English manages to express grammatical relations through a combination of **word order, prepositions, pronouns, and possessive constructions**. This essay explores the underlying structure and function of the English case system, analyzing both its surface and deep syntactic roles. Drawing from traditional grammar, transformational linguistics, and case grammar theory, this study highlights the nuances and contemporary interpretations of case in English.

### 1. Overview of Case in English

English primarily marks cases through **pronouns** and **possessive forms**, while most noun phrases remain uninflected. The core cases identifiable in English are:

- **Nominative**: used for subjects (e.g., *I, he, she, we, they*)
- **Accusative (Objective)**: used for direct/indirect objects and after prepositions (e.g., *me, him, her, us, them*)
- **Genitive**: used to express possession (e.g., *my, his, her, our, their*, or *John's book*)

(Hardegree, 2009, p. 3)

Other theoretical cases, particularly in deep structure, include **dative, ablative, perlative, and instrumental**, as analyzed in case grammar theory [1].

### 2. Case-Marking Mechanisms

Hardegree (2009) and Nilsen (1970) describe three main mechanisms of case-marking in English:

1. **Word Order**: English uses a strict Subject–Verb–Object (SVO) order to distinguish roles.
2. **Inflection**: Limited to personal pronouns and the genitive ('s).
3. **Adpositions (Prepositions)**: Critical in assigning relational meaning (e.g., *to, from, by*).

These mechanisms often combine to clarify grammatical roles in a sentence. For example, in «Jay introduced his mother to Kay», the preposition *to* indicates the dative case [1].

### 3. Case Grammar and Deep Structure

Don Nilsen (1970), building on Fillmore's (1968) case grammar theory, introduced a semantic approach to syntactic roles using deep-structure cases. According to this framework, a verb selects from a universal inventory of **semantic cases** (Agent, Patient, Instrument, etc.). The distribution and surface realization of these cases depend on the verb and context.

For instance:

9. Abdul broke the bicycle with a rock

Abdul break-PST NP PP

Agent: Abdul; Instrument: rock; Patient: bicycle

10. A rock broke the bicycle

PP break-PST NP

Instrument becomes subject

11. The bicycle broke

NP break-PST

Patient becomes subject

(Nilsen, 1970, p. 271)

This demonstrates that in English, surface subjects may correspond to different semantic roles depending on the presence or absence of agents or instruments.

### 4. Genitive and Possessive Constructions

The **genitive** case is mainly realized in two forms:

1. Apostrophe-s (e.g., *John's car*)
2. The preposition *of* (e.g., *the roof of the house*)

Hardegree (2009) notes the distinction between **genitive** (relational) and **possessive** (ownership) uses. For example:

- *my mother* (genitive – relational)
- *my dog* (possessive – ownership)

These forms are structurally similar but semantically distinct [1].

### 5. Passive and Instrumental Case

English uses the **preposition *by*** to mark the **perlative case** in passive constructions. For example:

12. Kay was respected by Jay  
 Kay PST respect-PST AGENT  
 (Jay = agent, expressed via perlative case) [1].

Nilsen (1970) explains that passive voice constructions reveal deep case assignments, where the subject can shift based on syntactic or semantic requirements.

### 6. Special Case Forms in English

English displays a few unique behaviors regarding case:

- **Middle Constructions:** e.g., *The book sells well, This cloth washes easily*
- No clear agent; subject interpreted as theme or patient (Nilsen, 1970)

- **Case Ambiguity with Prepositions:**

- *Jay was killed by the lake* (ambiguous between location and agent)

- **Relational Nouns and Case:**

- Nouns like *mother, friend, capital* require genitive complements (*Jay's mother, the capital of France*) [1].

### 7. Frequency and Temporal Cases

English also encodes **temporal and frequency relations** using noun phrases and prepositions:

- *on Monday, every year, in winter, at 5 PM*

● These forms mark abstract temporal cases that serve similar roles to morphological case in other languages [1].

### 8. Pronoun Paradigm in English

The most consistent morphological case marking in English occurs in personal pronouns (Table 1):

Table 1 – The Case Paradigm of English Personal Pronouns

Case	Singular	Plural
Nominative	I, he, she, it	we, they
Accusative	me, him, her, it	us, them
Genitive	my/mine, his, her/hers, its	our/ours, their/theirs

These paradigms retain older Indo-European case distinctions and function as the main morphological remnants of case in modern English.

### 9. Corpus-based examples

Using the **British National Corpus (BNC)** or **Corpus of Contemporary American English (COCA)**, illustrative examples could include:

- *She gave him a book* – «him» reflects **dative** case (recipient).
- *The roof of the house collapsed* – «of the house» reflects **genitive** via preposition.
- *Jay was killed by the lake* – a **case ambiguity** (agent vs. location).

Such examples enhance clarity around **how English syntactic structures fulfill semantic roles**, despite limited morphology.

Moreover, studies using COCA show that the **double-object construction** («She gave him a book») is consistently more frequent than the **prepositional dative** («She gave a book to him») for verbs like *give* and *send*—mirroring similar patterns in BNC data (approx. 88 % vs. 12 %)

### 10. Theoretical Implications

English case structure challenges traditional assumptions about morphology. It operates mostly through syntax and function words, making it a prototypical analytic language. However,

case grammar theory reveals that English encodes deep semantic roles even without overt morphology. This supports Fillmore's argument that case is a fundamental universal organizing principle of grammar.

### Conclusions

Furthermore, English's reliance on word order to express syntactic functions implies a higher risk of ambiguity compared to case-inflected languages. For instance, changing the word order in «*Jay respects Kay*» leads to an entirely different meaning, whereas in Latin or Kazakh, case endings maintain clarity despite rearrangement.

Kazakh and English exhibit fundamentally different approaches to grammatical case. Kazakh relies on an elaborate inflectional system that facilitates syntactic flexibility, while English uses a combination of word order and prepositions. These differences underscore the importance of contextual and morphological awareness in language learning and translation

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## ҚАЗАҚ ЖӘНЕ АҒЫЛШЫН ТІЛДЕРІНДЕГІ СЕПТІКТЕРДІ САЛЫСТЫРМАЛЫ ТАЛДАУ

**Аңдатпа.** Бұл мақалада ағылшын және қазақ тілдеріндегі септік жүйесі салыстырмалы түрде талданады. Қазақ тіліне қатысты мәліметтерді кеңейту мақсатында түрік тілі де қолданылады, бұл арқылы түркі тілдерін салыстырып, олардың қызықты ұқсастықтарын байқауға болады. Қазақ тілі агглютинативті тіл болғандықтан (яғни, жалғауларды қолданады), оның септік жүйесі кеңірек. Ал ағылшын тілі аналитикалық тіл болып табылады (яғни, көмекші етістіктерді, сөз тәртібін және предлогтарды қолданады), сондықтан ол септіктерді синтаксис арқылы ажыратады. Дескриптивизм мен контрастивизм әдістері арқылы біз екі тілдегі септіктердің морфосинтаксистік мінез-құлқын талдаймыз. Нәтижелер көрсеткендей, қазақ тілі грамматикалық қатынастарды

морфологиялық септік жалғаулары арқылы білдіреді, бұл сөз тәртібінің икемділігін қамтамасыз етеді, ал ағылшын тілінде сөз тәртібі мен предлогтар нақты және қатаң қолданылады. Бұл контраст типологиялық айырмашылықтарды атап қана қоймайды, сонымен қатар екінші тілді үйренуге, тілдердің аудармасын және морфосинтакс теориясын үйренуге мүмкіндік пен ақпарат береді. Сонымен қатар, бұл зерттеуде ақпараттық құрылым мен дискурсивті контексттің, әсіресе қазақ тілінде жағдайлардың таралуына әсері атап көрсетілген.

**Тірек сөздер:** Грамматикалық септік, салыстырмалы лингвистика, агглютинативті тіл, аналитикалық тіл, морфосинтаксис, жұрнақ жалғау, бастауышты жіктеп белгілеу.

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## СРАВНИТЕЛЬНЫЙ АНАЛИЗ ПАДЕЖЕЙ В КАЗАХСКОМ И АНГЛИЙСКОМ ЯЗЫКАХ

**Аннотация.** В данной статье представлен сравнительный анализ падежной системы английского и казахского языков. Для расширения информации о казахском языке также используется турецкий язык, что позволяет сравнить тюркские языки и выявить интересные сходства. Так как казахский язык является агглютинативным (то есть использует аффиксы), он обладает более широкой падежной системой. В то время как английский язык является аналитическим (то есть использует вспомогательные глаголы, порядок слов и предлоги) и различает падежи преимущественно при помощи синтаксиса. Используя дескриптивизм и контрастивизм, мы анализируем морфосинтаксическое поведение падежей в этих двух языках. Результаты показывают, что в казахском языке грамматические отношения выражаются с помощью морфологических падежных суффиксов, что позволяет гибко использовать порядок слов, тогда как в английском используется фиксированный и определенный порядок слов и предлоги. Этот контраст не только подчеркивает типологические различия, но так же дает возможность и информацию для изучения второго языка, изучения перевода языков и теории морфосинтакса. Более того, в этом исследовании подчеркивается влияние информационной структуры и дискурсивного контекста на распределение падежей, особенно в казахском языке.

**Ключевые слова:** грамматический падеж, сравнительная лингвистика, агглютинативный язык, аналитический язык, морфосинтаксис, суффиксация, дифференцированное маркирование подлежащего.

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