The facts in Hebrew are illustrated by the following examples:

(1) קָאָרָתֵי היאָ תַּפָּר | קָאָרָתֵי תַּפָּר.
  a. מָדִית מִי רָאִית?
  b. מָדִית מִי רָאִית?

The particle נִקּוֹת marks objects. A form that indicates the function of a NP in the sentence is called case, and the form that marks that an NP is the object is called accusative case. So נִקּוֹת is accusative case. But it is only used when the object is definite, or, in the case of question words, animate.

Definiteness / Specificity

(2) **Turkish**
  
  objects have accusative suffix only if they are specific
  
a. Hasan ḍıkūz- ü uilder.
  Hasan ox- ACC bought
  ‘Hasan bought the ox.’
  
b. Hasan bir ḍıkūz uilder.
  Hasan a ox bought
  ‘Hasan bought an ox.’
  
c. Hasan bir ḍıkūz- ü uilder.
  Hasan a ox- ACC bought
  ‘Hasan bought a (specific) ox.’

Other factors (often referred to as animacy)

(3) **Russian**
  
  masculine singular nouns (declension Ia) have accusative suffix only when animate.
  
  I saw boy- ACC / hippopotamus- ACC
  ‘I saw the boy/hippopotamus.’
  
b. Ja videl dub / stol.
  I saw oak / table
  ‘I saw the oak/table.’

(4) **Dyirbal**
  
  objects are accusative only if they are 1st or 2nd person
  
a. ḇana jaja ɲamba- n.
  we child hear- NFUT
  ‘We heard the child.’
  
b. ḇana n’urra- na ɲamba- n.
  we you.PL- ACC hear- NFUT
  ‘We heard you.’

(5) **English**
  
  objects are accusative if they are pronouns and (in the singular, where there is a difference in form) animate.
  
a. I saw him (*he).
  b. I saw it.
  c. I saw the student / the book.
(6) **Catalan**
objects are accusative if they are pronouns
a. No m’ havien vist a mi.
   NEG 1sgOBJ they have seen ACC me
   ‘They hadn’t seen me.’
b. A ell no el vul.
   ACC him NEG 3msgOBJ I want
   ‘Him, I don’t want.’
c. No havien vist l’ alcalde.
   NEG they have seen the mayor
   ‘They had not seen the mayor.’

(7) **Pitjantjatjara**
objects are accusative if they are pronouns or proper names. (ERG is ergative Case, a Case used in this language to mark (some) subjects)
a. Tjitjiŋku ngayu nya nga ngu.
   child ERG me ACC see PST
   ‘The child saw me.’
b. Tjitjiŋku Billy nya nga ngu.
   child ERG Billy ACC see PST
   ‘The child saw me.’
c. Billy lu tjitji nga ngu.
   Billy ERG child see PST
   ‘Billy saw the child.’

**Both**

(8) **Spanish**
objects are accusative iff they are both animate and definite (or specific)
a. El director busca el carro / un empleado.
   the manager look.for.PRES the car / a employee
   ‘The manager is looking for the car/an employee.’
b. El director busca a (el) empleado / a un empleado.
   the manager look.for.PRES ACC the employee / ACC a employee
   ‘The manager is looking for the employee / a certain employee.’
(9) **Persian**

objects have accusative suffix if they are specific, or, optionally otherwise, preferably if they are animate

a. Hasan ketāb- rā did.
Hasan book- ACC saw
‘Hasan saw the book.’

b. Hasan yek ketāb did.
Hasan a book saw
‘Hasan saw a book.’

c. Hasan yek ketāb- rā did.
Hasan a book- ACC saw
‘Hasan saw a (specific, important) book.’

d. Mard- i- rā did.
man- INDEF ACC he.saw
‘He saw a man.’

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**Phenomena of this kind are widespread!!!**

This handout covers the following language families: Afro-Asiatic, Altaic, Indo-European, and Pama-Nyungan. It is also found in Dravidian languages, Uralic languages, and elsewhere.