

# Absolutely a Matter of Degree: The Semantics of Structural Case in Finnish

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## 1. Functional categories

- (1) What are the functional categories of a language? A proposal.
  - a. Syntax: functional categories are projected by functional heads.
  - b. Morphology: functional categories are assigned by affixes or inherently marked on lexical items.
  - c. Null elements may mark default values in paradigmatic system of functional categories.
  - d. Otherwise functional categories are not specified.
- (2)
  - a. Diachronic evidence: syntactic projections of functional categories emerge hand in hand with lexical heads (e.g. Kiparsky 1996, 1997 on English, Condoravdi and Kiparsky 2002, 2004 on Greek.)
  - b. Empirical arguments from morphology (e.g. Kiparsky 2004).
- (3) Minimalist analysis of Accusative vs. Partitive case in Finnish (Borer 1998, 2005, Megerdoo-  
mian 2000, van Hout 2000, Ritter and Rosen 2000, Csirmaz 2002, Kratzer 2002, Svenonius  
2002, Thomas 2003).
  - a. Accusative is checked in AspP, a functional projection which induces telicity.
  - b. Partitive is checked in a lower projection.
    - (1) rules out AspP for Finnish.
- (4) Position defended here (Kiparsky 1998):
  - a. Accusative case is assigned to complements of BOUNDED (non-gradable) verbal pred-  
icates.
  - b. Otherwise complements are assigned Partitive case.
- (5) Partitive case in Finnish:
  - a structural case (Vainikka 1993, Kiparsky 2001),
  - the default case of complements (Vainikka 1993, Anttila & Fong 2001),
  - syntactically alternates with Nominative, Genitive, and Accusative case.

- Following traditional grammar, we'll treat Accusative as an abstract case that includes in addition to Accusative itself, the Accusative-like uses of Nominative and Genitive (for a different proposal, see Kiparsky 2001).
- (6) Three types of Partitive in Finnish:
- a. The VP-Partitive ('aspectual').
  - b. The NP-Partitive ('quantificational').
  - c. The Partitive of negation.
- (7) The VP-partitive is assigned to objects of most atelic predicates:
- a. Etsi-n karhu-a / kah-ta karhu-a.  
seek-1Sg bear-**Part** / two-**Part** bear-Part  
'I'm looking for the (a) bear / (the) two bears'
  - b. Etsi-n #karhu-n / #kaksi karhu-a / #karhu-t.  
seek-1Sg bear-**Acc** / two-**Acc** bear-Part / bear-Pl**Acc**  
'I'm looking for the (a) bear / two bears / the bears'
- (8) Some verbs that assign Partitive case to their objects: *halveksia* 'despise', *ihailla* 'admire', *ikävöidä* 'yearn for', *harrastaa* 'be interested in (as a hobby)', *huvittaa* 'amuse', *ikävystyttää* 'bore', *inhota* 'feel revulsion towards', *kadehtia* 'envy', *karttaa* 'avoid', *kehua*, *ylistää* 'praise', *kiinnostaa* 'interest', *kiittää* 'thank', *kunnioittaa* 'honor', *moittia* 'blame, reprimand', *onnitella* 'congratulate', *pelätä* 'fear', *rakastaa* 'love', *sietää* 'tolerate', *siunata* 'bless', *toivoa* 'hope for', *valittaa* 'complain about', *vihata* 'hate', *väsyttää* 'tire', *koettaa*, *yrittää* 'try', *pyytää* 'ask for', *merkitä*, *tarkoittaa* 'mean', *ajatella*, *pohtia* 'think about', *harkita* 'consider', *matkia* 'imitate', *paeta* 'flee', *kysyä* 'ask for', *heiluttaa* 'swing back and forth', *ravistaa* 'shake', *keinuttaa* 'rock', *nyökyttää* 'nod', *suudella* 'kiss', *hyvällä* 'caress', *koskettaa* 'touch', *hieroa* 'rub, massage'.
- (9) Accusative is assigned by most telic predicates:
- a. Tapo-i-n #karhu-a / #kah-ta karhu-a  
kill-Pst-1Sg bear-**Part** / two-**Part** bear-Part  
'I killed the (a) bear / (the) two bears'
  - b. Tapo-i-n karhu-n / kaksi karhu-a / karhu-t (#vuode-n)  
kill-Pst-1Sg bear-**Acc** / two-**Acc** bear-Part / bear-Pl**Acc** (year-Acc)  
'I killed the (a) bear / two bears / the bears (#for a year)'
- (10) Some verbs that assign Accusative case to their objects: *saada* 'get', *löytää* 'find', *saavuttaa* 'reach', *ostaa* 'buy', *ottaa* 'take', *säästää* 'save', *pudottaa* 'drop', *suorittaa* 'carry out', *kadottaa*, *menettää*, *hukata* 'lose (possession)', *hävitä* 'lose (game, fight)', *löytää* 'find', *hyväksyä* 'accept', *panna*, *asettaa* 'put', *tappaa* 'kill', *antaa*, *lahjoittaa* 'give', *kaataa* 'fell', *mainita* 'mention', *siepata* 'catch', *omaksua* 'appropriate', *ripustaa* 'hang', *istuttaa* 'plant', *myöntää* 'admit', *kieltää* 'deny'.
- (11) Ambivalent verbs (union of case patterns in (7) and (9)):
- a. Ammu-i-n karhu-a / kah-ta karhu-a  
shoot-Pst-1Sg bear-**Part** / two-**Part** bear-Part  
'I shot at the (a) bear / at (the) two bears'
  - b. Ammu-i-n karhu-n / kaksi karhu-a / karhu-t  
shoot-Pst-1Sg bear-**Acc** / two-**Acc** bear-Part / bear-Pl**Acc**  
'I shot the (a) bear / two bears / the bears'

(12) Some ambivalent verbs: *syödä* ‘eat’ (*söi piirakkaa* (part.) ‘ate pie, some of the pie’, *söi piirakan* (acc.) ‘ate a/the pie’), *leikata* ‘cut’, *kaivaa* ‘dig’, *kirjoittaa* ‘write’, *lukea* ‘read’ (part.): ‘read (at least part of)’, acc.: ‘read up to some point’, usually ‘finish reading’), *tutkia* ‘investigate’, *siirtää* ‘move’, *sekoittaa* ‘mix’, *lyödä* ‘beat’ (part.: ‘beat or hit (at) someone’, acc.: ‘beat someone at something’), *nimittää* ‘name’ (part.: ‘call (by a name)’, acc.: ‘nominate’), *muistaa* ‘remember’ (part.: ‘commemorate’, ‘remember someone with a gift or greeting on a special occasion’, acc.: ‘recall’).

(13) Mattila-n Eero ampui sonni-n ja Kaurase-n Jari pien-tä, vain 115 kiloi-sta  
 Mattila-Gen Eero.Nom shot bull-Acc and Kauranen-Gen Jari small-Part only 115 kilo-Adj-Part  
 lehmä-ä, jonka Kalevi sitten lopetti.  
 cow-Part, which-Acc Kalevi.Nom then finished  
 ‘Eero Mattila shot [and killed] a bull elk and Jari Kauranen shot a small cow which only weighed 115 kilo and which Kalevi then finished off.’  
<http://yhdistykset.vlk.fi/spms/mietteita.htm>

(14) Degree achievements (including motion verbs) yield a subtler contrast:

- a. Siirsi-n isoäiti-ä  
 move-Past1Sg grandma-Part  
 ‘I moved grandma.’ [around, a ways]
- b. Siirsi-n isoäidi-n  
 move-Past1Sg grandma-Acc  
 ‘I moved grandma.’ [to another place]

(15) Degree adverbs force Partitive.

- a. Siirsi-n isoäiti-ä (#isoäidi-n) vähän / kaksi metri-ä  
 move-Past1Sg grandma-Part (#grandma-Acc) a little / 2-Acc meter-PartPl  
 ‘I moved grandma a little / two meters.’
- b. tunnen hän-et (#hän-tä)  
 know-1Sg him-Acc (#him-Part) a bit  
 ‘I know him/her a little’
- c. tunnen hän-tä (#hän-et) vähän  
 know-1Sg him-Part (#him-Acc) a bit  
 ‘I know him/her a little’

(16) Resultative predication (overt or implicit) allows Accusative.

- a. Hiero-i-n si-tä  
 rub-Pst-1Sg it-Part  
 ‘I rubbed it’
- b. Hiero-i-n sen / sitä pehmeä-ksi  
 rub-Pst-1Sg it-Acc / it-Part soft-SgTrnsf  
 ‘I kneaded it soft’
- c. Ravist-i-n matto-a (pää-tä-ni)  
 shake-Pst-1Sg carpet-SgPart (head-SgPart-1Sg)  
 ‘I shook the carpet (my head)’
- d. Ravist-i-n mato-n (#pää-ni)  
 shake-Pst-1Sg carpet-SgAcc (head-SgAcc-1Sg)  
 ‘I shook (out) the carpet (my head)’

- e. Äiti makas-i lapse-nsa kuoliaa-ksi  
 mother-SgN lie-Pst-3Sg child-SgAcc-3Sg dead-SgTransl  
 ‘The mother overlay her child’
- f. Luin kirja-a  
 read-Pst-1sg book-Part  
 ‘I was reading the book.’
- g. Luin kirja-n (loppu-un) / (repale-i-ksi)  
 read-PAST-1SG book-Acc (end-Illat) / (shred-Pl-Transl)  
 ‘I read the book (to the end) / (to shreds)’
- h. Rakast-i-n tei-tä  
 love-Pst-1Sg you-PlPart  
 ‘I loved you’
- i. Rakast-i-n te-i-dä-t rappio-lle  
 love-Pst-1Sg you-PlAcc ruin-Adess  
 ‘I loved you into ruin’ (Eino Leino)

(17) **The NP-Partitive:** NP objects with quantitatively indeterminate (unbounded) reference ( $\approx$  mass terms and bare plurals) are Partitive regardless of the verb.

Ets-i-n / tapo-i-n karhu-j-a (vuode-n)  
 seek-Pst-1Sg / kill-Pst-1Sg bear-Pl-Part (year-Acc)  
 ‘I sought / killed bears (for a year)’

(18) Quantitative determinacy, or boundedness (not telicity, definiteness, or specificity) is what counts:

- a. Joulu-ksi sato-i lun-ta.  
 Christmas-Transl rain-Past(3Sg) snow-Part  
 ‘For Christmas, it snowed.’
- b. Joulu-ksi sato-i pysy-vä-n lume-n.  
 Christmas-Transl rain-Past(3Sg) stay-Prt-Acc snow-Acc  
 ‘For Christmas, there fell a permanent (amount of) snow.’
- c. Aki-lla on iso-t silmä-t.  
 Aki-Adess have-3Sg big-PlAcc eyes-PlAcc  
 ‘Aki has big eyes’
- d. Aki-lla on iso-j-a silm-i-ä.  
 Aki-Adess have-3Sg big-PlPart eyes-PlPart  
 ‘Aki has big eyes (in his possession)’

(19) **The Partitive of negation:** Objects of negated verbs are Partitive (except under certain conditions when they have contrastive focus).

- a. E-n tapa karhu-a / kah-ta karhu-a / karhu-j-a.  
 Not-1Sg get bear-Part / two-Part bear-Part / bear-Pl-Part  
 ‘I won’t kill the (a) bear / (the) two bears / bears’
- b. E-n tapa \*karhu-n / \*kaksi karhu-a / \*karhu-t.  
 Not-1Sg kill bear-Acc / two-Acc bear-Part / bear-PlAcc  
 ‘I won’t kill the (a) bear / two bears / the bears’

(20) Implicit negation:

- a. On-ko sinu-lla kynä?  
Be-Q you-Adess pencil-**Acc**  
'Do you have a pencil?'
- b. On-ko sinu-lla kynä-ä?  
Be-Q you-Adess pencil-**Part**  
'Do you have a pencil (by any chance)?'

(21) *Silitää*, 'stroke, pet' (atelic), 'smooth, iron (clothes)' (either atelic, 'to iron smoother', or telic, 'to iron smooth').

- a. **Silitin karhuja**: (1) "I petted the bears" (VP-partitivity), or (2) "I petted (some) bears" (both VP-partitivity and NP-partitivity).
- b. **Silitin paitoja**: (1) "I was ironing ('ironing away at', 'making smoother') the shirts" (VP-partitivity), or (2) "I ironed (some) shirts" (NP-partitivity), or (3) "I was ironing (some) shirts" (both).
- c. **Silitin housuja**: (1) "I was ironing a/the (pair of) pants", (2) "I was ironing the pants (a fixed number)" (VP-partitivity), (3) "I ironed (some) pants" (NP-partitivity), (4) "I was ironing (some) pants" (both).
- d. **En silitänyt housuja**: (1) "I wasn't ironing a/the (pair of) pants", (2) "I wasn't ironing the pants (fixed number)" (VP-partitivity), (3) "I didn't iron (any) pants" (NP-partitivity), (4) "I wasn't ironing (any) pants" (both), (5) "I didn't iron a/the (pair of) pants", (6) "I didn't iron the pants (fixed number)" (partitive of negation).

(22) • How to unify the case patterns?

- How to distinguish the different types of verbal predicates?

(23) • Finnish case marking depends on the GRADABILITY of the VP's denotation. An object is Accusative if and only if its VP has a BOUNDED reading (Heinämäki 1984, Kiparsky 1998), i.e. denotes no gradable property.

- The denotation of the VP depends on the inherent meaning of the verb and on the nature of its object and adverbial modifiers.
- Verbs like (7) are inherently gradable, verbs like (9) are inherently non-gradable. Verbs like (11) are compatible with both readings, which is disambiguated by the case of the object.

*Gradable predicates:*

The hunter shot at a bear some more.  
The customer touched the vase slightly.  
How much did you study the theorem?  
Fred used the book a bit.  
Mary loved Bill enormously.

*Bounded predicates:*

#The hunter killed a bear some more.  
#The customer bought the vase slightly.  
#How much did you prove the theorem?  
#Fred finished the book a bit.  
#Mary married Bill enormously.

(24) A generic reading confers gradability (degree adverbs and partitive case OK).

I looked for the key a lot.

(#)I found the key a lot.

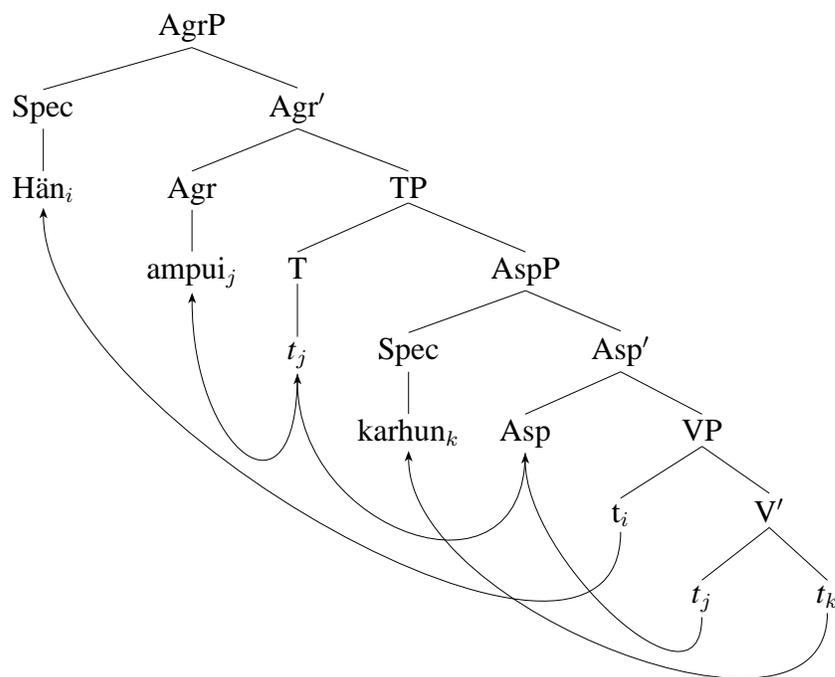
I expected this present less than Alice did.

(#)I got this present less than Alice did. (OK: this kind of present.)

- (25) Puutarhuri istutt-i paljon tätä ruusu-a.  
gardener plant-Past3Sg much this-**Part** rose-**Part**  
'The gardener planted this (kind of) rose a lot.'
- (26) A few dimensions of gradability and some adverbials that diagnose them:
- Degree of change. E.g. *shorten the rope* (by a little, by 50cm).
  - Degree to which result state is achieved. E.g. *shorten the rope* (to 10 meters, to half its length), *clean the kitchen* (superficially, thoroughly).
  - Amount of the theme argument involved. E.g. *see the bear, cross the desert* (in part, fully).
  - (Intended) duration of result state: E.g. *lend the book* (briefly, overnight, for a month). (Finnish has unambiguous translative adverbs for this, e.g. *viikoksi* 'for a week'. See Piñon 1999 for the semantics of this type of measure phrase.)
  - Duration of event (durative, iterative, progressive): E.g. *kill the bear* (quickly, slowly), *drop the ball* (repeatedly, all the time).
- (27) Hän avas-i ikkuna-a  
He open-Past3Sg window-**Part**  
(1) 'He opened the window' (by  $x$  amount)  
(2) 'He opened the window' (to  $x$  degree of openness)  
(3) 'He opened the window' ( $x$  much of it)  
(4) 'He opened the window' (for  $x$  amount of time)  
(5) 'He was opening the window' (during  $x$  stretch of time) [progressive]  
(6) 'He opened the window' ( $x$  times)
- (28) The  $x$ 's can be fixed by explicit measure phrases, inherent lexical properties of the predicate, and/or contextual inference (Kennedy & Levin 2001). If all are fixed, the partitive is excluded.
- (29) Rule (23) also covers the NP-partitive (since a VP with a mass noun or bare plural object is necessarily unbounded).
- (30) Accusative case is a POSITIVE POLARITY ITEM (like English *some*). This accounts for the "partitive of negation".

## 2. Is Accusative case checked in AspP?

- (31) The minimalist account (Borer 1998, 2005, Megerdoomian 2000, van Hout 2000, Ritter and Rosen 2000, Csirmaz 2002, Kratzer 2002, Svenonius 2002, Thomas 2003).
- Each structural case is checked by an AGREE relation between a functional head and a lexical item with matching feature values. So, since Partitive and Accusative are structural cases, they must be checked by different functional heads.
  - Accusative is checked in AspP, a functional projection which induces telicity.
  - Partitive is checked in a lower projection.
- (32) Resulting derivation of *Hän ampui karhun* 'He shot the bear' (Accusative).



### Argument 1: A Missed Generalization

- (33) This case-checking mechanism can't account for the NP-partitive. Since the NP- and VP-partitives can't be related, a generalization is lost.

Historically, the NP-Partitive arose first (grammaticalized from a 'from' case) and was then generalized to the VP-Partitive. This historical process would be incomprehensible if the two uses were unrelated.

### Argument 2: Asp Mismatch

- (34) No syntactic evidence for AspP or for any raising of Accusative objects (Nelson 1998:147, Kiparsky 1998). What is more, conjunction facts tell against AspP:

- a. Lue-n lehde-n ja kirja-a.  
 read-1Sg paper-Acc and book-Part  
 'I read a/the newspaper and a/the book' [finishing the paper but maybe not the book]  
[users.utu.fi/mataso/lehtoriviikko.htm](http://users.utu.fi/mataso/lehtoriviikko.htm)
- b. Potilas voi levä-tä ja pala-ta työ-hön.  
 patient.Nom can-(Past) rest-Inf and return-Inf work-III  
 'A/the patient is/was able to rest and return to work.'

The functional features of a shared predicate must distribute over all conjuncts. In (b), the verb *voi* is ambiguous between Present and Past, but the sentence has only two readings, not four. This generalization would break down in (a), under the AspP theory.

### Argument 3: Atelic Predicates that Assign Accusative

- (35) Atelic predicates which are bounded assign *Accusative* case!

- a. Omist-i-n #karhu-a / #kah-ta karhu-a  
Own-Pst-1Sg bear-**Part** / two-**Part** bear-Part  
'I owned the (a) bear / (the) two bears'
- b. Omist-i-n karhu-n / kaksi karhu-a / karhu-t (vuode-n)  
Own-Pst-1Sg bear-**Acc** / two-**Acc** bear-Part / bear-Pl**Acc** (year-**Acc**)  
'I owned the (a) bear / two bears / the bears (for a year)'

Minu-lla on sinu-t / #sinu-a.  
I-Adess be-3Sg you-**Acc** / you-**Part**

'I have you.'

- (36) Atelic verbs that assign Accusative case: *omistaa*, *omata* 'own', *sisältää* 'contain', *käsittää* 'comprise', *muis-  
taa* 'remember', *tietää* 'know' ('savoir'), *tuntea* 'know' ('connaître'), *ymmärtää* 'understand' (something),  
*myöntää* 'acknowledge', *katsoa* 'regard, consider', *oivaltaa* 'realize', *uskoa* 'believe' (something), and nona-  
gentive perception verbs: *nähdä* 'see', *kuulla* 'hear', *maistaa* 'taste' (nonagentive), *haistaa* 'smell' (nonagen-  
tive) *huomata*, *havaita*, *keksiä* 'notice', *tajuta* 'be aware of', *kokea* 'experience', *oivaltaa*, *hoksata* 'realize'.  
But agentive perception verbs such as 'look at', 'listen', 'taste', 'smell', 'think about' assign Partitive.

*Remark:* Estonian is like Finnish, except that the counterparts of (36) assign *Partitive*.

(37) Cognitive grammar

- a. "It would appear that Finnish considers 'seeing' an achievement. . ." (Lees 2003).
- b. ". . . the motivation for the use of the Accusative is the cognitive strategy of conceptual-  
izing an in itself static situation via a dynamic, in this case telic, meaning. The telicity  
is thus only encountered at the level of subjective conceptualization, not in the referent  
situation itself." (Huumo MS).

- (38) Kratzer's extended telicity: 'own' and 'know' assign Accusative because they satisfy Map-  
ping to Events [if you own something, you own all its subparts].

- Does not extend to perception verbs.

- (39) And does not really work for 'own' and 'know' either.

- a. Omist-i-n se-n tunni-n  
own-Past-1Sg it-**Acc** hour-**Acc**  
'I owned it for an hour.'
- b. Telic predicates take iterative/durative affixes, e.g. *availla* (iterative), *aukaista* (mo-  
mentaneous), *aukoa* (durative), from *avata* 'open'. The verbs in (36) don't: *\*omistella*,  
*\*omistaista*,. . .).
- c. Omist-i-n se-n melkein  
own-Past-1Sg it-**Acc** almost  
'I almost owned it.' (unambiguous)

- (40) Gradability makes the right distinction

*Gradable:*

Mary wanted this copy very much.  
John fears the outcome greatly.  
John modified the password radically.  
The box protects the necklace considerably.

*Ungradable:*

#Mary owned this copy very much.  
#John knows the outcome greatly.  
#John remembered the password radically.  
#The box contains the necklace considerably.

- (41) a. Matti lainas-i kello-a  
 Matti borrow-Past3Sg watch-**Part**  
 ‘Matti borrowed a/the watch.’ [temporarily]
- b. Matti lainas-i kello-n  
 Matti borrow-Past3Sg watch-**Acc**  
 ‘Matti borrowed a/the watch.’
- (42) Partitive goes optionally “down” into complements:  
 Matti koett-i muista-a nime-n / nime-ä  
 Matti try-Pst-3Sg remember-Inf name-Sg**Acc** / name-Sg**Part**  
 ‘Matti tried to remember a/the name’

#### Argument 4: Telic Predicates that Assign Partitive

- (43) Telic predicates with Partitive objects: Degree achievements (Hay, Kennedy, and Levin 1999).
- a. Räätäli lyhens-i hamet-ta (tunni-n)  
 tailor shorten-Past3Sg skirt-**Part** hour-Acc  
 ‘The/a tailor shortened the/a skirt [made it shorter] (for an hour).’
- b. Räätäli lyhens-i hamee-n (#tunni-n)  
 tailor shorten-Past3Sg skirt-**Acc** hour-Acc  
 ‘The/a tailor shortened the/a skirt [made it short] (#for an hour).’
- c. Räätäli lyhens-i hamee-n (#hamet-ta) metri-n pituise-ksi (#tunni-n)  
 tailor shorten-Past3Sg skirt-**Acc** (skirt-**Part**) meter-Gen long-Transl (hour-Acc)  
 ‘The/a tailor shortened the/a skirt to a meter’s length (#for an hour).’
- d. Räätäli lyhens-i hamet-ta senti-n verran (#tunni-n)  
 tailor shorten-Past3Sg skirt-**Part** cm.-Gen by (hour-Acc)  
 ‘The/a tailor shortened the skirt by a centimeter (#for an hour).’

(44)	<i>päänsä</i> ‘his head- <b>Acc</b> ’	<i>päättään</i> ‘his head- <b>Part</b> ’
	<i>nosti</i> ‘lifted’	714 991
	<i>laski</i> ‘lowered’	326 58
	<i>kohotti</i> ‘raised’	109 179
	<i>kallisti</i> ‘inclined’	106 186
	<i>pani</i> ‘put’	34 0
	<i>asetti</i> ‘placed’	23 0
	<i>pudisti</i> ‘shook’	0 1090
	<i>nyökkäsi</i> ‘nodded’	0 58

- (45) Measure phrases make predicates telic, *without affecting object case*: The VP in (43d) is telic but has a Partitive object.
- (46) Could the measure adverbs be outside the scope of case assignment? No, the whole VP is included: predicates of higher VPs can determine downstairs case.

- a. Koet-i-n (#pää-t-i-n) tappa-a karhu-a (tunni-ssa)  
try-Pst-1Sg (decide-Pst-1Sg) kill-Inf bear-**Part** (hour-Iness)  
'I tried (#decided) to kill the/a bear (in an hour)'
- b. Pää-t-i-n koetta-a tappa-a karhu-a  
decide-Pst-1Sg try-Inf kill-Inf-III bear-**Part**  
'I decided to try to kill the/a bear'
- c. #Koet-i-n päättä-ä tappa-a karhu-a  
try-Pst-1Sg decide-Inf kill-Inf-III bear-**Part**  
'I tried to decide to kill the/a bear'
- d. Koet-i-n (#pää-t-i-n) lyhentä-ä hamet-ta metri-n pituise-ksi  
try-Pst-1Sg (decide-Pst-1Sg) shorten-Inf skirt-**Part** meter-Gen long-Transl  
'I tried (#decided) to shorten the skirt to a meter's length.'

- How does the higher verb determine whether the object can move to AgrO in the lower clause?

(47) Telicity depends on entire VP, including adverbs.

(48) In non-object positions, distribution of Partitive is determined by the same conditions. Predicate adjectives:

- a. Tämä viini o-n paras  
This-**Nom** wine-**Nom** be-3Sg best-**Nom**  
'This wine is the best'
- b. Tämä viini o-n paras-ta  
This-**Nom** wine-**Nom** be-3Sg best-**Part**  
'This wine is of the best (the best kind)'
- c. Nämä mansika-t o-vat kesä-n ensimmäise-t  
These-**NomPI** strawberries-**NomPI** be-3Pl summer-Gen first-**NomPI**  
'These strawberries are the season's first'
- d. Nämä mansika-t o-vat kesä-n ensimmäis-i-ä  
These-**NomPI** strawberries-**NomPI** be-3Pl summer-Gen first-**PartPI**  
'These strawberries are some of (among) the season's first'

### Argument 5: Coercion shows that partitive is interpretable

- (49) a. Tapo-i-n juuri karhu-a.  
kill-Pst1Sg just bear-**Part**  
'I was just killing the bear.'
- b. Matti ost-i (juuri) auto-a, (kun...)  
Matti buy-Pst3Sg (just) car-Sg**Part**, (when...)  
'Matti was (just) buying a car, (when...)'
- (50) a. #Matti voitt-i kilpajuoksu-a.  
Matti win-Past3Sg race-**Part**  
'Matti was winning the race.'

- b. Matti ol-i voitta-ma-ssa kilpajuoksu-a.  
 Matti was win-Prtcpl-Iness race-**Part**  
 ‘Matti was winning the race.’

(51) Conclusions

- a. No phrase structural difference between Partitive and Accusative objects, so correctly predict that they have identical syntactic properties.
- b. Explains why sentences with Accusative objects are aspectually unambiguous but sentences with Partitive objects are aspectually ambiguous (just to the extent allowed by (28)).
- c. Predicts observed dissociation between telicity and object case. Unbounded telic predicates have Partitive objects, bounded atelic predicates have Accusative objects.
- d. Explains why quantitative determinacy (rather than definiteness or specificity) is the relevant factor for the NP-partitive.
- e. Long-distance effects by case checking at VP level:  
 $[ V [ V NP ]_{VP} ]_{VP}$
- f. A VP’s aspectual properties can be determined by any element in the VP (and not just by its objects), so e.g. predicative adjectives are subject to the same case constraints. Also, related constraints apply in other phrasal domains (quantifier system).
- g. The simple relationship between overt morphosyntax and functional categories in (1) can be maintained.

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