Direct Object Morphology and the Role of the Partitive in Finnish

Koen Van Hooste

Structure of this Presentation

1) Concept of 'Case'
2) Observations
3) DO Marking in Finnish
4) Partitive case – Functions
5) Summary

1) Concept of Case

Case	Singular	Dual	Plural
Nominative	aśvaḥ	aśvau	aśvāḥ
Accusative	aśvam	aśvau	aśvān
Instrumental	aśvena	aśvābhyām	aśvaiḥ
Dative	aśvāya	aśvābhyām	aśvebhyaḥ
Ablative	aśvāt	aśvābhyām	aśvebhyaḥ
Genitive	aśvasya	aśvayoḥ	aśvānām
Locative	aśve	aśvayoḥ	aśveṣu
Vocative	aśva	aśvau	aśvāḥ

Case ≈ number, person etc. (Corbett 2008)

Case = packaging strategy to encode relations between Head and Dependents

Two Classes of Case

Structural cases: NOM, DAT, ACC, (GEN)

➜Encode core arguments

Semantic cases: LOC, ABL, TRA,...

➜ Encode abundance of information

Working Definition

Case is a double-layered (a morphosyntactic and a morphological layer) nominal feature driven by two underlying principles –'Identify' and 'Distinguish' – with the marking of certain head-dependent relationships as its goal.

2) Observations – To keep in mind...

'Aberrations'?

- ▸ Finnish does not have DAT
- ▸ Hungarian does not have GEN
- ▸ Finnish has a 'Partitive'

➔ Hungarian looks more 'regular' than Finnish

3) DO marking in Finnish

ACC in Finnish: Only with Personal Pronouns

Tunnetko	minut?	Tunnetko	meidät?
Tunne–t–ko	minu\t?	Tunne–t–ko	meidä\t
know–PRS.2SG–Q	I\ACC	know–PRS.2SG–Q	we\ACC
'Do you know me?'		'Do you know us?'	

If DO is not a PRS.PRN, then the matter is more complex

DO is in the SG number ➔ GEN.SG-morphology

Minä   osta-n   kirja-n
I.NOM   buy-PRS.1SG   book-GENACC
'I buy a book.'

However! If DO is not only SG but also has partitive reading ➔ Partitive Singular

Juon	kahvia		kahvin
juo–n	kahvi–a		kahvi–n
drink–PRS.1SG	coffee–PART.SG		coffee–GENACC
'I drink (some) coffee.'			'coffee'

Hungarian:

Iszok (valamennyi)	kávét
Iszok (valamennyi)	kávé–t
I drink(some)	coffee–ACC

Partitive Subject

Kahvi-a   on   kupi-ssa
Coffee-PART.SG   is   cup-INE
'There is some coffee in the cup'

Kahvi   on   kupi-ssa
Coffee.NOM   is   cup-INE
'Coffee is in the cup (implication: all of the coffee)

If PL DO is quantitatively indeterminate ➜ PART.PL

Ostan   kyniä
Osta–n   kyn–i–ä
buy–PRS.1SG   pen–PL–PART
'I buy pens.'

Explicit Quantity? ➔ PART.SG

Ostan   kaksi   kynää
osta-n   kaksi   kynä-ä
buy-PRS.1SG   two   pen-PART.SG
'I buy two pens.'

Definite and Plural? ➔ NOM(ACC).PL

Ostan   kynät
osta-n   kynä-t
buy-PRS.1SG   pen-NOMACC.PL
'I buy the pens.'

Plural, quantified and definite?
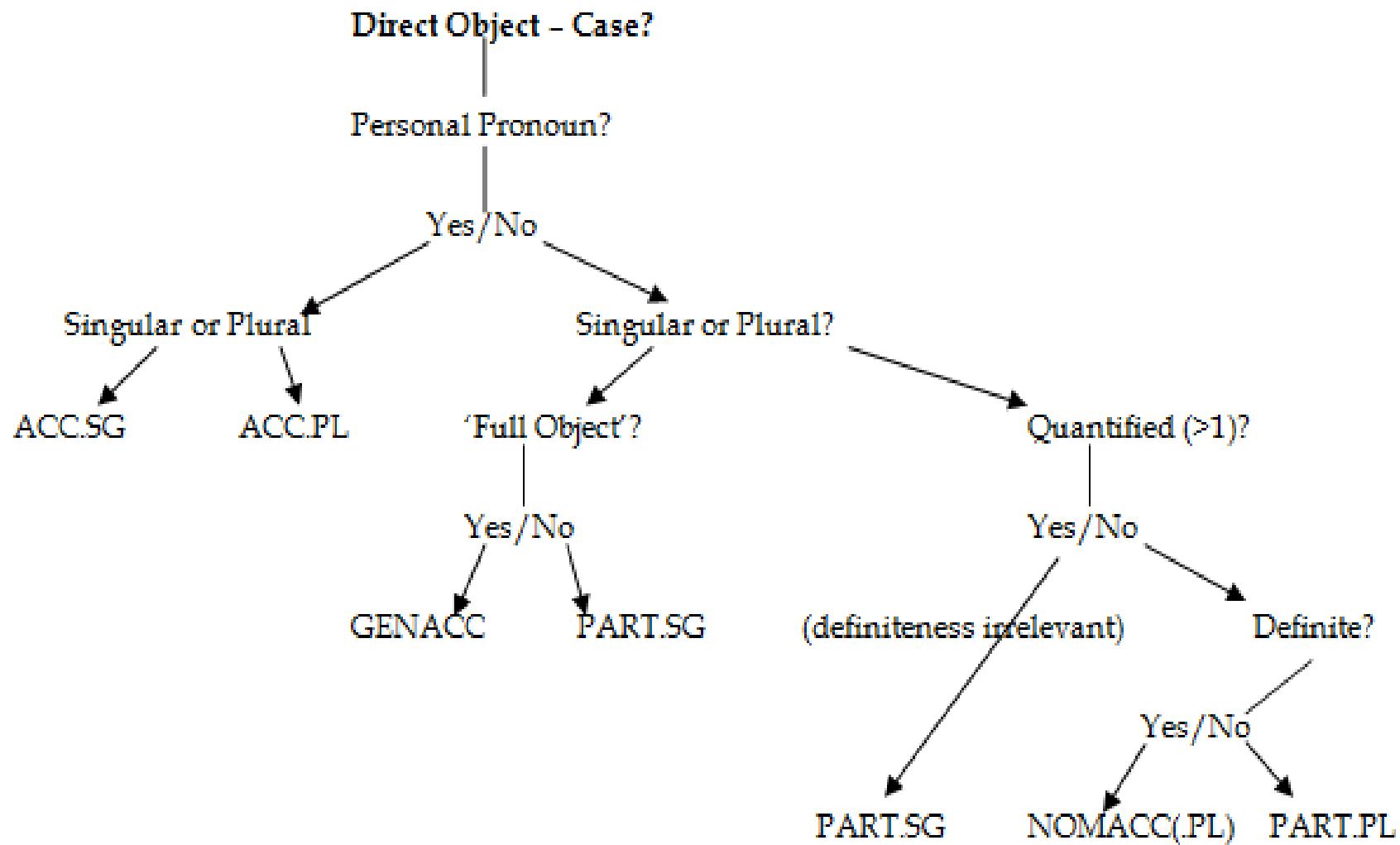➔ **<u>also</u>** PART.SG

Ostan	kaksi	kynää
Osta-n	two	kynä-ä
Buy-PRS.1SG	two	pen-PART.SG

'I buy (the) two pens' ➔ deduce from context

Decision Tree

Hungarian? ➔ ACC.SG or ACC.PL with 'A(z)' as Definite and 'egy' as indefinite article

Finnish: Highly complex

4) Partitive case – Functions

2 functions (Kiparsky 1998):

Aspectual function

NP-related function

NP-Related Function

Omista-n   karhu-j-a
own-1.SG   bear-PL-PART
„I own bears."

Omista-n   karhu-t
Own-1.SG   bear-NOMACC.PL
"I own the bears"

NP-Related Function

Quantitatively indeterminate ➔ Partitive

Otherwise ➔ Accusative

However: Quantifiers trigger partitive!

Ostan   kaksi   kynää
osta-n   kaksi   kynä-ä
buy-PRS.1SG   two   pen-PART.SG
'I buy two pens.'

Aspectual Function

Ammu-i-n   karhu-a
shoot-PST-1.SG   bear-PART
„I shot at the bear"

Ammu-i-n   karhu-n
Shoot-PST-1.SG   bear-ACC
"I shot the bear dead" (i.e. The process of shooting is over)

Aspectual Function

Unbounded ➜ Partitive Object

Bounded ➜ Accusative Object

Other function – Negation

Osta-n   auto-n
Buy-PRS.1SG   car-ACC
'I buy a car'

En   osta   auto-a
NeV.PRS.1SG   NeLV.stem   car-PART.SG
'I do not buy a car'

5) Summary

- Semantics overrides syntax in both subject and DO positions
- Default case for DO: GENACC
- Unboundedness, Indefinitess, Negation, Quantity trigger partitive

Any Questions?

Thank You!

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