Aspect and Partitive Objects in Finnish

Karine Megerdoomian
USC & Computing Research Lab, NMSU
karine@crl.nmsu.edu
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1 Introduction

• Object case-marking correlates with NP interpretation
Enç 1991 (Turkish), Mahajan 1990 (Hindi), Karimi 1999 (Persian).

Turkish

(1) Ali bir kitabı aldı
Ali one book-**Acc** bought
'A book is such that Ali bought it.'

(2) Ali bir kitap aldı
Ali one book bought
'Ali bought some book or other.'

• De Hoop 1992 (Finnish)
Two structural cases, weak and strong, that correlate with interpretation.
- Partitive case signals weak (existential) reading
- Accusative case signals strong (referential, generic) reading

(3) Ostin leipää
I bought bread-**Part**
'I bought (some) bread.'

(4) Ostin leivän
I bought bread-**Acc**
'I bought the bread.'

• Belletti 1988
- Partitive case is an inherent case
- the "essential" or "intrinsic" incompatibility of the partitive with definites

Problem
There is no one-to-one correspondence between case and strength of the object. Partitives can appear on definites in irresultative constructions (Itkonen 1976).

(5) ammu-i-n karhu-a
shoot-Past-1sg bear-**Part**
'I shot at the/a bear.'

(6) etsi-n karhu-j-a
seek-1sg bear-Pl-**Part**
'I'm looking for bears/the bears.'

2 Aspect and Partitive Case

◆ Partitive appears on the object in unbounded predicates (Kiparsky 1998).

(7) a. Matti luk-i kirja-t (tunni-ssa) *bounded*
Matti-Sg/Nom read-Pst/3sg book-Pl-**Acc** (hour-Iness)
'Matti read the books (in an hour).'

b. Matti luk-i kirjo-j-a (tunni-n) *unbounded*
Matti-Sg/Nom read-Pst/3sg book-Pl-**Part** (hour-Acc)
'Matti read books (for an hour).'

(8) a. Hän kirjoitt-i kirjeet *bounded*
He/she write-Pst/m/3sg letters-**Acc**
'He wrote the letters.'

b. Hän kirjoitt-i kirje-i-tä *unbounded*
He/she write-Pst/m/3sg letter-pl-**Part**
'He was writing (the) letters.'
'He wrote letters.'

◆ Partitive case does not depend on the strength/definiteness of the object.

- It correlates with the quantitative determinacy (Kiparsky 1998), quantization (Krifka 1992), specific quantity of A (Verkuyl 1993).

- An event is bounded if the object refers to a specific quantity (i.e., is +SQA)

(9) a. They ate cheese.   *unbounded*
     b. They ate from the cheese.   *unbounded*
     c. They ate sandwiches.   *unbounded*
     d. They ate three sandwiches.   *bounded*
     e. They ate a sandwich.   *bounded*

- Since partitives do not appear in bounded predicates, and since objects representing a specific quantity give rise to bounded predicates, we expect not to have partitive case on a +SQA (specific quantity) object.
⟹ Partitive case marks objects that are -SQA.

(10) a.* saa-n   kah-ta   karhu-a
         get-1sg two-**Part** bear-Part
     b. saa-n   kaksi   karhu-a
         get-1sg two-**Acc**   bear-Part
         'I'll get (the) two bears.'

- But partitives do appear on +SQA objects with certain verbs.

(11) a. etsi-n   kah-ta   karhu-a
         seek-1sg two-**Part** bear-Part
         'I'm looking for bears/the bears.'
     b.* etsi-n   kaksi   karhu-a
         seek-1sg two-**Acc**   bear-Part

◆ The properties of the lexical verb constrain the aspectual interpretation of the predicate.

• *not result-oriented* (love, touch, kiss, seek, hate, want, doubt)

(12) a. etsi-n   karhu-a   /   karhu-j-a   *unbounded*
        seek-1sg bear-Part /   bear-Pl-Part
        'I'm looking for the (a) bear / (the) bears.'
     b. etsi-n   *karhu-n / *karhu-t
        seek-1sg bear-Acc/ bear-Pl/Acc

(13) Rakast-i-n   tei-tä   *unbounded*
     love-Pst-1sg you-Pl.**Part**
     'I loved you'

• *result-oriented* (buy, take, kill, get, lose, find)

(14) a. Matti   ost-i   maito-a   *unbounded*
        Matti-Sg/Nom buy-Pst/3sg   milk-sg.**Part**
        'Matti bought milk.'
     b. Matti   ost-i   maido-n   *bounded*
        Matti-Sg/Nom buy-Pst/3sg   milk-sg.**Acc**
        'Matti bought the milk.'

(15) a. Matti   luk-i   kirjo-j-a   *unbounded*
        Matti-Sg/Nom read-Pst/3sg book-Pl-**Part**
        'Matti read books.'
     b. Matti   luk-i   kirja-t   *bounded*
        Matti-Sg/Nom read-Pst/3sg book-Pl-**Acc**
        'Matti read the books.'

• *unspecified for result* (shoot, kick)

(16) Ammui-n   karhu-j-a
     I-shot   bear-Pl-**Part**
        1.I shot at the bears.   *irresultative; unbounded*
        2.I shot at bears.   *irresultative; unbounded*
        3.I shot bears.   *resultative; unbounded*

(17) Ammui-n   karhu-t
     I-shot   bear-Pl.**Acc**
     'I shot the bears.'   *resultative; bounded*

⟹ Partitive case and unbounded VP aspect correlate

⟹ Resultativity and boundedness do not always coincide
   - resultatives allow both bounded and unbounded aspect
   - irresultatives do not allow bounded events

	Verb	Object	VP Aspect	Object Case	example
1	+result	+SQA	+bounded	Accusative	*Matti luki kirjat* 'Matti read the books'
2	+result	-SQA	-bounded	Partitive	*Matti luki kirjoja* 'Matti read books'
3	-result	+SQA	-bounded	Partitive	*etsin karhuja* 'I am looking for the bears'
4	-result	-SQA	-bounded	Partitive	*etsin karhuja* 'I am looking for bears'

3 Aspect and Syntactic Structure

Derive aspect (and case-marking) compositionally from syntax, based on the contributions from lexical verb and object NP properties.

- Aspect Phrase AspP$_{EM}$ (event measure) delimits the event when the object appears in the specifier position (Borer 1994, Ritter and Rosen 1998)
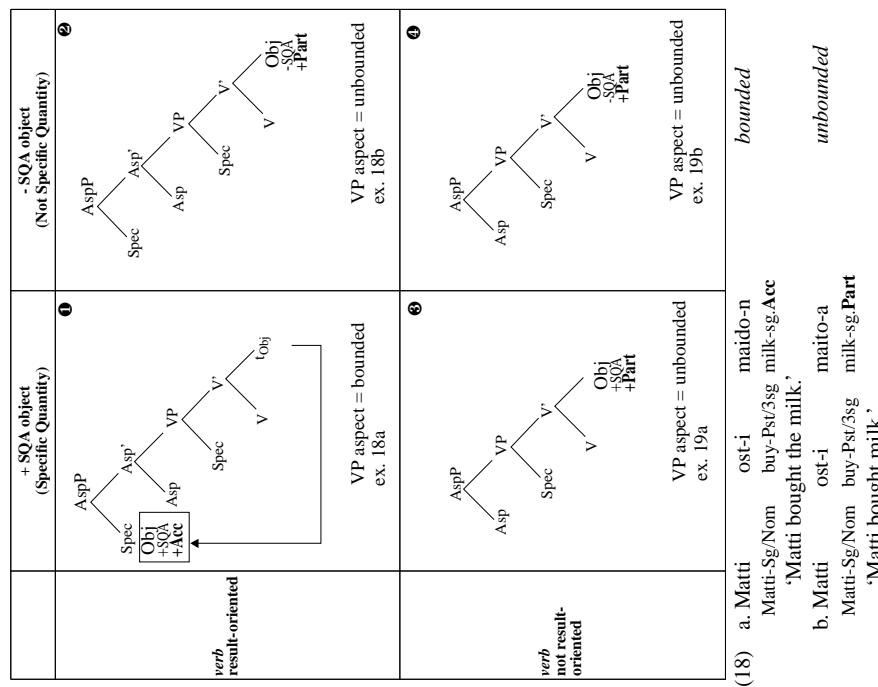
- Aspect Phrase assigns accusative case to the NP in the specifier position

If the object appears in the specifier of AspP, the predicate is bounded and the object receives accusative case.

Proposal

The movement of the direct object to the specifier of AspP is allowed if

(i) the object represents a specific quantity, which is represented in the DP structure (Verkuyl 1993); and
(ii) AspP is fully projected in the syntactic structure.

If any of these conditions is not met, the object remains within the Verb Phrase and receives partitive case.

- Result-oriented verbs project [spec, AspP$_{EM}$]; verbs that are not result-oriented do not; verbs that are not specified for result may or may not project [spec, AspP$_{EM}$]

	+SQA object (Specific Quantity)	-SQA object (Not Specific Quantity)
verb result-oriented	❶ VP aspect = bounded ex. 18a	❷ VP aspect = unbounded ex. 18b
verb not result-oriented	❸ VP aspect = unbounded ex. 19a	❹ VP aspect = unbounded ex. 19b

(18) a. Matti   ost-i   maido-n
    Matti-Sg/Nom   buy-Pst/3sg   milk-sg-**Acc**
    'Matti bought the milk.'   *bounded*

    b. Matti   ost-i   maito-a
    Matti-Sg/Nom   buy-Pst/3sg   milk-sg **Part**
    'Matti bought milk.'   *unbounded*

unbounded

(19) a. etsi-n   karhu-j-a
        seek-1sg   bear-Pl-**Part**
        'I'm looking for bears.'
     b. etsi-n   karhu-j-a / *karhu-t
        seek-1sg   bear-Pl-Part / bear-Pl.**Acc**
        'I'm looking for the bears.'

(20) *verbs unspecified for result*

	+ SQA object (Specific Quantity)	- SQA object (Not Specific Quantity)
verb **result-oriented**	❶ VP aspect = bounded ex. 21a	❷ VP aspect = unbounded ex. 21b
verb **not result-oriented**	❸ VP aspect = unbounded ex. 21c	❹ VP aspect = unbounded ex. 21d

(21) a. Ammui-n karhu-t
        I-shot   bear-Pl.**Acc**
        'I shot the bears.'
        full AspP projected; resultative
        definite NP[+SQA]
        ➡ *Accusative case; Bounded predicate*

     b. Ammui-n karhu-j-a
        I-shot   bear-Pl-**Part**
        'I shot bears.'
        full AspP projected; resultative
        indefinite NP[-SQA]
        ➡ *Partitive case; Unbounded predicate*

     c. Ammui-n karhu-j-a
        I-shot   bear-Pl-**Part**
        'I shot at the bears.'
        partial AspP; irresultative
        definite NP[+SQA]
        ➡ *Partitive case; Unbounded predicate*

     d. Ammui-n karhu-j-a
        I-shot   bear-Pl-**Part**
        'I shot at bears.'
        partial AspP; irresultative
        indefinite NP[-SQA]
        ➡ *Partitive case; Unbounded predicate*

4 Conclusion

• An account of Finnish case-marking on objects and VP aspect based on the combination of two independent factors
  - quantificational properties of the object
  - aspectual properties of the verbal entry
  and their relation to syntactic structure.

• distinguished two notions of resultativity and boundedness
  - result-orientedness is a lexical aspectual property
  - boundedness is obtained compositionally at VP

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