

## ON THE NATURE OF THE ACCUSATIVE IN FINNISH

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Modern Finnish grammars display a clear tendency to eliminate the category of the accusative entirely, or to limit it only to manifestations which are heterophonic from manifestations of other cases (the nominative and genitive). However, in older grammars (from the first half of the 20th century), the accusative was considered a proper full member of the inventory of Finnish cases. The present paper can be seen as a defense of the former approach to the accusative, because the author believes that the new approach exposes only the paradigmatical aspect of this part of the Finnish language, concealing the syntagmatic aspect. By means of syntagmatic comparison, different types of grammatical neutralizations are brought into view. One of them is especially instructive for the case in question, because it reveals specific properties not only of the accusative, but also of the category of voice in Finnish.

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### 1. INTRODUCTORY REMARKS

In modern Finnish grammars there seems to be a strong tendency to eradicate the accusative from the inventory of cases. For example, the authors of the latest Finnish grammar *Iso suomen kielioppi* explicitly refrain from distinguishing the accusative, saying that in the earlier grammars this category represented the concept of syntactic not morphological case (as if such a split of the category of case were possible). They seem to be referring to the extensive phonic indistinguishability of the accusative from the genitive singular and nominative in both numbers. The only manifestations of the accusative which have survived this “reform” of the Finnish case system are forms of the personal pronouns and interrogative pronoun *kuka / ken* ‘who’ ending in *-t*: *minut* ‘me’ (of *minä* ‘I’), *sinut* ‘you’ (of *sinä* ‘you’), *hänet* ‘him, her, it’ (of *hän* ‘he, she, it’), *meidät* ‘us’ (of *me* ‘we’), *teidät* ‘you’ (of *te* ‘you’), *heidät* ‘them’ (of *he* ‘they’), *kenet* ‘whom’ (of *kuka / ken* ‘who’), because these forms are not identical with those of any other case of these words (HAKULINEN et al. 2004: 1178). Of course the extensive phonic indistinguishability of the accusative from the aforementioned cases must, in one way or another, have certain implications in the linguistic interpretation of this part of the Finnish language. Nevertheless, maintaining that the accusative is not a relevant case for Finnish because its forms are mostly phonically identical with the forms

of the genitive singular or nominative in both numbers is only an apparent simplification of the description of the modern Finnish language. Reducing the accusative to its mere forms and putting its remaining virtual manifestations into different case classes according to their phonic manifestations must have serious implications, which are usually not mentioned by the authors adopting such an approach. In the present article I shall try to reveal some weaknesses and discrepancies in modern Finnish grammars which have no accusative at their disposal apart from seven pronoun forms mentioned above. At the same time I will defend the better and older solutions, which in my view are too often neglected nowadays.

## 2. THE DUALITY OF THE FINNISH ACCUSATIVE

In older Finnish grammars (from the first half of the 20th century) two kinds of the accusative are usually distinguished: the so-called (i) first accusative or accusative with ending, and (ii) second accusative or endingless accusative (GENETZ 1882: 26–27; KETTUNEN 1936: 125; SETÄLÄ 1952: 48). In these grammars the forms of the first accusative singular are mostly identical with genitive singular, having the ending *-n*. The forms of the first accusative plural are mostly identical with nominative plural having the ending *-t*, for example the word *kana* ‘hen’ would function in the following way in the types of Finnish sentences which are relevant to this analysis:

- (1) *Mies/Ø*                      *tappa/a*                                      ***kana/n.***  
*man-Nom Sg*                      *kill-III Sg Activ Praes Ind*                      *hen-I Acc Sg*  
 ‘The man kills a hen.’ ‘The man will kill a hen.’
- (2) *Mies/Ø*                      *tappa/a*                                      ***kana/t.***  
*man-Nom Sg*                      *kill-III Sg Activ Praes Ind*                      *hen-I Acc Pl*  
 ‘The man kills (all) the hens.’ ‘The man will kill (all) the hens.’  
 ‘The man kills (known) set of hens.’ ‘The man will kill (known) set of hens.’
- (3) *Mies/Ø*                      *tappa/ko/on*                                      (a) ***kana/n***                      (b) ***kana/t.***  
*man-Nom Sg*                      *kill-III Sg Imp Activ*                      *hen-I Acc Sg*                      *hen-I Acc Pl*  
 (a) ‘Let the man kill the hen.’  
 (b) ‘Let the man kill (all) the hens.’ ‘Let the man kill (known) set of hens.’

The forms of the second (endingless) accusative are mostly identical with the nominative in both numbers, for example:

- (4) ***Kana/Ø***                      *tape/ta/an.*  
*hen-II Acc Sg*                      *kill-Impers Praes Ind*  
 ‘One kills the hen.’ ‘One will kill the hen.’  
 ‘The hen is killed.’ ‘The hen will be killed.’
- (5) ***Kana/t***                      *tape/ta/an.*  
*hen-II Acc Pl*                      *kill-Impers Praes Ind*  
 ‘One kills (all) the hens ((known) set of hens).’  
 ‘One will kill (all) the hens ((known) set of hens).’  
 ‘(All) the hens are killed.’ ‘(All) the hens will be killed.’  
 ‘(Known) set of hens is killed.’ ‘(Known) set of hens will be killed.’

- (6) *Tapa/Ø* (a) *kana/Ø* (b) *kana/t*.  
*kill-II Sg Imp Activ* *hen-II Acc Sg* *hen-II Acc Pl*  
 (a) ‘Kill the hen.’  
 (b) ‘Kill (all) the hens.’ ‘Kill (known) set of hens.’

The distribution of the manifestations of these two subclasses of the accusative is strictly complementary, and the rule governing it is known as *Jahnsson’s rule*, according to which (i) the first accusative occurs with verbs which have a subject (sentences (1)–(3)), (ii) the second accusative occurs with verbs lacking a subject (sentences (4)–(6)). It seems very surprising that one case category is divided into two subclasses which are not only formally different (at least in the forms of accusative singular) but also have different syntactical distribution. For example words occurring in the first accusative like *kana/n* ‘hen’, *kana/t* ‘(all) the hens’ can syntactically determine only such words like *tappaa* ‘kills’, *tappakoon* ‘let kill’ which can determine only such words like *mies* ‘man’. Their syntactical determination context can be represented as follows:

|  |                                  |   |                                  |                    |
|--|----------------------------------|---|----------------------------------|--------------------|
| <i>kana/n,</i><br><i>kana/t</i><br>... | can determine<br>syntactically → | <i>tappaa,</i><br><i>tappakoon</i><br>... | can determine<br>syntactically → | <i>mies</i><br>... |
| I Acc                                  |                                  | Activ                                     |                                  | Nom                |
| direct object                          |                                  | predicate                                 |                                  | subject            |

On the other hand, words occurring in II Acc like: *kana/Ø* ‘hen’, *kana/t* ‘(all) the hens’ can syntactically determine only such words like *tapetaan* ‘one kills, is killed’, *tapa* ‘kill’ which seem unable to determine anything else:

|  |                                  |  |
|--|----------------------------------|--|
| <i>kana/Ø,</i><br><i>kana/t</i><br>... | can determine<br>syntactically → | <i>tapetaan,</i><br><i>tapa</i><br>... |
| II Acc                                 |                                  | (...) <sup>1</sup>                     |
| direct object                          |                                  | predicate                              |

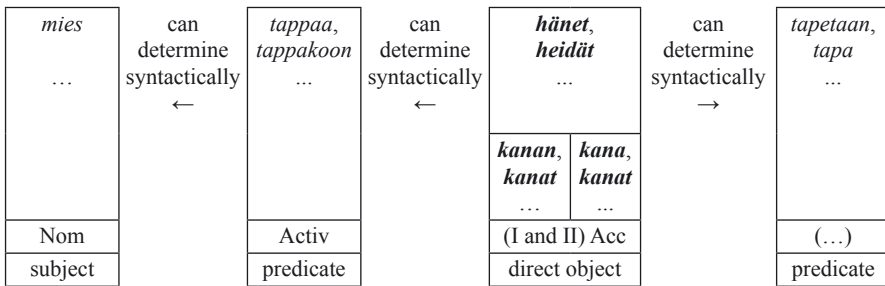
At this moment a very important question should be raised: why were these two subclasses of the accusative case distinguished at all, if their syntactical distribution is completely disjoint as shown above (so it is impossible to talk about morphological variance as such) and one of them (the second accusative) is indistinguishable from the nominative in both numbers. Before trying to answer this question, let us take a closer look at two of the personal pronouns: *hän* ‘he, she, it’ and *he* ‘they’. The substitution of word *kana* ‘hen’ in the sentences (1)–(6) by these two pronouns would result in:

- (1’) *Mies/Ø* *tappa/a* *hüne/t*.  
*man-Nom Sg* *kill-III Sg Activ Praes Ind* *he-Acc (I)*  
 ‘The man kills him.’ ‘The man will kill him.’
- (2’) *Mies/Ø* *tappa/a* *heidät*.  
*man-Nom Sg* *kill-III Sg Activ Praes Ind* *they-Acc (I)*  
 ‘The man kills them.’ ‘The man will kill them.’

<sup>1</sup> I deliberately do not address here the morphosyntactical category to which the above words belong, because it is not obvious and will be analyzed in section 4: *The accusative and voice*.

- (3') *Mies/Ø*                      *tappa/ko/on*                      (a) *häne/t*                      (b) *heidä/t*.  
*man-Nom Sg*                      *kill-III Sg Imp Activ*                      *he-Acc (I)*                      *they-Acc (I)*  
 (a) 'Let the man kill him.'  
 (b) 'Let the man kill them.'
- (4') *Häne/t*                      *tape/ta/an*.  
*he-Acc (II)*                      *kill-Impers Praes Ind*  
 'One kills him.' 'One will kill him.'  
 'He is killed.' 'He will be killed.'
- (5') *Heidä/t*                      *tape/ta/an*.  
*they-Acc (II)*                      *kill-Impers Praes Ind*  
 'One kills them.' 'One will kill them.'  
 'They are killed.' 'They will be killed.'
- (6') *Tapa/Ø*                      (a) *häne/t*                      (b) *heidä/t*.  
*kill-II Sg Imp Activ*                      *he-Acc (II)*                      *they-Acc (II)*  
 (a) 'Kill him.'  
 (b) 'Kill them.'

The syntactical context in which such words like *hänet* 'him, her, it' and *heidät* 'them' can occur seems to result from the summation of the syntactical contexts of words like *kanan* 'hen', *kanat* '(all) the hens' (I Acc) on the one hand, and *kana* 'hen', *kanat* '(all) the hens' (II Acc) on the other, and could be represented as follows:



It can be stated that thanks to syntagmatic comparison between proper types of Finnish sentences exemplified in the present article by sentences (1)–(6) and (1')–(6'), certain words are grouped by the Finnish linguistic consciousness as belonging to one syntactical category, in other words their syntactical properties are similar to such a degree that they are considered to be syntactically indistinguishable. For example the words: *kanan*, *kanat*, *kana*, *hänet*, *heidät* belong to the category of direct object, and by this very fact they should not belong to the same morphosyntactic category as the subject (e.g. nominative). Their forms should be considered as a matter of secondary importance. Kempf, for example, analyzing the category of case in general, goes even further and affirms that in spite of the casual syncretism resulting from the vanishing and assimilation of endings during the historical development of a language, the category of case is invincible, to use his words (KEMPF 1978: 108). There seems to be no reason why casual syncretism could not be a property of the Finnish language too, if its existence is recognized in many other languages such as Polish, Lithuanian and German. What is more, it

seems to be extremely dubious theoretically to propose the relevance of such separate notions as (i) syntactical and (ii) morphological case, as most modern Finnish grammarians do explicitly with reference to the accusative. It would be very interesting to follow the consequences of grammars which derive the category of case exclusively from paradigmatical comparison, without a syntagmatic one. One might expect, among other things, that the inventory of cases would vary according to the particular word being considered. For example, every morphological variance should actually be considered consistently in such an approach as a basis for distinguishing different cases. How otherwise would a Finnish grammarian know that forms of genitive plural of the word *hevonen* ‘horse’: *hevos/ten* and *hevos/i/en* ‘of horses’ are manifestations of the same casual category if he had not applied syntagmatic comparison earlier? As far as the author is aware, no Finnish grammar says that *hevosten* and *hevosien* ‘of horses’ belong to different casual categories because of their different endings (*-ten*, *-en*). The procedure of syntagmatic comparison must without doubt have been applied here. There can be no boundary between morphology and syntax established *a priori*. These two aspects of a language intermingle each other and their correlations must result from both paradigmatical and syntagmatic relations (SAUSSURE 2002: 163). Kiparsky in his approach to the Finnish accusative seems to be one of the few modern Finnish linguists to take into account the syntagmatic comparison too, but in his corollaries he continues to use the notion of morphological case, which can be conceived as internally contradictory. He uses analogical examples proposed earlier by Itkonen in one of his articles about ergativity in Finnish (ITKONEN 1974: 380–381). Kiparsky’s sentence (here (9)) results from paratactical synthesis of two types of Finnish sentences (7)–(8):

- (7) *Mikko/Ø* *pyörty/i.*  
*Mikko-Nom Sg faint-III Sg Activ Praet Ind*  
 ‘Mikko fainted.’
- (8) *Mikko/Ø* *kanne/tti/in* *ulos.*  
*Mikko-II Acc Sg carry-Impers Praet away (partic)*  
 ‘One carried Mikko away.’  
 ‘Mikko was carried away.’
- (9) *Mikko/Ø* *pyörty/i* *ja* *kanne/tti/in* *ulos.*  
*Mikko-Nom Sg faint-III Sg*  
*Activ Praet Ind*  
*and (con) carry-III Sg away (partic)*  
*Passiv<sup>2</sup> Praet*  
 ‘\*Mikko fainted and one carried (him) away.’  
 ‘Mikko fainted and was carried away.’

In his words, the case system provides a simple explanation why the ellipsis in the second phrase is possible: such verbs like *pyörtyi* ‘fainted’ assign nominative case to their role argument (*Mikko*). ‘Passive’ verbs (like *kannettiin ulos* ‘one carried away, was carried away’ – the quotation marks around the word ‘passive’ are his) assign morphological nominative case to the same argument when it is not a personal pronoun (the sentence *\*Hän pyörtyi ja kannettiin ulos* ‘\*He

<sup>2</sup> Kiparsky unfortunately does not say which grammatical category the predicate in the second phrase belongs to, so the interpretation is mine.

fainted and one carried (him) away’, ‘He fainted and was carried away’ is incorrect) (KIPARSKY 2001: 319). Of course the possibility of the existence of a paratactical relation between words like *pyörtyi* ‘fainted’ and *kannettiin ulos* ‘one carried away, was carried away’ referring to the same word *Mikko* is something astonishing when one considers that *Mikko* is the subject in sentence (7) and direct object in sentence (8),<sup>3</sup> but it is not enough to claim that *Mikko* in (8) occurs in the nominative case because the syntagmatic comparison of that sentence with the sentence *Hänet kannettiin ulos* ‘One carried him away’, ‘He was carried away’ seems to deny such an interpretation totally. If Kiparsky claims that *Mikko* in *Mikko kannettiin ulos* belongs to the nominative, which category of voice does *kannettiin ulos* belong to? It should consistently belong to the passive voice, but this is not mentioned. If Kiparsky uses the syntagmatic comparison, why does he refer to the type of sentence of whose existence only specialized Finnish linguists are aware, and why is there no mention of such simple comparison between phrases like *Mikko kannettiin ulos* and *Hänet kannettiin ulos* ‘One carried him away’, ‘He was carried away’, where the word *hänet* belongs without any doubt to the accusative case? If Kiparsky says that *Mikko* from *Mikko kannettiin ulos* belongs to the nominative but in the morphological sense, is it possible that he actually claims that it belongs to the accusative in the syntactical sense, because he does not mention anywhere that as a consequence of his approach *kannettiin ulos* would belong to the passive voice? If according to him *Mikko* in *Mikko kannettiin ulos* belongs to the nominative and only *hänet* from *Hänet kannettiin ulos* belongs to the accusative, does *kannettiin ulos* consequently belong to different voices (passive and impersonal) according to the word it occurs with (*kannettiin ulos*: (i) passive (when with *Mikko*), (ii) impersonal (when with *hänet*))? Unfortunately these questions remain unanswered, and are only some of the weaknesses resulting from Kiparsky’s approach to the Finnish accusative.

There is no dispute that the manifestations of the accusative in Finnish are almost always identical to manifestations of the genitive and nominative, but this need not mean that no accusative exists in the language; because the language can express certain meanings without any special substantial matter, the language can be satisfied with the mere opposition. Here we consider the question of whether the seven forms previously referred to (*minut, sinut, hänet, meidät, teidät, heidät, kenet*) are enough to sustain the existence of the accusative in Finnish if thousands of Finnish words actually do not. In other words: is the distinctness of the presented syntagmatic comparison flagrant enough to sustain the necessity of distinguishing the accusative even if the seven mentioned forms are characteristic only for standard literary Finnish and its eastern dialects and in other dialects can be identical with the genitive (HAKULINEN 1979: 99) or even with the nominative (LEHTINEN 1985)? Shouldn’t the extensive phonic indistinguishability of the accusative and especially the nominative have consequences in the interpretation of the accusative itself? How should we interpret the duality of the accusative case which manifests itself in its division into two syntactically almost totally disjunctive sub-categories? This problem will be discussed more thoroughly below.

### 3. THE ACCUSATIVE AND THE PARTITIVE

The partitive in modern Finnish, with its endings: *-a, -ä, -ta, -tä, -tta, -ttä* is considered

<sup>3</sup> This phenomenon will be discussed in more detail in section 4: *The accusative and voice*.





in the case of the few above-mentioned personal pronouns (*minä, sinä, hän, me, te, he*) and the interrogative pronoun (*kuka / ken*) but also because it is systematically sustained by the existence of the endings of the partitive, which are always different from the endings of the nominative and genitive. The nominative should be conceived only as the case of the subject, the genitive as the case of the attribute (and adverbial phrase), and the accusative, although the neutralization of the grammatical opposition between it and the nominative and genitive in modern Finnish is extremely extensive, together with the partitive should be interpreted as cases of the direct object. Although the partitive seems to occur in the same syntactical context as the accusative (both first and second), it should be distinguished as a separate case, because apart from its forms its syntactical distribution is much more wider than the distribution of the accusative. In other words: the partitive can always occur in the syntactical context of the accusative, but not vice versa: the accusative cannot occur in all syntactical contexts where the partitive can. For example, negation excludes the accusative as a case of the direct object:

- (16) *Mies/Ø*            *ei/Ø*            *tapa/Ø*            ***kana/a.***  
*man-Nom Sg*    *no-III Sg*    *kill-Radix*    *hen-Part Sg*  
 ‘The man doesn’t kill a hen.’ ‘The man won’t kill a hen.’
- (17) *Mies/Ø*            *ei/Ø*            *tapa/Ø*            ***kano/j/a.***  
*man-Nom Sg*    *no-III Sg*    *kill-Radix*    *hen-Part Pl*  
 ‘The man doesn’t kill (some) hens.’ ‘The man won’t kill (some) hens.’
- (18) *Mies/Ø*            *äl/kö/ön*            *tappa/ko*            ***kana/a.***  
*man-Nom Sg*    *no-III Sg Imp*    *kill-Imp*    *hen-Part Sg*  
 ‘Let the man not kill a hen.’
- (19) *Mies/Ø*            *äl/kö/ön*            *tappa/ko*            ***kano/j/a.***  
*man-Nom Sg*    *no-III Sg Imp*    *kill-Imp*    *hen-Part Sg*  
 ‘Let the man not kill (some) hens.’
- (20) ***Kana/a***            *ei/Ø*            *tape/ta.*  
*hen-Part Sg*    *no-III Sg*    *kill-Impers Praes Ind*  
 ‘One doesn’t (won’t) kill the hen.’ ‘The hen is not being (won’t be) killed.’
- (21) ***Kano/j/a***            *ei/Ø*            *tape/ta.*  
*hen-Part Pl*    *no-III Sg*    *kill-Impers Praes Ind*  
 ‘One doesn’t (won’t) kill (some) hens.’ ‘(Some) hens aren’t (won’t be) killed.’
- (22) *Älä/Ø*            *tapa/Ø*            ***kana/a.***  
*no-Imp*            *kill-II Sg Imp Activ*    *hen-Part Sg*  
 ‘Don’t kill the hen.’
- (23) *Älä/Ø*            *tapa/Ø*            ***kano/j/a.***  
*no-Imp*            *kill-II Sg Imp Activ*    *hen-Part Pl*  
 ‘Don’t kill (some) hens.’

In the case of many transitive verbs the accusative seems to be excluded lexically, because these verbs can govern only the partitive, for example *rakastaa* ‘to love’ and *silitää* ‘to stroke’:



(24) *Mies rakastaa* (a) *kana/a* (b) *kano/j/a*. ‘The man loves (a) a hen (b) hens.’

(25) *Mies silittää* (a) *kana/a* (b) *kano/j/a*. ‘The man strokes (a) a hen (b) hens.’

In the case of verbs which can govern both cases of the direct object, for example *tappaa* ‘to kill’, the opposition between accusative and partitive expresses a whole range of different quantitative, informational, temporal and aspectual meanings. Compare English translational equivalents for the known Finnish examples:

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| <p>(1) <i>Mies tappaa kanan.</i> (I Acc Sg)<br/>‘The man kills a hen.’<br/>‘The man will kill a hen.’</p>   | <p>(10) <i>Mies tappaa kanaa.</i> (Part Sg)<br/>‘The man is killing a hen (slowly).’</p>                                |
| <p>(2) <i>Mies tappaa kanat.</i> (I Acc Pl)<br/>‘The man kills (all) the hens.’<br/>‘The man will kill (all) the hens.’<br/>‘The man kills (known) set of hens.’<br/>‘The man will kill (known) set of hens.’</p> | <p>(11) <i>Mies tappaa kanoja.</i> (Part Pl)<br/>‘The man kills (some) hens.’<br/>‘The man is killing (some) hens.’</p> |

This phenomenon is extremely complicated, and seems to be one of the most difficult issues both for learners of Finnish as a foreign language and for theoreticians. It has been analyzed for example by Itkonen (ITKONEN 1975b). In the present article, however, different quantitative, temporal, informational and aspectual meanings expressed by the accusative and partitive if these cases have the same syntactical distribution are of secondary importance, and can be actually omitted as insignificant. Relevant to the discussed problem is the fact that, in Finnish, words occurring in the accusative and partitive are to some degree syntactically indistinguishable as fulfilling the function of the direct object. This partial syntactical indistinguishability allows us to group words belonging to the accusative and partitive case as something other than words belonging to the nominative or genitive case. The syntagmatic comparison between sentences (1)–(6) and (1′)–(6′) containing the accusative and sentences (10)–(25) containing the partitive is beyond any doubt visible enough to sustain the difference between two cases of the direct object (accusative and partitive) on the one hand and the case of the subject (nominative) and attribute (and adverbial phrase) (genitive) on the other.

In addition, a certain type of Finnish sentence seems to be extremely problematic for the case under discussion: where the partitive occurs with verbs generally considered intransitive, such as *olla* ‘to be’, known as ‘existential’ sentences. This type of sentence semantically expresses roughly the ‘existence of somebody or something somewhere’ and syntactically can be approximately described as a sentence beginning generally with a circumstantial phrase followed by an intransitive verb occurring only in the singular. Between the verb and the word expressing the entity which exists somewhere there is no concord either in number or in grammatical person (PENTTILÄ 1963: 623–628). Let us consider the following series of sentences:

- (26) *Kanala/ssa*                      *on/Ø*                      *kana/Ø*.  
*poultry-house-Iness Sg*   *be-III Sg Activ Praes Ind*   *hen-Nom Sg (~ II Acc Sg)*  
‘There’s a hen in the poultry-house.’

- (27) *Kanala/ssa* *on/∅* ***kana/t.***  
*poultry-house-Iness Sg* *be-III Sg Activ Praes Ind* *hen-Nom Pl (~ II Acc Pl)*  
 ‘There are (all) hens in the poultry-house.’  
 ‘There is (known) set of hens in the poultry-house.’
- (28) *Kanala/ssa* *on/∅* ***kana/a.***  
*poultry-house-Iness Sg* *be-III Sg Activ Praes Ind* *hen-Part Sg*  
 ‘There is a part of hen in the poultry-house.’
- (29) *Kanala/ssa* *on/∅* ***kano/j/a.***  
*poultry-house-Iness Sg* *be-III Sg Activ Praes Ind* *hen-Part Pl*  
 ‘There are (some) hens in the poultry-house.’
- (30) *Kanala/ssa* *ei/∅* *ole/∅* ***kana/a.***  
*poultry-house-Iness Sg* *no-III Sg* *be-Radix* *hen-Part Sg*  
 ‘There’s no hen in the poultry-house.’
- (31) *Kanala/ssa* *ei/∅* *ole/∅* ***kano/j/a.***  
*poultry-house-Iness Sg* *no-III Sg* *be-Radix* *hen-Part Pl*  
 ‘There are no hens in the poultry-house.’

In the majority of Finnish grammars the bolded words *kana/∅*, *kana/t*, *kana/a*, *kano/j/a* in the sentences (26)–(31) are regarded as manifestations of a certain subcategory of the subject. In this case, however, there is no grammatical concord either in number nor person between the words manifesting it and the predicate, with the exception of personal pronouns in affirmative sentences, where such concord seems to be compulsory:

- (32) *Kanala/ssa* *ole/n* ***minä/∅.***  
*poultry-house-Iness Sg* *be-I Sg Activ Praes Ind* *I-Nom*  
 ‘I am in the poultry-house.’

There is no concord in number or person even in the case of personal pronouns when the sentence is negative, for example:

- (33) *Kanala/ssa* *ei/∅* *ole/∅* ***minu/a.***  
*poultry-house-Iness Sg* *no-III Sg* *be-Radix* *I-Part*  
 ‘I am not in the poultry-house.’ ‘\*There’s no me in the poultry-house.’

To recapitulate: words regarded by the majority of Finnish grammarians as the subject of so-called ‘existential’ sentences can occur in the partitive, which is then one of the cases of direct object in Finnish. Between these words and the predicate there is no concord in number or person, with the exception of personal pronouns in affirmative sentences, though the lack of such concord can also be identified in another type of Finnish sentence expressing possession of something or somebody (the so-called *habeo*-structure) even in the case of affirmative sentences. This type of sentence is syntactically very similar to the syntactic structure of ‘existential’ sentences, for example:

- (34) *Minu/lla* *on/∅* ***häne/t.***  
*I-Adess* *be-III Sg Activ Praes Ind* *he-Acc (II)*  
 ‘I have him.’ (‘\*There’s him on me.’)

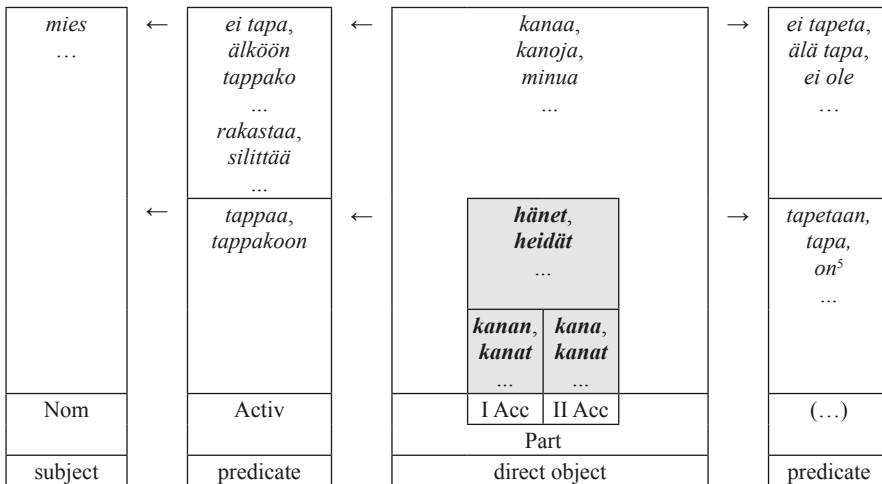
Let us now consider the three series of sentences below. The first column contains so-called ‘existential’ sentences, the second contains sentences expressing possession (*habeo*-structure) and the third one contains sentences with the II Acc and Part with the transitive verb *tappaa* ‘to kill’. Words of interest to us have been bolded:

- |                                      |   |   |
|--------------------------------------|---|---|
| (26) <i>Kanalassa on kana.</i>       | (35) <i>Minulla on kana.</i> <sup>4</sup> | (4) <b><i>Kana</i></b> <i>tapetaan.</i>     |
| (27) <i>Kanalassa on kanat.</i>      | (36) <i>Minulla on kanat.</i>             | (5) <b><i>Kanat</i></b> <i>tapetaan.</i>    |
| (28) <i>Kanalassa on kanaa.</i>      | (37) <i>Minulla on kanaa.</i>             | (13) <b><i>Kanaa</i></b> <i>tapetaan.</i>   |
| (29) <i>Kanalassa on kanoja.</i>     | (38) <i>Minulla on kanoja.</i>            | (14) <b><i>Kanoja</i></b> <i>tapetaan.</i>  |
| (30) <i>Kanalassa ei ole kanaa.</i>  | (39) <i>Minulla ei ole kanaa.</i>         | (20) <b><i>Kanaa</i></b> <i>ei tapeta.</i>  |
| (31) <i>Kanalassa ei ole kanoja.</i> | (40) <i>Minulla ei ole kanoja.</i>        | (21) <b><i>Kanoja</i></b> <i>ei tapeta.</i> |
| (33) <i>Kanalassa ei ole minua.</i>  | (41) <i>Hänellä ei ole minua.</i>         | (42) <b><i>Minua</i></b> <i>ei tapeta.</i>  |
|                                      | (34) <i>Minulla on hänet.</i>             | (4') <b><i>Hänet</i></b> <i>tapetaan.</i>   |
| (32) <i>Kanalassa olen minä.</i>     |   |   |

The similarity between the sentences in the first and second columns on one hand and the third column on the other, manifested in the forms of the bolded words, seems to be obvious: (i) there is no concord in number between these words and the verb, (ii) there is no concord in person between them either (with the exception of the type of sentence represented by example (32)), (iii) the formal side of the bolded words from each column seems to be the same: *kana*, *kanat*, *kanaa*, *kanoja*, *minua*, (*hänet*). In spite of that parallelism, the majority of grammarians claim, as we know, that words like *kana*, *kanat*, *kanoja*, *minua* in the first and second column are manifestations of the subject (of so-called ‘existential’ sentences) (the case of the sentence *Minulla on hänet* where there is an accusative is without any doubt considered exceptional), while the words in the third column are manifestations of the direct object. Only a few Finnish linguists, such as HAKULINEN (1926) and WIİK (1974), question this assertion, stating that all these words play the role of direct object in spite of the intransitivity of the verb in the first and second column. Wiik says that the verb *olla* ‘to be’ in this kind of sentence receives the meaning of a transitive verb *sisältää* ‘to contain’. The so-called second accusative whose forms are mostly identical with the forms of the nominative is a case of direct object in Finnish. Its syntactical distribution is contained in the syntactical distribution of the accusative of the personal pronouns and the interrogative pronoun *kuka / ken* ‘who’ ending in *-t* on one hand, and the partitive on the other. If on the strength of syntagmatic comparison the forms of (i) the second accusative (for example: *kana*, *kanat*), (ii) the accusative ending in *-t* (for example *hänet*), and (iii) the partitive (for example: *kanaa*, *kanoja*) which determine a transitive verb are grouped together as belonging to one syntactical category: the direct object, then words like *kana*, *kanat*, *kanaa*, *kanoja*, *minua*, (*hänet*) in the first and second column above should belong to the same syntactical category too. In other words: if the forms of the accusative of the pronouns mentioned above ending in *-t* and the forms of

<sup>4</sup> The examples (35)–(42) have not yet appeared in the article. Their translation is given here, so as not to burden the text with superfluous information: (35) *Minulla on kana.* ‘I have a hen’, ‘\*There is a hen on me’, (36) *Minulla on kanat* ‘I have (all) hens’, ‘I have (known) set of hens’, ‘\*There are (all) hens on me’, ‘\*There is (known) set of hens on me’, (37) *Minulla on kanaa* ‘I have a part of hen’, ‘\*There is part of hen on me’, (38) *Minulla on kanoja* ‘I have (some) hens’, ‘\*There are (some) hens on me’, (39) *Minulla ei ole kanaa* ‘I don’t have a hen’, ‘\*There is no hen on me’, (40) *Minulla ei ole kanoja* ‘I have no hens’, ‘\*There are no hens on me’, (41) *Hänellä ei ole minua* ‘He doesn’t have me’, ‘\*There is no me on him’, (42) *Minua ei tapeta* ‘One doesn’t (won’t) kill me’, ‘I am not (won’t be) killed’.

the partitive allow the inclusion of forms of the II Acc (in the majority of cases equal to the nominative) in the syntactical category of direct object (of a transitive verb), if we want to be consistent, the same forms must allow the inclusion of forms formally equal to the nominative in the category of direct object, and by the same token in the category of the accusative (here II Acc) even if these forms determine an intransitive verb (for example: *on*, *ei ole*). In the discussed types of sentences such diathetically relevant categories as: (i) stative (entity which is in a certain state) (in our examples *kana* ‘hen’, *minä* ‘I’ and *hän* ‘he, she it’ in the third and second column) and (ii) patient (entity which undergoes an action, passive receiver of an action) (in our examples the same words in the third column) seem to be morphosyntactically and syntactically neutralized in the function of direct object. According to Itkonen, this quite systematic neutralization between stative and patient resembles ergative systems. In other ergative systems, however, this neutralization refers to the subject. For this reason Itkonen proposes calling the discussed phenomenon in Finnish an ‘inverted’ ergative system (ITKONEN 1974, 1975a, 1979). To summarize the discussion, the syntactical distribution of the Finnish accusative and partitive can be represented as follows:



#### 4. THE ACCUSATIVE AND VOICE

The extremely extensive phonic neutralization discussed above, especially between the nominative and so-called second accusative, must have serious implications for the interpretation of the category of voice in Finnish. In the majority of Finnish grammars the category of voice is divided only into two subcategories: (i) active and (ii) impersonal voice (SETÄLÄ 1952: 96–97; PENTTILÄ 1963: 460; SHORE 1986). The passive voice, for various reasons, is usually marginalized or confused with the impersonal voice. As far as the accusative is concerned, (i) with the active voice only I Acc can be taken into account (on condition that the subject of the sentence can be lexicalized – compare with sentences (6) (a)–(b)) with imperative mood, (ii) with impersonal voice only II Acc is possible. Of course in the case of

<sup>5</sup> If *on* has the following meanings: (i) ‘there is, there are, contains, contain’, not occurring with a personal pronoun or the interrogative pronoun *kuka / ken* ‘who’, (ii) ‘have, has’ even with a personal pronoun or the interrogative pronoun *kuka / ken* ‘who’.

both voices the forms of known personal pronouns, interrogative pronoun *kuka / ken* ‘who’ and partitive are equally admissible, for example:

- (43) *Minä/Ø tapa/n* a) *kana/n* b) *häne/t* c) *kana/a*.  
*I-Nom kill-I Sg Activ Praes Ind hen-I Acc Sg he-Acc (I) hen-Part Sg*  
 (a) ‘I kill a hen.’ ‘I will kill a hen.’  
 (b) ‘I kill him.’ ‘I will kill him.’  
 (c) ‘I am killing a hen (slowly).’
- (44) *Sinä/Ø tapa/t* a) *kana/n* b) *häne/t* c) *kana/a*.  
*You-Nom kill-II Sg Activ Praes Ind hen-I Acc Sg he-Acc (I) hen-Part Sg*  
 (a) ‘You kill a hen.’ ‘You will kill a hen.’  
 (b) ‘You kill him.’ ‘You will kill him.’  
 (c) ‘You are killing a hen (slowly).’
- (45) *Hän/Ø tappa/a* a) *kana/n* b) *häne/t* c) *kana/a*.  
*He-Nom kill-III Sg Activ Praes Ind hen-I Acc Sg he-Acc (I) hen-Part Sg*  
 (a) ‘He kills a hen.’ ‘He will kill a hen.’  
 (b) ‘He kills him.’ ‘He will kill him.’  
 (c) ‘He is killing a hen (slowly).’
- (46) a) *Kana/Ø* b) *Hänet* c) *Kana/a* *tape/ta/an*.  
*hen-II Acc he-Acc (II) hen-Part Sg kill-Impers Praes Ind*  
 (a) ‘One kills (will kill) the hen.’ ‘The hen is (will be) killed.’  
 (b) ‘One kills (will kill) him.’ ‘He is (will be) killed.’  
 (c) ‘One is killing the hen (slowly).’ ‘The hen is being killed.’

The active voice has no morphological marker in Finnish. The forms of the verb in the active voice agree in number and person with the subject, which can denote the agent of an action by means of appropriate endings (examples (43)–(45)). The marker of impersonal voice in its simple forms is *-tta-*, *-ttä-*, *-ta-*, *-tä-* followed by the ending *-Vn*, which historically can be understood as an ending of III Sg (HAKULINEN 1979: 241; ITKONEN 1966: 271–272), and in its compound forms the marker of impersonal voice, seems to be *-ttu*, *-tty*, *-tu*, *-ty*. The agent of an action in the sentences with the verb in impersonal voice in standard Finnish cannot be lexicalized, but the aforementioned marker of impersonal voice implies the general category the agent should belong to, for example the sentence *Kana tapetaan* ‘One kills (will kill) the hen’ ‘The hen is (will be) killed’ implies more or less unequivocally to a Finnish native speaker that the hen is (will be) killed by a human being (compare SADE- NIEMI 1959). The most interesting and instructive aspect of the category of Finnish voice in relation to the category of accusative, however, is its compound forms, which consist of: (i) auxiliary verb *olla* ‘to be’ in III Sg and (ii) Passive Past Participle ending in *-ttu*, *-tty*, *-tu*, *-ty* of the lexical verb, for example:

- (47) *Kana/Ø on/Ø* *tape/ttu/Ø*.  
*hen-II Acc be-III Sg Activ Praes Ind kill-Nom Sg Particip Praet Passiv*  
 ‘One has killed the hen.’ ‘The hen has been killed.’  
 ‘One will kill the hen.’ ‘The hen will be killed.’

There seems to be no concord either in number or in person between the part of the sentence represented in the above example by the word *kana* and the compound predicate (compare (5) *Kanat tapetaan*, (4') *Hänet tapetaan*):

- (48) ***Kanat on tapettu.***  
 'One has killed (all) the hens.' 'One has killed (known) set of hens.'  
 '(All) the hens have been killed.' '(Known) set of hens has been killed.'  
 'One will kill (all) the hens.' 'One will kill (known) set of hens.'  
 '(All) the hens will be killed.' '(Known) set of hens will be killed.'
- (49) ***Hänet on tapettu.***  
 'One has killed him.' 'He has been killed.'  
 'One will kill him.' 'He will be killed.'

The same form of the verb can be determined by the forms of the partitive case (compare: (13) *Kanaa tapetaan*, (14) *Kanoja tapetaan* in the third section):

- (50) ***Kanaa on tapettu.***  
 'One has killed the hen (slowly).' 'The hen has been killed (slowly).'
- (51) ***Kanoja on tapettu.***  
 'One has killed (some) hens.' '(Some) hens have been killed.'

The negation and some lexical meanings allow only partitive (compare: (20) *Kanaa ei tapeta*, (21) *Kanoja ei tapeta*, (24) *Mies rakastaa* (a) *kanaa* (b) *kanoja*, (25) *Mies silittää* (a) *kanaa* (b) *kanoja* from the third section):

- (52) ***Kanaa ei ole tapettu.***  
 'One hasn't killed the hen.' 'The hen hasn't been killed.'
- (53) ***Kanoja ei ole tapettu.***  
 'One hasn't killed (some) hens.' '(Some) hens haven't been killed.'
- (54) (a) ***Kanaa*** (b) ***Kanoja on rakastettu.***  
 'One has loved (a) the hen (b) hens.'  
 '(a) The hen has (b) Hens have been loved.'
- (55) (a) ***Kanaa*** (b) ***Kanoja on silitetty.***  
 'One has stroked (a) the hen (b) hens.'  
 '(a) The hen has (b) Hens have been stroked.'

Although the grammatical opposition between nominative and accusative (together with partitive) in the case of the word *kana* 'hen' from sentence (47) (and to some degree (48)) is phonically neutralized, thanks to syntagmatic comparison between sentence (47) and sentences (48)–(55) where such opposition is not phonically neutralized we can state that *kana* 'hen' in (47) belongs to the category of direct object and accusative case. Up to now we have discussed only such phonic neutralization as does not lead to ambiguity (compare BAŃCZEROWSKI et al. 1982: 276–280). Let us now consider the following series of sentences where the auxiliary verb *olla* 'to be' concords in number and person, and the lexical verb in number, with the word denoting the patient (here: *kana* 'hen'):

- (56) **Kana/Ø**      *on/Ø*      *tape/ttu/Ø.*  
*hen-Nom Sg*    *be-III Sg Activ Praes Ind*    *kill-Nom Sg Particip Praet Passiv*  
 ‘The hen is killed.’
- (57) **Kana/t**      *o/vat*      *tape/ttu/ja.*  
*hen-Nom Pl*    *be-III Pl Activ Praes Ind*    *kill-Part Pl Particip Praet Passiv*  
 ‘The hens are killed.’
- (58) **Kana/Ø**      *ei/Ø*      *ole/Ø*      *tape/ttu/Ø.*  
*hen-Nom Sg*    *no-III Sg*    *be-Radix*    *kill-Nom Sg Particip Praet Passiv*  
 ‘The hen is not killed.’
- (59) **Kana/t**      *ei/vät*      *ole/Ø*      *tape/ttu/ja.*  
*hen-Nom Pl*    *no-III Pl*    *be-Radix*    *kill-Part Pl Particip Praet Passiv*  
 ‘The hens are not killed.’

Because of (i) this concord and (ii) the non-use of the partitive with negation, we are to some extent obliged to say that words *kana*, *kanat* in the sentences above belong to the category of subject and nominative case, and such compound verbal forms as *on tapettu*, *ovat tapettuja*, *ei ole tapettu*, *eivät ole tapettuja* belong to the passive voice. All controversies as to what kind of aspectual and temporal meanings the sentences (56)–(59) express in comparison with the sentences (47)–(55) are of secondary importance, if not totally irrelevant, for the case under discussion (compare: HAKULINEN 1979: 557; HÄKKINEN 1994: 251–252; SAARIMAA 1971: 150; KARLSSON 1977: 373). Let us now compare two known series of sentences:

|                                    |  |
|------------------------------------|--|
| (47) <b>Kana</b> on tapettu.       | (56) <b>Kana</b> on tapettu.           |
| (48) <b>Kanat</b> on tapettu.      | (57) <b>Kanat</b> ovat tapettuja.      |
| (50) <b>Kanaa</b> on tapettu.      |  |
| (51) <b>Kanoja</b> on tapettu.     |  |
| (52) <b>Kanaa</b> ei ole tapettu.  | (58) <b>Kana</b> ei ole tapettu.       |
| (53) <b>Kanoja</b> ei ole tapettu. |  |
|                                    | (59) <b>Kanat</b> eivät ole tapettuja. |

In the first column words *kana*, *kanat*, *kanaa*, *kanoja* belong to the category of direct object and II Acc or Part. The verb (*on tapettu*, *ei ole tapettu*) belongs to the category of impersonal voice. In the second column the words *kana*, *kanat* belong to the category of subject and nominative case. The verb (*on tapettu*, *ovat tapettuja*, *ei ole tapettu*, *eivät ole tapettuja*) should consequently belong to the passive voice. As we can see the neutralization of grammatical opposition between *kana* in sentences (47) and (56) is somehow deeper than the neutralization discussed so far. Even if in the case of sentences like (1) *Mies tappaa kanan*, (2) *Mies tappaa kanat*, (6a) *Tapa kana*, (6b) *Tapa kanat* the neutralization between: (i) genitive and I Acc Sg, (ii) nominative and I Acc Pl or II Acc Sg and Pl can be disambiguated thanks to the procedure of syntagmatic comparison, the same procedure can never serve in Finnish as a tool of morphosyntactical and syntactical disambiguation for the type of sentence represented by (47) and (56). The total morphosyntactical and syntactical homonymy of the sentence *Kana on tapettu* is one of the inherent features of Finnish (where



*kana* simultaneously belongs to the II Acc Sg ~ Nom Sg and *on tapettu* belongs to Impers ~ Passiv). This homonymy, however, seems to be restricted only to forms of the words which are not personal pronouns or the interrogative pronoun *kuka / ken* 'who' and occur in the analyzed type of sentence. In addition, on the verb side this kind of homonymy seems to be restricted lexically. It is: some verbs cannot occur in the passive voice: the forms *\*(kana) on rakastettu* '(the hen) is loved', *\*(kana) ei ole rakastettu* '\*(the hen) isn't loved', *\*ovat rakastettuja* 'are loved', *\*eivät ole rakastettuja* 'aren't loved', *\*(kana) on silitetty* '(the hen) is stroked', *\*(kana) ei ole silitetty* '(the hen) isn't stroked', *\*ovat silitettyjä* 'are stroked', *\*eivät ole silitettyjä* 'aren't stroked' appear incorrect. In the case of simple forms of the impersonal voice the existence of this kind of homonymy is much more difficult to exhibit. It seems to be impossible to state the concord in number or person, because the ending (-*Vn*) remains unchanged, for example: (4) *Kana tape/ta/an*, (5) *Kana/t tape/ta/an*. The negation would require always the partitive: (20) *Kana/a ei tapeta*, (21) *Kano/j/a ei tapeta*, so it is impossible to talk about subject at all.<sup>6</sup> Ikola states, however, that not so long ago it was quite admissible (and maybe nowadays possible too) to use the imperative forms (with marker *-ko-*, *-kö-*) of simple forms of, consequently, passive voice (with marker *-tta-*, *-ttä-*, *-ta-*, *-tä-*) where at least the concord in number was confirmed without doubt because of the ending *-ot*, *-öt* characteristic for the III Pl (Imp) (IKOLA 1959: 42, footnote 3):

- (60)      *Wia/t*            *ja*            *rikokse/t*            *tutki/tta/ko/ot*  
           *guilt-Nom Pl*    *and (con)*    *crime-Nom Pl*    *examine-III Pl Imp Passiv*
- ja*                    *rangais/ta/ko/ot (...)*  
           *and (con)*            *punish-III Pl Imp Passiv*  
           'Let the guilts and crimes be examined and punished.'

Shore however maintains that forms like this are usually slips of the tongue (SHORE 1986: 17–18). If the concord test in the case of simple forms of the impersonal voice, apart from doubtful forms like *tutkittakoot* (instead of *tutkittakoon*) or *rangaistakoot* (instead of *rangaistakoon*), proves useless in proving its homonymy with passive voice, special attention should now be turned to Kiparsky's example as discussed previously. If paratactical synthesis between the sentences (7) *Mikko pyörtyi* 'Mikko fainted' and (8) *Mikko kannettiin ulos* 'One carried Mikko away' 'Mikko was carried away' seems to be admissible in Finnish:<sup>7</sup> (9) *Mikko pyörtyi ja kannettiin ulos* 'Mikko fainted and was carried away', maybe the already discussed type of neutralization of morphosyntactical and syntactical opposition in the case of compound forms of the impersonal voice, for example: *Kana on tapettu* 'One has killed the hen' 'The hen is killed' (where *kana*: II Acc Sg ~ Nom Sg, *on tapettu*: Impers ~ Passiv), takes place in its simple forms as well. Consequently the morphosyntactical cat-

<sup>6</sup> Even if the majority of Finnish grammarians recognize the partitive as one of the cases of the subject in so-called 'existential' sentences, they never recognize the partitive as the case of the subject of an transitive verb, without exceptions.

<sup>7</sup> Itkonen however suggests that this kind of paratactical synthesis is somehow lexically restricted because sentences with the verb in the active voice denoting an active action seem unnatural, for example: (\*) *S. kirjoitti vielä kolme teosta, mutta karkotettiin sen jälkeen maasta* 'S. wrote three works more, but after that was expelled from the country' is not natural because of the lexical meaning of the verb *kirjoittaa* 'to write' denoting active action (ITKONEN 1974: 381).

egorization of *Kana tapetaan* or *Mikko kannettiin ulos* could be: *kana*, *Mikko*: II Acc Sg ~ Nom Sg, *tapetaan*, *kannettiin ulos*: Impers ~ Passiv. How otherwise could the admissibility of sentences like (9) *Mikko pyörtyi ja kannettiin ulos* be interpreted? Analogous homonymy seems to take place in the case of so called ‘existential’ sentences and sentences which express the same semantic meaning, in which there can be identified concord in number and person between the word denoting the entity existing somewhere and the verb (the sentences in the second column are called sometimes ‘normal’ sentences (HAKANEN 1972)), for example:

|                                      |   |
|--------------------------------------|---|
| (26) <i>Kanalassa on kana.</i>       | (61) <i>Kana on kanalassa.</i> <sup>8</sup> |
| (27) <i>Kanalassa on kanat.</i>      | (62) <i>Kanat ovat kanalassa.</i>           |
| (28) <i>Kanalassa on kanaa.</i>      |   |
| (29) <i>Kanalassa on kanoja.</i>     |   |
| (30) <i>Kanalassa ei ole kanaa.</i>  | (63) <i>Kana ei ole kanalassa.</i>          |
| (31) <i>Kanalassa ei ole kanoja.</i> |   |
|                                      | (64) <i>Kanat eivät ole kanalassa.</i>      |

Here *kana* would simultaneously belong to: II Acc (sentence (26)) ~ Nom (sentence (61)), and *on* would belong to: Impers (26) ~ Activ (61). Different informational meanings which are partially expressed in these kind of sentences by word order seem to be irrelevant for the matter under discussion.

As concerns sentences like (47) or (56) *Kana on tapettu* and to some degree (4) *Kana tapetaan*, the neutralization between accusative and nominative case on the one hand and impersonal and passive voice on the other makes these sentences ambiguous. (Analogously the same type of homonymy should apply to sentences like (26) *Kanalassa on kana* and (61) *Kana on kanalassa*, where *kana* belongs at the same time to II Acc ~ Nom and *on* belongs to Impers ~ Activ.) It is quite easy to notice that this kind of neutralization is somehow always restricted only to the II Acc (Sg). As is implied by the section about the dual nature of the Finnish accusative the syntactical distribution of its forms I and II is almost totally disjoint. The syntactical similarities between the analyzed types of sentences, however, unite these two quite different subclasses into one superclass: the accusative. It is possible that the fact that nowadays the second accusative is almost always homophonic with the nominative results from earlier stages of the historical development of the Finnish language, when today’s direct object occurring in II Acc was perceived as a subject (compare HAKULINEN 1979: 241). Nevertheless, in a synchronic approach, such diachronic dependencies should not be taken into consideration and cannot be treated as a basis for appropriate interpretation of the duality of the Finnish accusative. We must state very clearly that the discussed

<sup>8</sup> The grammatical categorization and the translation is given here:

(61) *Kana/Ø* (hen-Nom Sg) *on/Ø* (be-III Sg Activ Praes Ind) *kanala/ssa* (poultry-house-Iness Sg) ‘The hen is in the poultry-house’

(62) *Kana/t* (hen-Nom Pl) *o/vat* (be-III Pl Activ Praes Ind) *kanala/ssa* (poultry-house-Iness Sg) ‘The hens are in the poultry-house’

(63) *Kana/Ø* (hen-Nom Sg) *ei/Ø* (no-III Sg) *ole/Ø* (be-Radix) *kanala/ssa* (poultry-house-Iness Sg) ‘The hen is not in the poultry-house’

(64) *Kana/t* (hen-Nom Pl) *ei/vät* (no-III Pl) *ole/Ø* (be-Radix) *kanala/ssa* (poultry-house-Iness Sg) ‘The hens are not in the poultry-house’

kind of neutralization between accusative and nominative in modern Finnish does not cover every word which belongs to those categories. For example in the case of sentences with imperative verbal forms ((6a) *Tapa kana*, (6b) *Tapa kanat*), such homonymy seems to be nonexistent. It should be the task of Finnish grammars to reflect properly these two kinds of (morphosyntactical and/or syntactical) neutralization. From the point of view presented in this article, Finnish grammars which omit the accusative entirely or restrict it to the forms of seven words (*minut, sinut, hänet, meidät, teidät, heidät, kenet*) are incapable of grasping such inherent neutralizations in the language, exposing only its paradigmatic aspect while concealing its syntagmatic aspect. Even the extensive phonic neutralization between accusative on the one hand and genitive and especially nominative on the other side does not necessarily mean that the accusative has been absorbed by the genitive and nominative cases. In the modern Finnish language this absorption has not yet taken place, and so the category of accusative cannot be erased and split between the categories of genitive and nominative.

## 5. SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

Modern Finnish grammars, in contrast to older ones (from the first half of the 20th century), tend to eliminate the accusative from the inventory of Finnish cases. The authors of such grammars are inclined to distinguish this casual category for only seven Finnish words: personal pronouns (*minä, sinä, hän, me, te, he*) and the interrogative pronoun (*kuka / ken*), because their forms in the accusative (*minut, sinut, hänet, meidät, teidät, heidät, kenet*) are phonically distinct from the forms of any other case. In the case of any other Finnish word its accusative would be phonically indistinguishable from Gen Sg or Nom Sg and Pl. In their approach to the category of case they seem to take into account only the paradigmatic aspect of the Finnish language. They group different forms into different casual categories only on the basis of their forms. However, a language can express certain meanings even without any special substantial matter. Mere opposition is enough for a language to maintain a difference between linguistic units. The description of a language should not be restricted only to its paradigmatic aspect; the syntagmatic aspect must be taken into account at the same time. In reference to the accusative only older Finnish grammars seem to have undertaken this quite complicated task. The specificities of the language require authors to distinguish two subcategories of the accusative: the so-called first (with ending) and second (endingless) accusative. These two subcategories, however, cannot be conceived as morphological variants as such. The first and second accusative seem to have almost totally disjoint syntactical distribution. One form cannot be substituted for the other. However the syntactical similarity (indistinguishability) of these two manifestations of the accusative, which fulfill the function of direct object, is maintained in Finnish by the forms of the seven aforementioned words and the forms of another case of the direct object: the partitive. The syntactical distribution of *minut, sinut, hänet, meidät, teidät, hänet* and *kenet* covers totally the distribution of the two subclasses of the accusative. The syntactical distribution of the partitive even exceeds the boundaries of the distribution of the accusative (the first and second together). The distribution of the accusative is contained in the distribution of the partitive. Thanks to the procedure of syntagmatic comparison we are able to state, in the overwhelming majority

of cases, which syntactical function (subject or direct object) a given word fulfills and which morphosyntactical category (nominative, genitive or accusative) it belongs to. The extensive phonic indistinguishability of the accusative on the one hand and genitive and nominative on the other has certain implications, especially with reference to the category of voice. As long as we consider only such subcategories of voice as active and impersonal (whose existence is not usually questioned by the majority of grammarians), the syntagmatic comparison test can always serve as a tool to disambiguate the syntactical and morphosyntactical category the examined word belongs to. But if we take into consideration sentences whose verb belongs to the passive voice (although the existence of the third subcategory of voice is recognized by surprisingly few Finnish grammarians), some types of sentences seem to be completely insensible to the syntagmatic comparison. In other words, this procedure can hardly ever disambiguate the syntactical and morphosyntactical category of the examined words in those types of sentences. The sentences of this type are always homonymous. This kind of homonymy between Acc and Nom on the one hand and Impers and Passiv on the other seems, however, to be very clearly restricted. Not all words belonging to Acc belong at the same time to Nom and not all words belonging to Impers belong simultaneously to Passiv. The category of nominative or genitive has not yet absorbed the accusative in Finnish, in spite of the extremely extensive syncretism between these cases. It seems very probable that Finnish grammars which have no accusative at their disposal, or which restrict its extent to the seven aforementioned pronouns, are not capable of grasping the syntagmatic similarity (or indistinguishability) between certain types of sentences, not to mention the various kinds of neutralizations that have been discussed. Maybe for the same reason they tend not to recognize the relevance of the passive voice for Finnish, because its described relations with the impersonal voice are complicated to such an extent that the inventory of cases containing only (i) nominative and partitive, which in their approach are the case of subject and direct object at the same time, and (ii) genitive, which in their approach is the case of direct object and attribute simultaneously, is insufficient to show this part of the reality of the Finnish language in its true light.

#### ABBREVIATIONS AND SYMBOLS

Acc – accusative (case); Activ – active (voice); Adess – adessive (case); con – conjunction; Imp – imperative (mood); Impers – impersonal (voice); Ind – indicative (mood); Iness – inessive (case); Nom – nominative (case); Part – partitive (case); partic – particle; Particip – participle; Passiv – passive (voice); Pl – plural (number); Praes – present (tense); Praet – simple past (tense); Radix – stem (of a word); Sg – singular (number); V – vocal; I – first (person or accusative); II – second (person or accusative); III – third (person); ~ – or; / – boundary between morphemes; \* – incorrect; → – direction of the syntactical determination; Ø – morphological zero

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