The Finnish Accusative: Long Distance Case Assignment Under Agreement

Abstract

One of the two object cases in Finnish, the accusative, has three variants. One of these is a pronoun form similar to the English accusative. The choice between the remaining two forms is based on a number of syntactic properties. Here we show that the correct generalization needs to refer to the agreement features of the noun itself, c-command, barriers, and agreement higher in the structure. Moreover, it will be shown that the two accusative forms instantiate long distance case assignment, namely a system in which the case assigner may be situated in a position arbitrarily far from the assignee. Despite the several interacting mechanisms which take part in determining the accusative form in Finnish, we present a simple system of grammatical Case assignment that allows us to account for the three-way accusative realization as a by-product of more general syntactic mechanisms. At the core of our explanation is a notion of last resort: under certain exceptional conditions, higher functional heads, such as C and Agr, participate in direct object Case marking in order to save the derivation from crashing. The results suggest that the system of structural case/Case in UG needs to be broadened in order to capture all of the observed phenomena.

1 Introduction

There are two types of nominal case features: structural and inherent. Structural case features are assigned to noun phrases on the basis of their structural position, whereas inherent case features are assigned via subcategorization by individual lexical items. A further standard assumption concerning case marking is that the Case of a given DP is determined by the most local potential Case assigner. For instance, within many X-bar theoretic models structural Case is assigned under local spec-head relations or, at the very least, under local governing relations.

Finnish accusative case presents a challenge to the locality assumption. In Finnish, a case language with fifteen morphological cases, the morphological realization of accusative case depends on the syntactic properties of a clause arbitrarily far from the accusative site. In addition, the morphological realization of accusative case for any DP depends on the interaction of several factors: (i) the nominal number of the DP, (ii) the pronominal/non-pronominal status of the DP, and most interestingly, (iii) whether there is agreement between grammatical heads and other arguments in the clause. While confusing at first, we show that the system is based on a simple principle which extends the standard unproblematic Case assignment rules from local to long distance.

We proceed as follows: after developing the criteria for an accusative-marked DP, we present the arguments against the traditional generalization concerning the Finnish accusative, concentrating on several
non-finite constructions, and develop the actual generalization that can be extracted from the data. In Section 4 we consider the long distance nature of the phenomenon and its relationship to islandhood, and in Section 5 we provide our analysis. Given the complex nature of the data, our goal is to first present the data in a theory-neutral (but generative) fashion in Sections 1-4, followed by the analysis in Section 5 which taps into everything that is known about structural Case assignment in Finnish, including Case checking and the Agree relationship in Minimalism.

2 Accusative Case in Finnish

2.1 The three accusative cases

Finnish has four structural cases—nominative, accusative, partitive and genitive—as well about a dozen of semantic cases (Hakulinen et al. 2004; Nelson 1998; Nikanne 1990; Vainikka 1989). Of the structural cases, The Finnish accusative is the most complex one, as it lacks a comprehensive description or analysis either in traditional grammar or in modern syntax, and its analysis has far-reaching ramifications for syntax, morphology and the general theory of case (or Case). It has three morphological variants: the true accusative suffix (-t or ACC(t)), the accusative lacking a suffix and thus identical to the nominative (-0 or ACC(0)), and the accusative that is homophonous with the genitive (-n or ACC(n)). However, in earlier stages of Finnish, the n-accusative and the genitive involved distinct forms. An example of each is provided in (1a–c).

(1) a. Minä näin häne-t
    I saw he-ACC(t)
    ‘I saw him.’

b. Minä näin auto-n
    I saw car-ACC(n)
    ‘I saw the car.’

c. Minun täytyy nähdä auto
    My must see car.ACC(0)
    ‘I must see the car.’

The t-accusative in (1a) emerges when the object is a pronoun (hän-et) (we consider later what happens in the plural). Kiparsky (2001) and Asudeh (2003) argue that the human pronouns in Finnish are the only DPs in Finnish that bear ‘true’ accusative Case. The same view is adopted in the new extensive reference grammar of Finnish (Iso Suomen Kielioippi, ”A Comprehensive Finnish Grammar”, Hakulinen et al. 2004, henceforth ISK). We adopt this view here as well.
If the object is non-pronominal and in the singular, then either the n-accusative (1b) or the 0-accusative (1c) emerges. The n-accusative emerges at least in standard transitive sentences with nominative subjects and agreement (1b). Now consider (2–5), all grouped together based on the fact that they take the 0-accusative, and do not allow the n-accusative.

The first construction is the impersonal passive which has no overt subject and no agreement, and only the 0-accusative is possible:

(2) Sinu-t/ sisko/ *sisko-n läydettiin pihalta
    you-ACC(t) sister-ACC(0) sister-ACC(n) found.PASS yard
    ‘You/The sister were/was found in the (back)yard.’

The same pattern holds both in the possessive construction and in the existential construction, where the logical subject (or a fronted locative phrase) occurs in a locative case and there is no agreement on the verb olla 'be'; the possessive construction is exemplified here:

(3) Onneksi minulla on sinu-t/ sisko/ *sisko-n
    fortunately I.ADE have.3SG you.ACC(t) sister.ACC(0) sister-ACC(n)
    ‘Fortunately I have you/a sister.’

Similarly, the pattern holds in the necessive construction with genitive subject and no agreement on the verb (modal-like täytyy ’must’):

(4) Minun täytyy löytää sinu-t/ sisko/ *sisko-n
    I.GEN must.3SG find.A you-ACC(t) sister-ACC(0) sister-ACC(n)
    ‘I must find you/the sister.’

Finally, the imperative construction reveals the same pattern; it normally occurs without a subject:4

(5) Etsi nyt hän-et/ sisko/ *sisko-n!
    find now he/she-ACC(t) sister-ACC(0) *sister-ACC(n)
    ‘Find her/the sister now!’.

These constructions all lack the nominative subject and (concomitant) subject-verb agreement. This data agree with the so-called Jahnsson’s Rule (Jahnsson 1871; Kiparsky 2001) which states that if there is an external nominative subject, then the object must have a phonologically realized (i.e. non-zero) case ending. The Finnish n-accusative is precisely the non-zero form of the two possible suffixes, n-form and 0-form.5 All the constructions above lack a nominative subject, and therefore the accusative emerges without an overt suffix. Jahnsson’s generalization seems to imply that every finite sentence has only one nominative
Case to assign. If it is not assigned to the grammatical subject, then it is assigned to the accusative position. One could therefore reason that what is going on in Finnish is similar to the English passive: when there is no nominative subject, the object rises to the subject position and obtains or ”checks” nominative Case.

This conclusion must be resisted, however. First, recall that only singular non-pronominal DPs obtain such nominative Case, while other DPs are assigned accusative (cf. 1a–c). It is unlikely that singular non-pronominal DPs would occupy a subject position while other types of object DPs do not.

Second, in several constructions with the nominative object listed above there are good reasons to think that the subject position cannot be filled with the accusative DP. The possessive and necessive constructions have an overt logical subject of their own (not in nominative Case; cf. Sands and Campbell 2001 and Toivonen 2007), and an accusative DP could co-occur with the subject DP in the subject position (nor does word order support such a view).

Third, direct evidence in favor of the conclusion that the 0-accusative is not nominative can be derived from the fact that there is no agreement with this accusative (that superficially looks like nominative) and the finite verb. The 0-accusative never agrees with a verb or another agreeing head, as we will see. The impersonal passive in Finnish behaves differently from the English personal passives and involves neither object raising nor agreement with the object.

Fourth, as we will show in the next section, all the various accusative objects, whether the n-accusative, 0-accusative or the unproblematic t-accusative, obey syntactic object tests in Finnish, hence they occupy the same syntactic object position.

Last but not least, we will demonstrate that Jahnsson’s generalization turns out not to be correct: it (accidentally) holds in finite contexts, but cannot be maintained in various non-finite contexts. We will find that the generalization fails in both ways: the presence of the nominative DP is not required for the n-accusative to occur while the 0-accusative can occur in the presence of nominative DP.

2.2 Object diagnostics

Before we criticize Jahnsson’s generalization in detail we will demonstrate that all three accusative suffixes are associated with the same syntactic position despite the fact that the n-accusative is homonymous with the genitive (in the singular) and that the 0-accusative is homonymous with the nominative. That is, we argue that the 0-accusative DP is not raised to the position of the grammatical subject normally associated with nominative Case.

The argument is structured as follows. First we define three unproblematic object diagnostics for Finnish, which allow us to gauge whether a given DP occurs in an object position or not. We will show
that the t-accusative, n-accusative and the 0-accusative share properties with respect to these object diagnostics; hence they do not differ in their objecthood. In the second part, we show that the various accusatives are also treated similarly in terms of certain syntactic operations, such as clefting and raising.

First of all, given the completely uncontroversial status of accusative marking with human pronouns, their distribution can be used as a test for determining whether other DPs occurring in the same object position are accusatives or not. This is captured by the following test:

(6) *The human pronoun test*

A DP can be treated as accusative if its human pronoun equivalent occurs in overtly marked accusative case with the suffix -t.

There are two main sentence types where this test is particularly useful, namely those involving agreement between the subject and the main verb, as in (7a), and those without subject-verb agreement, as in (7b). The human pronouns hänet ‘him/her’ and heidät ‘them’ occur in the accusative in both types of constructions. Plural DPs occur in the nominative form in both constructions (similar to accusative full DPs in English). Crucially, singular full DPs (and the inanimate pronoun se ‘it’) vary between genitive -n and nominative 0-accusative.6

(7) a. Kutsuin häne-t/ heidä-t/ poja-n/ poja-t/ se-n/ ne
I-invited him-ACC(t) them-PL.ACC boy-ACC(-n) boys-PL.ACC it-ACC(-n) them-PL.ACC
'I invited him/her, them, the boy, the boys, it, them (inanimate)’

b. Kutsu häne-t/ heidä-t/ poika/ poja-t/ se/
Invite.IMPER him-ACC(t) them-PL.ACC boy-ACC(0) boys-PL.ACC it-ACC(0)
ne!
them-PL.ACC
'Invite him/her, them, the boy, the boys, it, them (inanimate)’

The human pronoun test thus shows that the accusative form of poika ‘boy’ is either pojan (7a) or poika (7b), depending on the syntactic context. Yet these DPs appear in a position which, when substituted by a pronoun, show the unambiguous t-accusative form.

Let us turn to plural full (non-pronominal) DPs where the accusative case situation is fairly straightforward. There are three possible scenarios in the plural:

(i) the DP is a human pronoun and receives the accusative -t suffix (meidät ‘us’, teidät ‘you-pl’ and heidät ‘them’); (ii) the DP is not a pronoun, and it occurs with the plural -t suffix (identical to the plural nominative); and (iii) the DP is a non-human pronoun and receives neither the
accusative -t nor the plural -t suffix; it occurs in the bare nominative form (there is only one DP of this type, ne 'they/them-inanimate').

As we have seen, the Finnish accusative has a variant that looks identical to the genitive case (suffix -n). In the plural, however, the genitive variant of the accusative is never possible. This situation gives rise to the plural test relating to the accusative:

(8) **The plural test**

If a plural DP occurs in the genitive case, it is clear that the DP bears true genitive case, rather than accusative.

That is, in the following example, the plural DP ‘boys’ occurs unambiguously in genitive case, and this form can never occur in an accusative context:

(9) a. Näin **poikien** juoksevan
I-saw boys.PL/GEN run.VA
‘I saw the boys running.’

With the help of this test we can distinguish (singular) thematic objects of a verb that bear accusative case (that happen to look like genitive) versus those that actually bear genitive case and also happen to be objects of a verb (in e.g. certain nominalizations). Consider the following contrast:

(10) a. Minä näin **Peka-n** lähtemässä
I saw Pekka-? leave.MA
‘I saw Pekka leaving.’

b. Minä näin **Peka-n** lähtevän
I saw Pekka-? leave.VA
‘I saw Pekka leave.’

The subject of the embedded infinitival is *Pekka* in both cases, and the forms of the proper name in (a) and (b) look identical: they both have the same -n suffix. Only the form of the infinitival differs: in (10a) the MA-infinitival is used, whereas in (10b) the VA-infinitival is used. The exact nature of these infinitivals is not important for the moment, only the fact that they differ in their syntactic properties. Which, if either, of these DPs occurs in true genitive case and which, if either, occurs in genitive-look-alike n-accusative? The plural test provides the answer, as can be seen when the embedded subject DP occurs in the plural. Here are the same examples with plural DPs:
(11) a. Minä näin laiva-t lähtemässä
   I saw boat-PL.ACC leave.MA
   ‘I saw the boats leaving.’

   b. Minä näin laivo-jen lähtevän
   I saw boat-PL.GEN leave.VA
   ‘I saw the boats leave.’

The plural test reveals that the embedded subject DP of the VA-infinitive (10b) occurs in true genitive Case, whereas the embedded subject of the MA-infinitive (10a) carries the n-accusative. Therefore we can, and must, distinguish syntactically DPs which bear the genitive-looking n-accusative and the sui generis genitive case; in particular, the n-accusative case cannot be said to emerge in a process in which the syntactic position of the object changes into that of genitive DPs. Rather, it involves a genitive suffix which is suffixed to a DP in a syntactic object position.

A third test involves partitive case, the other objective case in Finnish (not discussed in any detail in this article). The test can be formulated as follows:

(12) The partitive test

If an object DP alternates between partitive case (suffix -(t)A) and potential accusative case based on the (semantic) features of the verb or the sentence, we can take the potential accusative to be actual accusative case.

For example, object DPs under the scope of negation occur in partitive case in Finnish, while in the equivalent affirmative sentence the accusative emerges. Let us consider the data in (10b) and (10a) again. The following data compares these two sentences when the matrix clause is affirmative (13a, 14a) as opposed to negated (13b, 14b):

(13) a. Minä näin Peka-n lähtemässä
   I saw Pekka-ACC(n) leave.MA
   ‘I saw Pekka leaving.’

   b. Minä en nähnyt Pekka-a lähtemässä
   I not saw Pekka-PAR leave.MA
   ‘I did not see Pekka leaving.’

(14) a. Minä näin Peka-n lähtevän
   I saw Pekka-GEN leave.VA
   ‘I saw Pekka leave.’

   b. Minä en nähnyt Peka-n lähtevän
   I not saw Pekka-GEN leave.VA
‘I did not see Pekka leave.’

Along with the earlier plural text, the negative test also reveals that the embedded subject of the MA-infinitival is in the -n accusative and hence alternates with the partitive, whereas the embedded subject of the VA-infinitival remains in genitive case and does not alternate.

A number of empirical tests show that all three accusative forms, the t-accusatives, the n-accusatives and the 0-accusatives, behave identically with respect to various syntactic processes. Here we show this for clefting, topicalization and idiom construction.

(15) Clefting:

a. Pekka söi leivä-n/ Se oli leipä jonka Pekka säi ___
   Pekka ate bread-ACC(n) It was bread-NOM which Pekka ate

b. Pekan näki häne-t/ Se oli hän jonka Pekka näki ___
   Pekka saw him-ACC(t) It was he-NOM whom Pekka saw

c. Pekan täytyy syödä leipä/ Se oli leipä joka Pekan täytyy syödä ___
   Pekka-GEN must eat bread-ACC(∅) It was bread-NOM that Pekka must eat

(16) Topicalization

a. Pekka säi leivä-n/ Leivä-n Pekka säi ___
   Pekka ate bread-ACC(n) Bread-ACC(n), Pekka ate

b. Pekka näki häne-t/ Häne-t Pekka näki ___
   Pekka saw him-ACC(t) him-ACC(t), Pekka saw

c. Pekan täytyy syödä leipä/ Leipä Pekan täytyy syödä ___
   Pekka-GEN must eat bread-ACC(0) Bread-ACC(0), Pekka-GEN must eat

(17) Idiom construction:

a. Pekka veti herne-en nenäänsä
   Pekka pulled pea-ACC(n) into-his-nose
   Pekka was offended

b. Pekan täytyy vetää herne nenäänsä
   Pekka must pull pea-ACC(0) into-his-nose
   Pekka must get offended.

In the idiom examples, the object DP of the idiom occurs in the n-accusative in example (a) in a regular sentence with agreement, but it occurs in the 0-accusative when main verb agreement is lacking, as in (b). In both examples, the idiomatic reading is retained.
The results of the diagnostic and syntactic tests are important in showing that the various morphological forms of the accusative are realizations of the same structural accusative Case. The diagnostic tests themselves are clearly accurate, since the unambiguous accusative forms converge with respect to specific DPs in the postverbal position: the DPs in this position show (i) the uncontroversial accusative suffix -t when they are pronouns, and (ii) the uncontroversial suffix -t when they are in the plural; they also undergo (iii) the accusative/partitive alteration, where partitive is an uncontroversial object case. What is thus exceptional are the singular non-pronominal DPs that show different case suffixes when they occur in these same positions. Therefore we think it unlikely that the data should be explained by relying on raising or other devices which would change the syntactic position of the accusative objects.

3 Rethinking Jahnsson’s generalization

Jahnsson’s generalization states that the 0-accusative emerges if and only if there is no nominative subject in the same clause. We have seen that the generalization is quite successful in predicting the properties of a number of constructions in Finnish. Nevertheless, the generalization fails in both directions: there are sentences with a nominative subject which emerge together with the 0-accusative, and sentences which have the n-accusative but no nominative subject. Let us begin with the former problem.

3.1 Impersonal passive

The argument comes from the impersonal passive construction in colloquial speech. An impersonal passive in Finnish is formed by applying the passive morphology to a finite verb and suppressing the subject, while keeping the patient argument in the object position. As we pointed out earlier, the patient appears in the 0-accusative (or t-accusative) form. In colloquial speech, however, it is common to use the first person plural nominative subject together with the impersonal passive and the object:

(18) Me rakennetaan uusi talo
      We.NOM build.PASS new.ACC(0) house.ACC(0)
      ‘we build a new house.’

This construction involves a nominative subject, a passive verb and a 0-accusative object; hence there are two nominative-looking arguments in this construction. It cannot therefore be true that it is the presence of a nominative subject which requires the appearance of the n-accusative.

Since in Finnish the matrix clause properties, such as passive morphology, may affect several object arguments downstream (Brattico 2009; 2012b), it is possible to craft a sentence with three nominative-
looking arguments (19a). As shown by (19b), the two nominative-looking objects are objects by the pronoun test:

(19) a. Me nähtiin Pekka ostamassa uusi auto
    We.NOM saw.PASS Pekka.ACC(0) buy.MA new.ACC(0) car.ACC(0)
    ‘We saw Pekka buying a new car.’

    b. Me nähtiin hänet voittamassa heidät
    We.NOM saw.PASS him.ACC(t) win.MA them.ACC(t)
    ‘We saw him beating them (in a game).’

Therefore we conclude that the 0-accusative can occur together with a nominative subject, in the same clause. In fact, there is no limit on the number of nominative-looking arguments in a sentence.

3.2 Deverbal adjective phrases

Next we show that the n-accusative can occur without the presence of a nominative subject. There are two relevant construction types, (i) deverbal adjective phrases and (ii) several types of non-finite clauses. We will examine adjectives first.

In Finnish it is possible to form complex prenominal adjective phrases. One of these is a participial adjective which is formed by applying the participle suffix to an eventive verbal root. The resulting adjective inflects for tense (past, present) and may take patient arguments which appear in accusative Case, as exemplified in (20); applying the pronoun test, (19b) shows that the object of the participial adjective occurs in true accusative case. Furthermore, the adjective shares its number and case features with the noun head via concord, as shown in (19c).

(20) [luun syönyt] koira
    bone.ACC(n) eat.VA.PAST.SG dog.SG
    ‘A dog that ate the bone.’

The adjective phrase can never contain a nominative subject. As we show later, adjective phrases are also grammatical islands which allow very little grammatical information to penetrate in and out. Yet the n-accusative is possible; hence it may appear without the presence of a nominative subject. Whether the matrix sentence has a nominative subject or not (or whether it has an agreeing verb) has no relevance to the n-accusative inside of the AP:

(21) a. Fido on se luun syönyt koira
    Fido.NOM is that bone.ACC(n) eat.VA.PAST dog
    ‘Fido is the dog that ate the bone.’
Fido must be the dog that ate the bone.

We have seen, then, that Jahnsson’s generalization does not hold – the n-accusative occurs even when the construction cannot have a nominative subject, and the 0-accusative occurs even in the presence of a nominative subject. In an attempt to determine the correct generalization for the distribution of the accusative forms, we turn to a rich, relatively unexplored source of information on accusative case, the non-finite constructions.

3.3 Non-finite phrases

We now examine the Finnish non-finite constructions in some detail. Finnish has a number of non-finite verb forms (Hakulinen & Karlsson 1979; Hakulinen et al. 2004; Koskinen 1998; Vainikka 1989), five of which will be discussed here. In addition to lacking finite verb suffixation, non-finite constructions in Finnish also lack the three markers of a finite clause: (1) a nominative subject; (2) the possibility of a negative verb (which carries full finite person/number agreement morphology in Finnish); and (3) the possibility of the auxiliary verb *olla* ‘be’ (Vainikka 1989: 243). In addition, as shown in Koskinen (1998), the Finnish non-finite constructions lack a CP-level Focus Phrase (see also Huhmarniemi 2012). Yet contrary to what we would initially believe (given the impossibility of a nominative subject) on the basis of Jahnsson’s rule, non-finite verbs allow both n-accusatives and 0-accusatives. This supports the claim that accusative realization in Finnish is in fact not controlled by the presence or absence of a nominative subject DP. We will also begin to uncover a pattern that this case suffix is associated with some type of agreement. Various authors such as (Nelson 1998; Reime 1993) have suggested that agreement is more relevant for accusative distribution in Finnish than nominative subjects, based on finite clauses; however, a full analysis of both finite and non-finite constructions in terms of the accusative has not been developed in previous work.

In the following, we look at several non-finite constructions one by one. Such a detailed examination is warranted because in addition to further showing that Jahnsson’s generalization cannot be correct, the data allow us to arrive at what we believe to be the correct generalization.

3.3.1 The temporal adjunct

We will first consider two types of adjunct (adverbial) clauses in Finnish, the temporal adjunct and the rationale adjunct. In the first of these adjunct constructions, the verb in the temporal adjunct carries the suffix *-essa* (ongoing aspect, ‘while Ving’, active or passive; ESSA or ESSA/PASS in the glosses) and
-iUA (completed aspect, ’after having Ved’; ESSA/PAST in the glosses). The term ”temporal adjunct” was introduced in Vainikka (1989); ISK (pp.536-7) refers to this as the ”temporal construction”. There is no traditional term for this construction, as it incorporates two traditional verb forms: in the present (or on-going) aspect, it is the traditional 2nd infinitive (active or passive) in inessive case, and the past (or completed) aspect, it is the traditional past participle in partitive case. According to ISK, the present and past forms in this construction are not exactly semantically equivalent, but for our syntactic purposes they are sufficiently equivalent. The three possible verb forms are listed in (22) together with concrete examples in (23a–c).

(22) lukiessa, luettua, luettaessa
    read.ESSA, read.ESSA/PASS, read.ESSA/PAST
    ’while reading’, ’having read’, ’while being read’

(23) a. Aika kuluu nopeasti [lukiessa hyvä kirja]
    time runs fast [read.ESSA good.PAR book.PAR]
    ‘Time runs fast when reading a good book.’

b. Hän meni nukkumaan [luettuaan hyvän kirjan]
    He went sleep.MA [read.ESSA/PAST good.ACC(n) book.ACC(n)]
    ‘He went to sleep after reading a good book.’

c. Aika kuluu nopeasti [luettaessa hyvä kirja]
    time runs fast [read.ESSA/PASS good.PAR book.PAR]
    ‘Time runs fast when a good book is being read.’

Importantly, example (24) shows that the n-accusative emerges in this construction, although there is no finite verb or nominative subject, and it does not matter what type of a main clause follows (or precedes) this adjunct:

(24) [Maijan löydettyä sinu-t/ sisko-n/ *sisko-0] meidän
    Maija.GEN find.ESSA/PAST you-ACC(t) sister-ACC(n) *sister-ACC(0) we.GEN
    täytyi lähteä kotiin.
    must.PAST/3SG leave.A home
    ‘After Maija found you/the sister, we had to go home’

There are three further key factors to note about the temporal adjunct construction. First, when the subject is a human pronoun, a possessive suffix is realized at the end of the verb form, as with regular possessive constructions involving a noun (25a–b).10

(25) a. (minun) kirja-ni
    (my) book-Px/1SG
Second, the construction has a version of tense (or aspect) marking, given the two aspects in the active mood shown above. Third, as will be shown in detail later, the temporal construction is a strong island and thus WH-extraction out of the adjunct is not possible. Island considerations will turn out to be relevant for the distribution of the accusative forms in Finnish. However, while finite subject-verb agreement is lacking in the temporal construction, the possessive suffix at the end of the verb form does agree with a genitive (subject) DP (in the specifier position of the predicate). Moreover, the agreement reflected in the Px is complete: the suffix agrees with the genitive DP in all person/number features (Finnish does not have gender agreement).

There are many reasons to think that possessive agreement in Finnish is similar to subject-verb agreement. Possessives have five distinct person/number forms (3rd person singular and plural share a form), and some of the forms are morphologically related (see Table 1). Furthermore, as in finite clauses, the first and second person subjects are optional; Finnish is pro-drop in first and second person, but not in third, and the pattern holds for Px’s, as well (Vainikka & Levy 1999).

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<th>Table 1. Verbal and nominal agreement.</th>
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| FIRST       | SECOND      | THIRD       |
| SINGULAR    | talo-ni     | talo-si     | talo-nsa   |
| PLURAL      | talo-mme    | talo-nee    | talo-nsa   |

In addition to the pro-drop pattern, the Px behaves like verb agreement in the sense that it is insensitive to the thematic roles of the arguments; the Px agreement obtains between any human pronoun DP in the prehead position. Consider (26).

(26) hänen esittely-nsä
his introduction-Px/3SG

This expression is ambiguous in three ways. According to one interpretation, the genitive DP is interpreted as a possessive and not an Agent or Patient. The expression then means 'his (artistic etc.) presentation'. On a second reading, the pronoun is the Agent of the predicate. In this case a reading 'the introduction
(of somebody) by him’ is obtained. Finally, the pronoun may be interpreted as a Patient which then generates the reading ‘the introduction of him (by somebody)’. What is remarkable here is that despite the variation in interpretation, the possessive suffix agreement remains the same. The same holds for verb agreement: there is agreement between a grammatical subject and a finite verb, completely regardless of the thematic role of the grammatical subject. In both cases, we conclude that the agreement pattern is a syntactic one.

The temporal adjunct thus presents a further counterexample to Jahnsson’s generalization since the accusative DP occurs in genitive case; the zero suffix is expected given that the non-finite construction has no nominative subject.

### 3.3.2 The rationale adjunct

The second non-finite adjunct construction, the rationale adjunct, consists of a non-finite verb form with the suffix -kse-, followed by an obligatory possessive suffix (coreferential with the subject of the matrix clause). The traditional term for the verb form in this construction is the 1st infinitive, long form. In ISK, the construction is unintuitively referred to as the ‘the finite construction’. We prefer Vainikka’s (1989:311-2) term ‘the rationale adjunct’.

(27) lukeakse(-ni)...read.KSE-Px/1SG
    ’in order (for me) to read…’

As with the temporal adjunct, the accusative object may emerge in the genitive -n form, even though there is no nominative subject (nor finite subject/verb agreement); furthermore, lack of agreement in the matrix clause does not prevent the n-accusative from emerging in the rationale clause. Consider the following examples from ISK (p.895), where the matrix verb in (28a) is an imperative, and the matrix verb in (28b) is the non-agreeing necessive verb täytyy ‘must’ which shows tense marking but no subject-verb agreement; recall that these two constructions gave rise to the zero accusative in the finite clauses in Section 2:

(28) a. Paina OK [käynnistääksesi ohjelma-n]
    Press OK start.KSE-Px/2SG program-ACC (-n)
    ‘Press OK to start the program.’

b. Maalliko-n täytyy tietää hieman taustoja [tajutakseen laitoksen
    layman-GEN must know little background understand.KSE-Px/3SG faculty-GEN
tärkeyde-n] importance-ACC (-n)
    ‘The layman must know a little bit of the background in order to understand the importance of the faculty.’
The accusative object inside the rationale adjunct occurs with the genitive suffix -n even when embedded in a matrix construction that cannot have a nominative subject. Thus, the rationale adjunct constitutes another counterexample to Jansson’s generalization. However, similarly to the temporal adjunct, the verb form in the rationale adjunct carries an agreeing possessive suffix. In this construction, the Px is, in fact, obligatory (presumably because an overt subject DP cannot occur in the construction).

On the other hand, the situation with the rationale construction is more complex than with the temporal construction: in addition to the -n accusative in the examples in (27), the 0-accusative is also possible in both sentences. Only the -n accusative was possible in the temporal construction. We return to a discussion of this option after considering three other constructions in Finnish that also allow the 0-accusative option, and after discussing the island status of the non-finite constructions in Finnish. In conclusion, given the data from the two non-finite adjunct constructions, while neither a nominative subject nor finite agreement features on the verb are necessary and sufficient for the genitive -n accusative, a more general sort of agreement appears to be relevant.

3.3.3 The A-infinitive

When we turn to more argument-like non-finite complements, a new factor emerges: the matrix verb has the possibility of controlling the form of the accusative object of the embedded non-finite clause in three separate constructions. Such matrix verb control represents a relatively nonlocal (i.e., non-clause-bound) realization of the accusative case suffix. We will begin with the so-called A-infinitive.11

Example (28) shows that the form of the embedded object of an A-infinitive is determined by whether the matrix clause has an agreeing verb and a nominative subject or not (Ross 1967; Vainikka 1989):

(29) a. Yritimme löytää sinut/ sisko-n/ *sisko-0 pihalta
   try.PAST/1PL find.A you-ACC(t) sister-ACC(n) *sister-ACC(0) yard-ABL
   ‘We tried to find you/the sister at the (back)yard.’

   b. Yritä löytää hänet/ sisko/ *sisko-n pihalta!
   try.IMP find.A him/her-ACC(t) sister-ACC(0)sister-ACC(n) yard-ABL
   ‘Try to find her/the sister at the (back)yard!’

In (29a) the matrix verb carries subject-verb agreement, and the accusative object of the embedded A-infinitival verb löytää ‘to find’ emerges in the genitive, while in (29b) the matrix verb is an imperative verb, lacking agreement, and the genitive is not possible.

The A-infinitive is the least clause-like of the non-finite forms in Finnish in that the embedded verb does not normally have an overt subject at all, but is controlled by the matrix subject or object (see Vainikka 1989,
Recall that while the two adjunct constructions discussed above are more independent of the matrix verb (because they are adjuncts) than the A-infinitive (which is typically a complement), the genitive -n form of the (singular DP) accusative was found in the adjunct constructions. In striking contrast, when the A-infinitive occurs in a construction where the infinitive is independent of the matrix verb, the accusative occurs in the nominative, as in the examples in (24) (from ISK, pp. 895-6):

(30) a. **Infinitive inside the subject DP**

[Mahdollisuus tehdä muuttoilmoitus ... ] voisi jäädä käyttämättä possibility.NOM make.A moving.announcement.ACC(0) ... could remain without-use

‘The possibility of filing a moving announcement might remain unused.’

b. **Infinitive as a complement of a noun**

Ahtisaari korosti olevansa hyvin tyytyväinen... [tilaisuuteen tavata koko Venäjän Ahtisaari emphasized be.VA.Px very satisfied opportunity meet.A whole Russian johto] leadership.ACC(0)

‘Ahtisaari emphasized his satisfaction with the opportunity to meet the whole Russian leadership.’

c. **Independent infinitive interrogative**

[Valitako viera] vai [oma pitkän linjan mies]?

select.A.QUEST guest.ACC(0) or own long.GEN track.GEN man.ACC(0)

‘To select an outsider or one’s own man?’

That is, when the A-infinitive is independent of a matrix verb, it does not support a genitive -n suffix on the accusative DP, and when it is dependent on the matrix verb, the case form of the object of the infinitive is determined by the matrix verb. This pattern will turn out to correlate with the fact that the A-infinitive itself does not carry any type of subject-verb or Px agreement, neither verbal nor nominal.

### 3.3.4 The MA-infinitive

Another argument-type non-finite clause, the MA-infinitive, behaves similarly to the A-infinitive. In the examples (a–b), the matrix agreement controls the accusative realization of the object DP within the embedded MA-infinitive, while example (c) (from ISK p.514) provides an example of a MA-infinitive that is independent of the matrix verb; in (c) the embedded object occurs in the nominative (although there is agreement and a nominative subject in the matrix clause) since the MA-clause in this example is not a complement of the matrix verb:
As with the A-infinitive, a possessive suffix is not possible in the MA-construction (nor is an overt subject normally possible), and there is no tense marking.

To recap the non-finite constructions so far: within the two non-finite complements which normally occur as arguments (the A-infinitive and the MA-infinitive)—and which never allow a possessive suffix—the form of the accusative is dependent on the subject-verb agreement status of the matrix verb; in the unusual situation without a ‘controlling’ matrix verb, the 0-accusative emerges. Within the temporal adjunct and the rationale adjunct—both of which have the same Px agreement pattern as possessive DPs—the -n accusative is always possible, and this is the only form found in the temporal adjunct (and the second option with the rationale adjunct will be discussed below).

### 3.3.5 The VA-construction

We now turn to the final non-finite construction in Finnish, the participial complement or the VA-construction. This construction is the most sentence-like of the non-finite constructions in that in general an embedded finite "että"-clause (that-clause) can be converted to a corresponding non-finite VA-construction. This construction has four verb forms, two active and two passive (and two for each aspect/tense):

(32) a. **Active, present or future**

Arvaan [pankin nostavankorkokantaa].
guess.ISG bank.GEN raise.VA interest.PAR
‘I guess the bank will raise the interest rate.’

b. **Active, past**

Epäilen [sinun syänneen luumuja]
doubt.ISG you.GEN eat-VA/PAST plums.PAR
‘I suspect that you ate the plums.’

c. **Passive, present or future**
Aavistan [korkokantaa nostetta-van],
suspect.1SG interest.PAR raise.VA/PASS
‘I suspect that the interest rate will be raised.’

d. Passive, past

Huomasin [kakkua maiste-tun],
notice.1SG cake-PAR taste.VA/PASS/PAST
‘I noticed that the cake had been tasted.’

While the examples in (32) do not have a possessive suffix, this construction does allow a Px whenever the matrix subject and the embedded subject refer to the same individual:

(33) a. Sinä muistat varmaan tavannee-si hänet aikaisemmin
     you remember.2SG probably meet.VA/PAST-Px/2SG him-ACC(t) earlier
     ‘You probably remember having met him earlier.’

b. *Sinä muistat varmaan meidän, tavannee-mme hänet aikaisemmin
     you remember.2SG probably us.GEN meet.VA/PAST-Px/1PL him-ACC(t) earlier
     ‘You probably remember (that) we have met him earlier.’

c. Me kuvittelemme syä-vämme juhla-ateriaa
     we imagine eat.VA-Px/1PL feast-PAR
     ‘We imagine that we are having a feast.’

d. *Me kuvittelemme teidän, syä-vänne juhla-ateriaa
     we imagine eat.VA-Px/1PL feast-PAR
     ‘We imagine that you are eating a feast.’

That is, when the VA-construction does not have an overt subject, it patterns similarly to the rationale clause in terms of subject control and Px agreement. In both cases, there may be a null anaphoric pro in the subject position bound by the matrix subject, as suggested in Steenberger (2001). The problem of why an overt pronoun is not possible with the Px is beyond the scope of this paper. Our focus here will be on the case realization of the embedded object. Given the possibility of the possessive suffixes and a tense/aspect distinction in the VA-construction, we would expect the -n accusative to emerge in the VA-construction (as it did with the temporal and rationale adjuncts). On the other hand, the VA-construction is also a complement of the matrix verb, and we might expect it to behave similarly to the A-infinitive and the MA-infinitive; in these constructions, the form of the embedded object was typically determined by the matrix verb. With the VA-construction, we thus have a conflict of sorts, and we shall now consider what actually happens with the embedded accusative in this construction. Given the ”conflict” with the VA-construction, an -n suffix of the embedded accusative could arise in two ways: either because there is (nominal, Px-related)
agreement in the embedded clause, or because there an agreeing matrix verb that exerts its influence on the 
embedded complement. When the matrix verb is an agreeing one, the genitive suffix does surface on the 
embedded accusative in this construction, as expected, and the 0-accusative is impossible:

(34) Muistan 

\[
\text{tavanneeni, } \text{hän-}t/ \text{Maija-}n/ \text{*Maija-0 joskus ennen.} \text{'I remember having met her/Maija sometime earlier.'}
\]

What if the matrix clause did not contain an agreeing verb? Such a situation would provide a test 
case for determining which of the two processes is more powerful, the local (Px) agreement or the matrix 
verb agreement that influences its complement clause. In order to occur at all in this construction, the 
embedded Px needs to be coindexed with something like a subject in the matrix clause. Nominative subjects 
cannot be considered because they would involve matrix subject-verb agreement. Neither the existential 
construction nor the possessive construction allow the VA-construction at all since they do not take any kind 
of a sentential complement. The passive construction in Finnish is an impersonal one and does not have a 
subject DP with which the embedded Px could be coindexed. While the imperative gives rise to 2nd person 
agreement, given its restricted nature it is not clear whether the imperative would be a reliable test case. The 
remaining construction, the necessive construction, fortunately presents a test case. The genitive subject of 
täytyy ‘must’ can be coreferential with the embedded Px:

(35) a. Meidän täytyy uskoa läytä-vämme häne-t/ sisko/ sisko-n 
we.GEN must.3SG believe.A find-VA-PX/1PL she-ACC(t) sister-ACC(0) sister-ACC(n) 
pihalta. 
yard.ABL 
‘We must believe that we (will) find her/the sister at the (back)yard.’

b. Sinun täytyy kuvitella osta-neesi hienompi sohva/ 
you.GEN must.3SG imagine-A buy-VA/PAST-Px/2SG better-ACC(0) sofa-ACC(0) 
hienomma-n sohva-n. 
better-ACC(n) sofa-ACC(n) 
‘You must imagine that you have bought a better sofa.’

The result of this test is that both the 0-form and the -n-form of the accusative object are possible. The 
possibility of the n-form is tied to the local (Px, or nominal) agreement within the embedded VA-clause, but 
apparently the matrix verb exerts control over the embedded case form in its complement clause, as well, 
and allows the 0 accusative to emerge as an alternative.
Further evidence that both forms of the accusative are in fact possible is provided by the passive example in (36) (from Vilkuna 1996:298 and Vainikka 2003:251; cf. also Vainikka 1989:303–4), although an overtPx is lacking:

(36) Uolevin väitetään [saa-van palkankorotus/ palkankorotuk-sen].
Uolevi claim.PASS get-VA rise-ACC(0)/ rise-ACC(n)

“Uolevi is claimed to get a raise”

In (36) the embedded genitive subject Uolevin ’Uolevi-GEN’ has been raised to the matrix clause in front of the matrix (impersonal) passive verb. While Vilkuna (1996) and Läbel (1999) discuss this problem, they do not provide a final analysis. Vainikka (2003) suggests that the variation is based on which of the verbs – the matrix or the embedded verb – has scope over the embedded object, but no independent evidence for the scope is provided. According to the present approach, an embedded (nominal) agreement gives rise to the -n accusative option, while the 0 accusative option would involve the lack of an agreeing verb in the matrix clause.

3.4 Summary

In sum, we conclude from the data examined in this section that Jahnsson’s generalization is not correct. The distribution of the 0-accusative and the n-accusative is based on something other than the presence/absence of a nominative subject.

The results from the previous two sections are summarized in Table 2. This table lists all the constructions investigated so far (hence all the commonly used constructions in Finnish that assign accusative case).

The term “subject DP” in the table refers to the possibility of having an overt nominative or genitive subject in the construction.
Table 2. Realization of Finnish singular full NPs in various accusative contexts.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CONSTRUCTION</th>
<th>SUBJECT DP</th>
<th>AGREEMENT</th>
<th>ACCUSATIVE FORM</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>FINITE CLAUSES</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>regular finite clause</td>
<td>nom</td>
<td>yes</td>
<td>-n</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>impersonal passive</td>
<td>no (nom*)</td>
<td>no</td>
<td>zero</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>possessive</td>
<td>no</td>
<td>no</td>
<td>zero</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>existential</td>
<td>no</td>
<td>no</td>
<td>zero</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>necessive</td>
<td>gen</td>
<td>no</td>
<td>zero</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>imperative</td>
<td>nom**</td>
<td>number only</td>
<td>zero</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>NON-FINITE CLAUSES</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>temporal adjunct</td>
<td>gen</td>
<td>yes(Px)</td>
<td>-n</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>rationale adjunct</td>
<td>gen¹</td>
<td>yes(Px)</td>
<td>both</td>
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<tr>
<td>A-infinitive</td>
<td>gen</td>
<td>no</td>
<td>zero</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MA-infinitive</td>
<td>no</td>
<td>no</td>
<td>zero</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VA-construction</td>
<td>gen¹</td>
<td>yes(Px)</td>
<td>both</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>OTHER</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participle AP</td>
<td>(head N)</td>
<td>yes(number/case)</td>
<td>-n</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Nominative subject possible in colloquial speech.

** The status of the subject DP in the imperative is unclear.

¹ No overt genitive DP, but arguably a covert one that is coindexed with the Px and matrix subject.

² While allows a genitive subject, this cannot co-occur with an overt Px.

Note that the ”zero” in the ”accusative form” column for the A-infinitive and the MA-infinitive means that the form is the 0-accusative when the clause is in isolation; when embedded under a matrix clause, the form of the accusative is determined solely by the matrix clause. The ”both” designation in the same column for the VA-construction indicates that there exists variation between the two accusative forms, ACC(0) and ACC(n): the ACC(n) is always possible in this construction (due to the embedded Px); however, when the matrix clause lacks agreement, the ACC(0) is possible as well, based on the matrix clause. We have indicated the rationale clause as allowing both variants, as well, although so far only the n-accusative has been discussed. The possibility of the 0-accusative in the rationale clause will be covered in the next section.

As can be seen from Table 2, the presence or absence of (complete) agreement is the determining factor in the realization of the accusative: the n-accusative is possible in regular finite clauses with subject-verb agreement (person/number), in the three non-finite constructions that allow (person/number) Px agreement (temporal adjunct, rationale clause, and the VA-construction), and in the deverbal adjective construction which exhibits case and number concord with the head noun. The constructions which do not show agreement only allow the 0-accusative (unless agreement and the n-accusative are provided by the matrix clause):
the two non-finite constructions that never carry the Px (the A-infinitive and the MA-infinitive), as well as the impersonal passive, the constructions with a 3rd person singular non-agreeing verb, and the imperative (which only agrees in number with the understood subject).

While it has now become clear that Jahnsson’s generalization does not hold, it remains true over a significant number of constructions and therefore represents a correlation that is unlikely to be true just by random coincidence. The conclusion that agreement controls the realization of the accusative explains at once why there is a correlation, but only a correlation, between nominative subjects and the n-accusative: agreement is often triggered by nominative subjects.

Finally, it is important to note here that what matters for the accusative realization is not agreement between the accusative object and a predicate, but the ‘existential’ property that there are c-commanding agreement features. Thus, since in Finnish objects never agree with anything, it is typically the agreement between the subject and a predicate which affects accusative realization of the object. In the case of the A- and MA-infinitives the agreement is not even in the same clause as the relevant object, but in a higher clause.

Before we present our analysis of the dependency between accusative realization and agreement elsewhere in the sentence, we turn to a brief discussion of a relevant property of this process, namely, its long distance nature. This property of the phenomenon is critical in arriving at an accurate analysis of accusative realization in Finnish.

4 Constraints on object Case assignment

In this section we show how the accusative phenomenon can extend over any number of clause boundaries, and then proceed to show that there are grammatical boundaries over which Case assignment is not possible. Both properties need to be discussed briefly in preparation for our analysis of the phenomenon.

4.1 Several clause boundaries

The data cited in the previous sections show that the realization of the accusative case in a complement clause is sensitive to the matrix clause, in particular the presence or absence of subject-verb agreement in the matrix clause. The question therefore arises if such effects carry over several clause boundaries. Example (37) shows that the matrix agreement—present in (b), absent in (a)—is capable of penetrating two complement A-infinitivals and modulating the form of the accusative (the MA-infinitive can be shown to work the same way):
To construct another similar test, recall that when agreement was eliminated in the matrix clause of a VA-complement, the accusative object of the embedded VA-complement was capable of taking either the -n form (nominal agreement inside the VA-structure) or the 0-accusative form (lack of agreement in the matrix clause). The VA-participle can take an A-infinitive complement, which results in a sequence of non-finite complements:

(38) Minä uskon haluava-ni syödä tuo-n leivä-\(n/\) *tuo leipä
   ‘I believe (that) I want to eat that bread.’

We can then eliminate the matrix agreement by using the necessitative verb täytyy together with its genitive subject and observe what happens to the double-embedded accusative DP. This test is reported in (39).

(39) Minun täytyy uskoa haluava-ni syödä tuo-n leivä-\(n/\) tuo leipä
   ‘I must believe (that) I want to eat that bread.’

Again, both forms are possible. Apparently, the effect can penetrate complement clause boundaries indefinitely, all else being equal. As shown in detail by Brattico (2009; 2012b), these non-finite clauses cannot be analysed as “reconstructed” monoclausal constructions: they involve their own argument structures and adverb modification. Hence we conclude that Finnish exhibits a genuine long-distance case assignment phenomenon, reaching over several non-finite clauses. We will henceforth refer to this long distance phenomenon as LDCA (for Long Distance Case Assignment).18

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18
4.2 Barriers

To prepare for our analysis of the phenomenon, we have to take notice of certain grammatical constructions which do not allow LDCA to penetrate. These will be called LDCA-barriers.

As we have seen, three of the non-finite constructions in Finnish, the A-infinitive, the MA-infinitive, and the VA-construction, allow the effect of agreement from the matrix clause to influence the realization of the embedded accusative object. We note that in addition, these three constructions readily allow extraction of \textit{wh}-elements out of the non-finite clause, as shown here for extraction out of a multiple embedding involving one instance of each infinitival (note that the \textit{wh}-word itself shows accusative variation):

\begin{itemize}
  \item[(40)] \textbf{Wh-extraction across several non-finite clauses:}
    \begin{itemize}
      \item[a.] Minun täytyy uskoa pystyväni syämään tuo-n leivä-n/
        I.GEN must believe.A capable.VA-Px/1SG eat.MA that-ACC(n) bread-ACC(n)
        tuo leipä
        that-ACC(0) bread-ACC(0)
        'I believe that I am capable of eating that bread.'
      \item[b.] Mikä/ Minkä minun täytyy uskoa pystyväni syämään
goose-ACC(0) goose-ACC(n) I.GEN must believe.A capable.VA-Px/1SG eat.MA
        'What do I believe that I am capable of eating t?'
    \end{itemize}
\end{itemize}

A second category of constructions are those that behave as barriers in terms of both processes. This class comprises the temporal adjunct and the adjectival participle construction discussed earlier. Both constructions have agreement (Px and concord, respectively), and the n-accusative always emerges. The 0-accusative is never possible in these constructions, even when the matrix clause lacks agreement, indicating that these two constructions act as barriers in terms of accusative realization. Furthermore, \textit{wh}-extraction is not possible out of these constructions:

\begin{itemize}
  \item[(41)] \textbf{Temporal adjunct island:}
    \begin{itemize}
      \item[a.] Lähditte kotiin heti [Maijan läydettyä Hiljan pihalta]
        went.2PL home immediately [Maija.GEN found.ESSA/PAST Hilja.ACC(n) yard.ABL]
        'You (pl.) went home immediately after Maija found Hilja in the (back)yard.'
      \item[b.] *?Kenet lähditte kotiin heti [Maijan läydettyä pihalta]?
        who.ACC(t) went.2PL home immediately [Maija.GEN found.ESSA/PAST yard.ABL]?
      \item[c.] *?Kenet lähditte kotiin heti läydettyänne?
        who.ACC(t) went home immediately found.ESSA.PAST.Px/2PL
    \end{itemize}
\end{itemize}
While these data might lead one to propose that LDCA-barriers and \(wh\)-islands coincide, this turns out to be wrong. Finite CPs and the rationale clause pattern differently with respect to the two processes. A finite CP boundary (regardless of agreement) blocks the accusative relationship, but nevertheless allows certain types of \(wh\)-extraction. Thus, it is possible to extract the object but not the subject from an embedded CP (see Huhmarniemi 2012 for details):

(42) a. Mitä Pekka uskoi että Merja läysi ____?
   what Pekka believed that Merja found

   b. *Kuka Pekka uskoi että ____läysi Merjan?
   who Pekka believed that _found Merja?

The second discrepancy concerns the rationale clause, where the pattern is the reverse of the finite CP: while \(wh\)-extraction is not possible, accusative realization can nevertheless be influenced from the matrix clause (as pointed out by Huhmarniemi, personal communication, Feb.2009). Consider the following \(wh\)-extraction examples:

(43) Rationale adjunct island:

a. Kävin kirjastossa [lainatakseni uusimman dekkarin].
   went.1SG library.INE borrow.KSE-Px/1SG latest detective.novel
   ‘I went to the library in order to borrow the latest detective novel.’

b. *Minkä kävit kirjastossa [lainataksesi ____]?
   what went.2SG library.INE [borrow.KSE-Px/2SG ____]?
   ‘*What did you go to the library in order to borrow?’

c. *Keneltä kävit kaupungissa [lainatakseksi kirjan ____]
   from.who went city borrow.KSE-Px/2SG book
   ‘From whom did you went to a city to borrow a book?’

The minimal pair showing the effect of matrix agreement on accusative realization in the rationale clause is provided in (44a–b).

(44) a. Painoin nappia käynnistääkseni ohjelman/ *ohjelma.
   Press.1SG button start.KSE-Px/1SG program.ACC(n) program.ACC(0)
   ‘I pressed the button in order to start the program.’

b. Minun täytyi painaa nappia käynnistääkseni ohjelman/ ohjelma
   I.GEN must.3SG press button start.KSE-Px/1SG program.ACC(n) program.ACC(0)
   ‘I had to press the button in order to start the program.’

In (44a) there is agreement both in the matrix clause (subject-verb agreement) and in the rationale clause (nominal, Px, agreement), and only the n-accusative is possible. In (44b) the nominal agreement gives rise
to the n-accusative, and it must be the lack of matrix agreement that is responsible for the possibility of the 0-accusative. This is surprising given that the rationale clause is a strong island that does not allow wh-extraction. The rationale clause thus stands in a marked contrast with the temporal adjunct which is both an island and opaque to LDCA.

There are two other constructions in Finnish that have come to our attention that pattern somewhat similarly to the rationale clause: (i) an adjunct version of the MA-infinitive (MALLA) and (ii) a complement DP construction, exemplified here:

(45) a. Minä opin lukemalla tämän kirjan
   I learn.1SG reading.MALLA this.ACC(n) book.ACC(n)
   ‘I learn by reading this book.’

   b. Opitaan lukemalla tämä kirja
      learn.PASS read.MALLA this.ACC(0) book.ACC(0)

   c. *Opitaan lukemalla tämän kirjan
      learn.PASS read.MALLA this.ACC(n) book.ACC(n)

   d. *Minä Pekka oppii lukemalla
      What Pekka learns read.MALLA

(46) a. Minä tein [sopimuksen ostaa auton/ auto]
       I make contract buy.A car.ACC(n) car.ACC(0)
       ‘I made a contract to buy a car.’

   b. Tehtiin [sopimus ostaa *auton/ auto]
      Made.PASS agreement buy.A car.ACC(n) car.ACC(0)

   c. *Minä minkä tein sopimuksen ostaa ___?
      What.ACC I did agreement buy.A

See Brattico (2009; 2012b) for details on the latter construction. In both constructions, the lack of agreement in the matrix clause forces the embedded object to be realized as a 0-accusative, but wh-extraction is not generally possible.

We have established in this section that the choice between the n-accusative and the 0-accusative involves a long distance dependency that is nevertheless sensitive to certain phrase boundaries we call LDCA-barriers. What exactly characterized LDCA-barriers is an open issue and will not be addressed here (see Brattico (2012a) for one proposal). For present purposes, we will use the term LDCA-barrier in our analysis to designate constructions (finite clauses, certain adverb phrases and the participle adjective phrase) which do not allow LDCA to penetrate.
5 Analysis

Up until this point we hope to have demonstrated that the choice between the two variants of the Finnish accusative in the case of singular full DP objects is controlled by c-commanding agreement. Rather than agreement of the accusative DP with anything in the sentence, the relevant agreement occurs higher in the structure, such as subject-verb agreement in the same clause as the accusative, or often in a higher clause. As discussed in the previous section, the dependency between agreement and the form of the accusative can occur over any number of clause boundaries, as long as LDCA-barriers are not crossed.

We will begin by fixing the terminology and clarifying the theoretical ideas we will use as our background. We will use the term “Case assignment” in a theory-neutral sense: it covers Case checking, Case valuation, Case marking and Case assignment, all which designate a certain type of nominal feature covariation.

Second, we attempt to present our analysis first in a theory-neutral setting. While working within some narrowly defined formal framework has its benefits, so far our article has been geared towards neutrality due to the fact that the phenomenon has not been analyzed before and even the basic generalizations available are lacking. Towards the end of the article we will discuss how these findings can be embedded within the current minimalist program, the minimalist theory of Chomsky (2000; 2008) in particular.

Next we cover the generalizations that have been discovered about Finnish structural case/Case in previous research, in particular by Vainikka (1989; 2003) and Brattico & Huhmarniemi (2006). Note that all of these rules are needed for Finnish independent of the three variants of the accusative. Our purpose is to extent these rules so that the accusative phenomenon can be explained as a side-effect, and no new, exotic rules will be needed.

(47) **Structural Case in Finnish**

a. *Nominaive case*
   Assigned by finite C to the subject DP.

b. *Accusative case*
   Assigned by verb to its complement (direct object).

c. *Partitive case*
   Assigned by a lexical head (such as V, P, Q, and perhaps A and N) to its complement.

d. *Genitive case*
   Assigned by a head (such as N, P, V, A) to its specifier.
The Accusative statement (47b) here results in the realization of the accusative suffix -t on personal pronouns, but does not cover the two variants of the (singular) full DPs. These are the fairly standard descriptive rules with many important details omitted aside for clarity.19 We will next propose slight modifications to (47).

Since the accusative only occurs on complements of verbs, and given the aspectual nature of the choice between accusative and partitive, let us tentatively posit an Aspect Phrase as the lowest functional projection dominating the vP. The head of AspP would then assign the accusative on direct objects that are involved in completed action.

(48) Pekka ampui Asp hän-et
    Pekka shot \(\leftrightarrow\) he-ACC(t)
    ‘Pekka shot him dead.’

Determining a potential Case-assigning head for the partitive can be more complicated. What we might say is that all functional projections have the default option of assigning the partitive – and if all constructions in Finnish have at least one functional projection, then the lowest functional projection c-commanding a local DP would assign the partitive. Alternatively, the partitive is assigned by any lexical complement-taking head. Partitive assignment by a preposition kohti ‘towards’ is shown in (49).

(49) kohti talo-a
    \(\leftrightarrow\) house-PRT
    ‘towards a house.’

Vainikka (2011) provides the most recent discussion of the Finnish genitive, attempting to find a functional head that might be associated with the genitive. While agreement is involved in many instances of the genitive, there are also various productive types of genitive case in Finnish that do not have agreement, and in fact seem not to contain any functional projection at all (such as Virtasen (GEN) Virpi ‘Virpi of the Virtanen’s’). Vainikka (2011) concludes that Finnish has two ways of assigning the genitive: one involving agreement, and the other involving assignment by a lexical head to its specifier position. We propose that the head of AgrP assigns the genitive, and this accounts for those instances of genitive that combine with nominal agreement (the possessive suffix) in various possessive constructions and non-finite clauses; the AgrP is posited high in the nominal phrase, equivalent to AgrSP in a finite clause. In constructions with no evidence of a functional projection, and no nominal agreement, genitive Case is assigned by its lexical head. Example (50) shows genitive assignment by a noun head talo ‘house’, while example (51) shows genitive assignment by Agr.
We discuss Agr-less theories, and how these generalization might be captured under such systems, later on. Both genitive rules are upward pointing, assigning Case from a head to its specifier. Summarizing, we propose the following slightly modified “standard” Case assignment rules (52):

(52) **Structural Case in Finnish**

a. *Nominative case*
   Assigned by finite C to the subject DP downstream.

b. *Accusative case*
   Assigned by Asp downstream.

c. *Partitive case*
   Assigned by a lexical head (such as V, P, Q, and perhaps A and N) downstream.

d. *Genitive case*
   Assigned by a head (such as N, P, V, A and Agr) to its specifier.

“Downstream” refers to a c-command relation, but not necessarily to a local c-command relation. There is an antecedent empirical reason to avoid strict locality assumptions. For example, nominative Case is typically assigned by the C-head in the adjacent subject position (in this case, Spec,AgrP); however, the subject DP in Finnish may remain lower in the tree, and nominative Case assignment by the c-commanding head takes place even then (Holmberg & Nikanne 2002). Furthermore, the Asp head assigns the accusative across the intervening vP/VP material. Similarly, in the situation where Agr assigns the genitive, Agr c-commands the genitive-marked DP, and while the two are often adjacent, they need not be (attributive APs, for example, may intervene). Notice that these assumptions are all part of the standard minimalist theory of Agree (Chomsky 2000; 2001; Holmberg & Nikanne 2002).

Let us turn to the genitive-nominative accusative alteration. Recall that the accusative variant is homophonous with the genitive -n when the singular object DP is c-commanded by agreement higher up in the structure. Why would there be such a relation between agreement and the genitive? The generalization (52d) provides the answer. We have already seen that the genitive is assigned by an Agr-head. In other words,
there is a direct relation between phi-agreement and the genitive in Finnish. It is therefore not surprising that the direct object genitive is also directly related to phi-agreement. We will therefore assume that the direct object genitive Case is assigned by Agr, much like the subject genitive Cases are according to (condition 52d). The sole novel property required to apply the genitive rule to the case of direct objects is the direction of assignment: the genitive Case must be able to go downstream in addition of going from a head to its specifier (see Brattico in press for further arguments).

Consider any singular DP that has the accusative Case. We propose that if the Finnish lexicon provides a way to realize this feature in a unique fashion, the accusative is assigned by the functional head Asp, and the derivation is complete in terms of accusative realization. This is the situation with human personal pronouns (all of which have a separate accusative form). Notice that we have derived a strong locality effect: the closest possible case assigner will case-mark a constituent, and under any normal circumstances this will be the end of the story: no further case assignment relations will take place for that DP.

The remaining accusative direct object DPs occur in one of two forms, genitive (suffix -n) or nominative (zero suffix). Singular full DPs (and the inanimate singular pronoun se ’it’) emerge in the genitive if there is a c-commanding Agr head around – otherwise in the nominative. All plural full DPs (and the inanimate ne ’they’) emerge in the nominative, regardless of agreement. Since under the Case-assigning system developed above the Agr head assigns the genitive, the same Agr must assign the genitive downstream to a DP that lacks overt realization of accusative, as a last-resort operation. Why is such checking by Agr only possible in the singular? We conjecture that this kind of exceptional Case assignment is only possible if the DP has no features other than Case features – in particular, it carries no PLURAL feature. But what happens if the direct object DP obtains no case from Agr? It is commonly assumed that DP’s lacking Case will cause the derivation to crash. Rather than the derivation crashing, it appears that the only remaining functional head that has the power to assign a structural Case, namely C, exceptionally assigns the nominative – again as a last resort operation. In short, we propose that the regular heads, C and Agr, assigning the nominative and genitive, respectively, assign these cases to the direct object as a last resort when local Case assignment fails.

The analysis is illustrated in (simplified) phrase-structures (53), (54) and (55). The direct object can be provided Case in one of three ways: (1) by Aspect head, if overtly marked accusative case (53); (2) by Agr head, if the DP does not carry PL feature (54); (3) by C (55). The three options need not be extrinsically ordered, as their application follows from the bottom-up derivation of the tree. Notice that these phrase-structures do not contain all functional heads assumed to be part of the representation of a finite clause in Finnish; for the full clause-structure, see (Holmberg & Nikanne 2002). The label “Impa” refers to the phi-less impersonal passive verb form that does not carry phi-features; solid arrow represents realized Case assignment, while the dashed arrow represents failed or unrealized assignment.
(53)  a. CP
    \[\text{C} \rightarrow \text{AgrP} \rightarrow \text{DP} \rightarrow \text{AgrP} \rightarrow \text{Agr} \rightarrow \text{TP} \rightarrow \text{T} \rightarrow \text{AspP} \rightarrow \text{Asp} \rightarrow \text{vP} \rightarrow \text{DP} \rightarrow \text{V}\]

b. C Me löysi-mme Asp hän-et
    \[\Rightarrow \text{we.NOM} \text{found-1PL} \Rightarrow \text{he.ACC}\]
    ‘We found him.’
(54) a. 

```
CP
  /\  
C   AgrP
   /\  
  DP   AgrP
    /\  
   Agr  TP
    /\  
   T   AspP
    /\  
   Asp  vP
    /   
   DP   V
```

b. C Me löysi-mme Asp talo-n
   we.NOM found.1PL house.GEN
   ‘We found a house.’
Notice how the last resort principle allows us to extend the standard rules of Finnish Case assignment to cover the more exceptional long distance relations without positing new, exotic dependencies. After the local Case assignment fails, the last resort principle allows nonlocal functional heads to participate in direct object Case-marking. This, in turn, explains automatically why the two “subject” Case genitive and nominative appear at the direct object.

Let us go over the various constructions types summarized above in Table 2 to see how the analysis accounts for all the data. Here we will consider only singular DPs that are not human pronouns (and will use the term ‘full DP’ as a shortcut). Plural DPs and pronouns are assigned the accusative locally and no last resort mechanisms are needed.

If a finite clause (matrix or embedded) has no subject-verb agreement—and thus no AgrP— the direct object DP will be assigned its Case by the finite C as a last resort, resulting in the nominative variant. The LDCA effect is obtained because Case checking may cross any non-finite clause boundaries that are not LDCA-barriers. This holds for rows 2-6 in Table 2 (the finite contexts). A similar situation holds for the two non-finite contexts that never exhibit nominal agreement, the A-infinitive and the MA-infinitive, when they
occur in isolation (that is, not embedded under a matrix clause with agreement).

In contrast, when the finite clause contains an AgrP (with subject-verb agreement), the genitive is assigned by Agr, resulting in the genitive variant. This is the case in a garden-variety finite clause with a nominative subject and subject-verb agreement. Furthermore, the object DP of an embedded A-infinitive or MA-infinitive (i.e. non-islands) also occurs in the n-accusative when their matrix clause contains subject-verb agreement (not shown in the table). In addition, a similar situation obtains within a non-finite clause (of the island type) that carries nominal (Px) agreement, i.e. the temporal adjunct. We need to assume that the temporal adjunct also contains an AgrP projection, and Agr assigns the genitive, resulting in the realization of the genitive form on the accusative full DP. Again, long-distance effects are derived based on c-command condition and the definition of LDCA-barrier.

Since all proposals on Finnish syntax posit AgrP (or its equivalent) below the CP, it follows from the bottom-up derivation of the syntactic tree that assignment by Agr is attempted before assignment by C. If Agr is present in a clause or phrase, it assigns the feature; if not, C assigns the feature. We return below to the problem of the construction where variation between the two forms occurs.

Consider next the tensed deverbal participle adjective which allows for the n-accusative (genitive) and never the 0-accusative (nominative):

(56) a. luun syänyt koiran
bone.ACC(n) eat.V A.PAST.SG dog.SG
‘A dog who ate the bone.’

b. *luun syänyt koiran
bone.ACC(0) eat.V A.PAST.SG dog.SG

These data are also accounted for if we can posit an AgrP inside the tensed participle adjective to account for concord-type agreement (number and case) between the adjective and the head noun.

What remains are the two constructions that allow variation between the 0-accusative and the n-accusative, the rationale adjunct and the V A-construction. We begin with the non-finite rationale adjunct. Recall that this construction is an island for wh-extraction, but it allows LDCA. This construction can never have an overt subject DP, but it has obligatory Px agreement controlled/bound by the matrix clause. Given the Px agreement within the adjunct, we would posit AgrP with (genitive) Case assignment. As expected, the n-accusative is always possible in this construction.

The surprising fact about the rationale clause is that although the genitive rule is always relevant for this construction, there is also the possibility of Case checking from the matrix clause. This can be observed when the matrix clause lacks an AgrP – only in such examples does the variation in the rationale clause occur:
(57) a. Painoin nappia käynnistääkseni ohjelman/ *ohjelma.
Press.1SG button start.KSE.Px/1SG program.ACC(n) program.ACC(0)
'I pressed the button in order to start the program.'

b. Minun täytyi painaa nappia käynnistääkseni ohjelman/ ohjelma
I.GEN must.3SG press button start.KSE.Px/1SG program-ACC(n) program-ACC(0)
'I had to press the button in order to start the program.'

Under our system, the closest potential Case-assigner checks the structural Case features – if assigning by Aspect works (i.e. a lexical entry exists for Accusative), then Asp assigns accusative Case; otherwise, if Agr is present, it assigns the genitive, and if not, C assigns the nominative. In order to maintain these assumptions, we propose that the alternation in terms of the rationale clause has to do with the presence vs. absence of an AgrP within the rationale clause. An AgrP can always be posited, resulting in the n-accusative. However, we propose that the rationale clause also allow for the possibility of reduced structure (note that overt subject DPs are never possible in this construction, supporting the idea of some sort of reduced structure). If an AgrP and CP are not posited within the rationale clause, matrix clause Agr or C will assign the Case, resulting in the observed variation.

Finally, the non-finite VA-construction behaves the same way as the rationale clause in terms of the genitive-nominative assignment, and we posit the same analysis of an optional AgrP projection. While an overt genitive DP is possible in the VA-construction, this construction is unusual in that an overt subject cannot co-occur with a Px, unlike all other Px constructions in Finnish.

We have ended up with two types of structural case/Case in Finnish: (i) Case that is assigned by a functional head, and (ii) default case/Case that is associated with the complement vs. specifier position of any number of lexical (and perhaps functional) heads, namely, partitive case and the non-agreeing version of the genitive. In addition, Finnish has 6 locative cases and other semantic cases which presumably represent separate lexical entries in the lexicon (equivalent to P – Nikanne 1993). Furthermore, Finnish has two more categories of case marking that do not fall under the types discussed so far: (i) inherent case associated with specific verbs, and (ii) 'quirky’ case associated with the subject DP of various constructions involving e.g. experiencer verbs and possessive constructions. We assume that inherent case and quirky case will override both types of structural Case discussed in this paper; the analysis of quirky subjects in Finnish is beyond the scope of this paper. As far as inherent case is concerned, if the lexical entry of verb calls for specific case marking on the complement of the verb, neither the accusative nor the partitive will end up being assigned or realized to such a complement.

Ultimately, we want to propose a rigorous analysis of Finnish LDCA within a more finely defined linguistic framework. We conclude this article by sketching how the analysis proposed in the previous
The minimalist theory is an offshoot of a minimalist program, which consists of a set of stated goals for linguistic theorizing. The core idea is to try to explain linguistic facts as emerging from certain “given”, extra-linguistic facts. The minimalist goals can be adopted inside any linguistic framework. When they have been adopted inside the generative theory, the result has been emphasis on the relations between language (technically, narrow syntax) and the two extra-linguistic systems, articulatory-perception systems and thought-meaning systems. Structural Case assignment is modeled as a consequence of an operation Agree that tries to clean up narrow syntax so that its products are interpretable at the two external systems. Specifically, when a function head with an uninterpretable feature, a probe, is merged to the derivation, it will try to find a local corresponding element downstream, a goal, so that the unwanted features can be deleted. Agree, Case assignment in particular, obtains between a probe (Case assigner) and a goal (Case assignee).

Our analysis of LDCA crucially relies on a “last resort” principle. When local Case assignment fails, higher functional elements can assign Case nonlocally. The last resort philosophy is central to the minimalist program. It is central to Agree in the following way. If the fundamental purpose of Agree is to hygienize the representation for the interface representations, then it is not impossible that it will resort to remote Case assignment when local Case assignment fails. We can thus recast the whole analysis in the following way without drastically modifying neither the original analysis nor the particulars of the minimalist theory of Agree. We assume that functional heads C, Agr and Asp function as probes that search for goals as soon as they are merged. Asp assigns the accusative Case under Agree(Asp, DP)(53). If local Case assignment fails, the goal is left without Case feature and the derivation will crash unless another Case is assigned. Agree(Agr, DP) will function as a last resort operation and assign the genitive (54); if there is no Agr-probe, C will eventually assign the nominative (55). The purpose of these operations is to ensure that the representation will not crash at the interfaces.

As far as we know, there are three ways this analysis departs from the more standard minimalism. We conclude by commenting each. The first departure concerns our assumption that the genitive is assigned by the Agr-head. The existence of the Agr-head is often called into question on the grounds that it serves no role at the LF-interface and will crash the derivation; therefore most minimalist analyses of clause structure does not assume Agr. Instead, some grammatical heads are inserted to the derivation with an uninterpretable and unvalued phi-feature, and phi-agreement result when the unvalued phi-feature gets a value (such as, e.g., first person plural) under Agree. Phi-agreement is thus triggered by a feature, not by its own dedicated grammatical head. We can thus recast our analysis in a system where there is no Agr simply by notating the rule (52) differently. Instead of claiming that the genitive is assigned by Agr, we say that it is assigned/value/checked
by an uninterpretable (and unvalued) phi-set. What comes to the Finnish facts, these two proposals are notational variants. Notice, however, that so far almost all analyses of Finnish clause-structure has assumed the existence of Agr or its equivalent (Holmberg & Nikanne 2002).

The second difference concerns the assignment of the accusative Case. The true accusative Case is assigned when the event described by the verb phrase is interpreted as denoting a completed event. We have assumed that it is assigned by an aspectual head Asp heading vP. Unlike C and Agr, however, Asp is interpretable semantically and should therefore not trigger Agree at all. If the Asp feature is deleted, the derivation will converge but with a wrong interpretation. This way of looking at the matter overlooks one important distinction we have to make on independent grounds: the distinction between structural Case and semantic Case. Finnish nominal elements can be assigned a dozen of semantic Cases, and the Asp is semantically interpretable as well. What is the mechanism of semantic Case assignment in Finnish, then? As far as we know, no minimalist analysis exists. A simplest imaginable proposal is to assume that the semantic Case is assigned by a lexical element or by a phonologically covert preposition (Nikanne 1993), but that its function is not to delete uninterpretable features. Whatever exact operation implements such assignment and whatever its underlying function is, the accusative Case assignment can be implemented by that same mechanism.

The third way our analysis differs from current minimalism is that we have (stipulatively) introduced the notion of LDCA-barrier to constrain LDCA. This notion does not exist in current theorizing, but on the other hand, it was introduced here by pure enumeration, excluding certain constructions while including others. It therefore remains open if it can be analyzed or recasted in a minimalist theory. However, Bošković (2007) and Chomsky (2008) have both suggested that Agree is not limited by strict locality. A powerful case can be made on the basis of Finnish LDCA that this is the right direction to explore. We believe this is the single most important implication of the present study to the minimalist theory.

6 Conclusion

In this article we have shown that the traditional generalization about the Finnish accusative (Jansson’s generalization) is too narrow, namely that the accusative DP is realized with the (genitive) -n suffix whenever the sentence contains a nominative subject. The new generalization—which covers data from a number of finite and non-finite constructions, summarized in Table 2—is that an accusative DP is realized with the -n suffix whenever ϕ-agreement is present within the LDCA-barrier containing the accusative DP; that is, accusative realization is a long distance phenomenon. In the absence of agreement, the accusative DP is realized without a suffix, i.e. in the nominative.
In this paper we have shown that Finnish accusative realization involves a syntactic long distance dependency. The dependency holds between one of the three variants of the accusative and c-commanding agreement over any distance, as long as island constraints are not violated.

As we pointed out in the beginning of the present article, case assignment has traditionally been viewed as a local process. While we acknowledge that most case assignment relationships are indeed local, the present data show that a cross-linguistically valid theory of nominal case needs to assimilate the systematic and persuasive long-distance case assignment phenomenon found in Finnish. For further discussion of this topic, see (Brattico 2009; 2012c).

The further interesting result obtained here is that long distance Case is closely related to instances of local Case checking. Thus, whatever assigns the genitive locally can also assign it non-locally; whatever assigns the nominative locally can also assign it non-locally. Long-distance case assignment does not therefore need a brand new system of case rules, but it can be understood as an extension of the standard rules.

Notes

1The latter category includes lexical, semantic and quirky case features. These are not identical notions, but since the bulk of the present article is concerned with structural case, we will hold off the discussion of different types of Case until the end of the article.

2Since Chomsky (1981), Case features have been partitioned into abstract Case features (capitalized) and morphological case features (lower-case). The latter designate concrete case suffixes that may differ somewhat from construction to construction, and from language to language, while abstract Case refers to universal syntactic features that form part of the core syntax of Universal Grammar (UG) and whose surface realization may vary or may even be completely absent, as in the case of English non-pronominal DPs.

3We will mostly ignore the semantic case system here. Nominative and partitive are perhaps the two most unproblematic structural cases in Finnish. Nominative is a suffixless subject case and partitive is the default object or complement case (Vainikka 1993; 2003). Genitive is associated with various nominal constructions, but also with several verb types; we return to the genitive later.

4There is a possibility of an adjunct-like postverbal subject with the imperative (not possible with a finite verb). The imperative verb may carry number agreement (a unique morpheme) but no person agreement (e.g. Lue kirja! 'Read the book!' vs. Lukekaa kirja! 'Read-PL the book!'

5The nominative subject need not be overtly realized in order for the -n accusative to emerge: this also holds in null subject constructions (cf. Vainikka & Levy 1999) and in the so-called "missing person construction" involving an impersonal third person singular verb (cf. Hakulinen & Karttunen 1973 and Holmberg 2005).

6Unless otherwise stated the data and grammaticality judgments reported here are those of the present authors, both native speakers of Finnish.

7Finnish has a number of non-finite constructions which will be discussed in more detail in Section 3. For now, we indicate the type of non-finite verb in the gloss based on the identifying suffix on the verb, e.g. lähtemässä 'leave.MA', where the -ma/mä suffix
occurs at the end of the verb stem.

8In her detailed analysis of the non-finite constructions in Finnish, Koskinen (1998) shows that all of the Finnish non-finite constructions, whether participial or infinitival, contain a full-fledged VP projection typically embedded under non-sentential projections such as DP or AP. While we accept her structures in general, we are not committed to the strict monosemy approach that she espouses, whereby each affix has the same syntax regardless of the construction in which it occurs.

9In addition to these two adjuncts, Finnish has a third adjunct-type non-finite clause with the suffix -en on the verb, as in lukien 'while reading’. This verb form is fairly rare in spoken language, and we will not discuss it further in this paper.

10Even in the possessive construction, Px’s only occur with human pronouns, not with full DPs (or the inanimate pronouns) except when the full DP binds an empty pronominal from outside the nominal with the Px (cf. Vainikka (1989) and Trosterud (1993) for more discussion on the Px as a Binding Theoretic (Condition A) anaphor, requiring a local antecedent), and an alternative analysis of the Finnish Px’s in Toivonen (2000).

11The traditional name of this construction is ”the 1st infinitive, short form”. In Vainikka (1989) and Koskinen (1998) the term -TA-infinitive was used, and ISK uses ”A-infinitive”, also adopted here.

12The traditional name of this verb form is ”the 3rd infinitive in inessive/elative/illative case”. Vainikka (1989) first called this construction the ”MA-infinitive”, and this terminology has been adopted by ISK, as well. (Example forms: lukemassa/lukemasta/lukemaan ’reading/to read’)

13The traditional term for the two verb forms involved in this construction is ”the 1st and 2nd participle”. In Vainikka (1989) this construction was referred to somewhat misleadingly as ”the clausal complement infinitival”, and ISK refers to it as ”the referative construction”. We use here the term VA-construction on the basis of the overt morphological form of the non-finite verb.

14The main exception are negative finite clauses, since—as with all the other non-finite constructions in Finnish—the negative verb cannot be expressed as a non-finite verb.

15As already mentioned above, however, the distribution of Px’s in the VA-construction differs slightly as compared to a possessive DP (and the temporal and rationale adjuncts). In all four constructions, a Px emerges when a null subject/possessor DP is controlled (or bound) by a matrix DP. In the possessive construction the Px also emerges when there is an overt (human) pronominal possessor, while this does not happen in the VA-construction, as can be seen in example (32b). For the purposes of accusative realization, all of these constructions behave as if they had a possessive suffix, even when a Px happens not to occur.

16Vilkuna (1996), Läbel (1999) and Vainikka (2003) also discuss the accusative variation in the embedded version of the existential, possessive, or predicative constructions (involving the VA-construction). According to ISK (p.534–5), historically the postverbal DP behaves as an accusative object and occurs in the genitive (if singular and non-pronominal) in these constructions – all of which involve the main verb olla ’to be’ – but nowadays the nominative is more common in these situations (ISK p.534-5).

17The only relevant construction not covered in this paper is the adverbial construction discussed in Maling (1993) and Vainikka (2003). Since this construction does not allow human pronouns, it is very difficult to determine whether the adverbs in question carry accusative or genitive case; we leave the details of this construction to future research.

18Raposo and Uriagereka (1990), in an article by the name “Long Distance Case Assignment”, analyze the case of non-raised subjects of small clauses (nominative vs. accusative) in European Portuguese. The choice of case is partly determined by the matrix clause verb, thus it is ”long distance”. However, in our view the accusative phenomenon in Finnish is a more robust example of true long distance case.

19In particular, notions such as ”subject” and “direct object” cannot be assumed to be unproblematic, and the actual implementation of Case assignment depends on the theory.

20What can be considered given in the context of linguistics is debatable. It is usually assumed that language is embedded within
a system of articulation-perception and a system of meaning-thought. In addition, it is assumed that language is a combinatorial system, that its products are assembled from discrete parts and that ultimately these parts are downloaded from a mental lexicon. The assembling device is called Merge. These are “given” in the sense that any system remotely resembling human linguistic communication must have them; we can’t work without assuming at least these modules. To constrain the relations between the lexicon, Merge and the interfaces, it is usually assumed that they must be related in an economical or optional way. If there are no such general constraints, the Merge-interface complex alone is perhaps too vague to have empirical substance.

Thus, the thought-meaning interface can only process semantic features, while the articulatory-perceptual system can process phonological features. It is not possible to send phonological features to the thought-meaning system, or semantic features to the articulatory system.

The other standard conditions of the minimalist Agree are: (i) the probe must c-command the goal, (ii) the goal must be active and (iii) the probe and goal must be local. Condition (i) applies to the Finnish facts unproblematically. Condition (ii) will not be addressed here. Condition (iii) requires revision, discussed below.

They are not notational variants as such: the existence of Agr implies the existence of the concomitant positions, Spec,AgrP and Agr itself, while the feature-theory has less syntactic positions in its arsenal. However, whether such positions exists is irrelevant to LDCA.

Brattico & Huhmarniemi (2006) and Brattico & Saikkonen (2010) are exceptions. They follow the feature inheritance model of Chomsky (2001) according to which the markers of finiteness, such as phi-features, are inherited from the C to the head it selects. As of now, the two models have not been compared empirically; they are notational variants over a broad range of empirical facts.

References


