

Grammatical Case in Estonian

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Declaration

I hereby declare that this thesis is of my own composition, and that it contains no material previously submitted for the award of any other degree. The work reported in this thesis has been executed by myself, except where due acknowledgement is made in the text.

Merilin Miljan

Abstract

The aim of this thesis is to show that standard approaches to grammatical case fail to provide an explanatory account of such cases in Estonian. In Estonian, grammatical cases form a complex system of semantic contrasts, with the case-marking on nouns alternating with each other in certain constructions, even though the apparent grammatical functions of the noun phrases themselves are not changed. This thesis demonstrates that such alternations, and the differences in interpretation which they induce, are context dependent. This means that the semantic contrasts which the alternating grammatical cases express are available in some linguistic contexts and not in others, being dependent, among other factors, on the semantics of the case-marked noun and the semantics of the verb it occurs with. Hence, traditional approaches which treat grammatical case as markers of syntactic dependencies and account for associated semantic interpretations by matching cases directly to semantics not only fall short in predicting the distribution of cases in Estonian but also result in over-analysis due to the static nature of the theories which the standard approach to case marking comprises.

On the basis of extensive data, it is argued that grammatical cases in Estonian have underspecified semantic content that is not truth-conditional, but inferential, i.e. it interacts with linguistic context and discourse. Inspired by the assumptions of Relevance Theory (Wilson & Sperber 1993, 2002, 2004) and Dynamic Syntax (Cann et al 2005), it is proposed that grammatical cases in Estonian provide procedural information: instead of taking cases to encode grammatical relations directly, and matching them to truth-conditional semantics, it is argued that it is more useful and explanatory to construe case marking in Estonian as providing information on how to process the case-marked expression and interpret it within an immediate discourse (or sentence). This means that grammatical cases in Estonian are seen to encode a heavily underspecified semantics which is enriched by pragmatic processes in context. In this way, certain problematic constructions in Estonian, such as transitive clauses in which the object is marked by either genitive or nominative, depending on number (often referred to as the accusative in the relevant literature, e.g. Ackerman & Moore 1999,

2001; Hiietam 2003, 2004) and constructions in which the nominative occurs on the object both with singular and plural nouns, are shown to have a unitary explanation.

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List of Abbreviations

ACC	accusative case	TERMIN	terminative case
ABLAT	ablative	TRANSL	translative case
ADESS	adessive case		
ALLAT	allative case		
ASP	aspect		
COND	conditional		
DEF	definite article		
DIM	diminutive		
ELAT	elative case		
EMP	emphatic particle		
GEN	genitive case		
ILLAT	illative case		
IMP	imperative		
IMV	impersonal		
INESS	inessive case		
INF	infinitive		
NEG	negation marker		
NOM	nominative		
OBJ	object		
PASS	passive		
PL	plural		
PPL	participle		
PRES	present		
PROG	progressive		
PRTV	partitive		
PST	past		
PTC	particle		
REFL	reflexive		
SG	singular		
SUBJ	subject		

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1 Introduction

In this thesis I explore the semantic underpinnings of grammatical cases in Estonian. Estonian is one of the Finnic languages and has an extensive case system which includes alternations in the case marking of all the core arguments. Although there is an abundance of literature on a similar language, Finnish, in which the Finnic data appears to be explained exhaustively and the factors conditioning differential case marking well illuminated, I focus here on the very same topics – namely grammatical cases and case variation – in the closely related language Estonian. I demonstrate that the apparent exhaustiveness of the conclusions or analysis is not only just apparent, but that there is also a need for (re-)exploration of the data, if case is viewed from a different perspective. Specifically, current accounts of Finnic data (or rather Finnish) take primarily a structuralist point of view of case (e.g. Vainikka 1993, Nelson 1995, Kiparsky 2001, Ritter and Rosen 2001, Kratzer 2002, Svenonius 2002, Asudeh 2003, among others), which means that the alternations in case-marking are described and interpreted from the structuralist, morphosyntactic perspective. However, as Butt (2006:199) notes in her comprehensive overview of theories of case, there is hardly any literature on case alternations which tries to explain the semantically motivated variation in case from an entirely semantic point of view. Indeed, even if some semantic factors have been identified (e.g. control, aspect, modality) they ‘are not well understood’; hence there is a need for a ‘serious exploration of the semantics of case alternations’. This exploration is undertaken in this thesis with the hope that data from Estonian, which is slightly dissimilar to Finnish and undeservedly less studied and a different perspective to case-marking, will contribute to a better understanding of case in Finnic in particular and case-marking more generally.

In Estonian, as in Finnish, the variation in overt case morphology, as illustrated in (1), has been associated with semantic notions such as total affectedness (1b) and partial affectedness (1a) (i.e. whether the object is totally or partially affected by the action which the verb denotes); and/or with the expression of completed (1b) vs. uncompleted action (1a), i.e. aspect. Partitive case is thus related to partial

affectedness and irresultativity, while genitive is seen to express the opposite distinction.

- (1) a. Raul ehitas suvila-t.
R.NOM. build.PAST.3SG cottage-PRTV.SG
'Raul was building a cottage.'
- b. Raul ehitas suvila.
R.NOM. build.PAST.3SG cottage.GEN.SG
'Raul built a cottage.'

Also, as shown in (2), the differential case marking is taken to express nominal related semantics, e.g. partitive refers to parts of the whole (2a), while genitive makes a reference to totality (2b). This opposition is often associated with the indefinite-definite distinction.

- (2) a. Ostsin leiba.
buy.PAST.1SG bread.PRTV.SG
'I bought (some) bread.'
- b. Ostsin leiva.
buy.PAST.1SG bread.GEN.SG
'I bought a/the bread.'

An alternation also takes place between cases which mark the 'total' object, as in (3). In Estonian, this alternation is between genitive and nominative, while in Finnish it is commonly referred to as the accusative case.

- (3) Kass sõi hiire / hiired ära.
cat.NOM.SG eat.PAST.3sg mouse.GEN.SG / mouse.NOM.PL up
'The cat ate the mouse/the mice.'

Differential case marking occurs also on the subject in Estonian, as shown in (4), where the alternation is between partitive and nominative, expressing roughly the distinction between partiality and totality, respectively. The case-marked arguments may either precede the verb, as in (4), or they may occur post-verbally (this is explained in more detail in Chapter 2).

- (4) a. Inimesed sõitsid maale.
 people.NOM travel.PAST.3PL countryside.ALLAT.
 'People travelled / were travelling to the countryside.'
- b. Inimesi sõitis maale.
 people.PRTV travel.PAST.3SG countryside.ALLAT.
 (i) 'Some [of the] people travelled / were travelling to the countryside.'
 (ii) 'There were people travelling to the countryside.'

While these alternations are definitely mostly grammaticalised in Finnic, they are not unique to Finnic, but are common to most of the Uralic languages, where the distinctions expressed by alternating cases are generally described in terms of definiteness vs. indefiniteness (Koptjevskaja-Tamm & Wälchli 2001:663). Similar alternations on the marking of objects occur in the languages of the Circum-Baltic area, and are well-known in a number of ancient Indo-European languages (e.g. Classical Greek, Sanskrit, Gothic, Old High German and Middle Low German), where the differential case-marking is interpreted in terms of total affectedness or quantificational delimitation, but not aspect (ibid.). A parallel has often been drawn with Basque, which shows alternation between the absolutive and partitive case both on the object and intransitive subject, and in which partitive is taken to express similar semantics as in Finnic, i.e. indefinite quantity (e.g. Koptjevskaja-Tamm & Wälchli 2001:666).

From the structuralist perspective, the alternations in case marking in Estonian are problematic in several respects, depending on how much credit is given to overt case marking as opposed to structural case marking. First, with regard to example (3), there is the question of the accusative, i.e. whether there is an alternation between genitive singular and nominative plural, or not. Thus the question becomes one of whether these alternations are really alternations at all. The issue is in fact more complicated in the light of Finnish data. Until recently it has been unanimously assumed that the case-marking in sentences such as (3) is an instance of accusative case, whose realisation is conditioned by number. Yet different opinions also exist (see, for example, Kiparsky 2001: 316-322). Related to the question of alternation vs. no alternation is how to analyse *singular* nominative objects in impersonal and imperative clauses, and how all this relates to a particular problematic subset of quantity adverbials which undergo similar case-marking pattern.

Second, the semantically motivated alternations, as in (1) and (2), are even more challenging, as it has to be decided what determines the case marking on object noun phrases in identical syntactic environments. Specifically, the structural approach to case, as the name itself suggests, is concerned with the structural or syntactic assignment of case, and morphological case is no more than its overt realisation; hence the actual overt morphology is secondary. Structural case is seen as a property of a particular structural configuration, assigned in particular syntactic positions, and is therefore not associated with any semantics – its only role is to regulate argument realisation, as within Government and Binding theory (Chomsky 1981). Structural case is thus seen as distinct from semantic case, the assignment of which is either related to a specific semantic interpretation (i.e. θ -/thematic role) or else it is taken to be assigned by a particular lexical verb (or head). In accounting for semantically based alternations in Finnic, the distinction between semantic and structural case has to be revised or loosened, as in the Minimalist Program (Chomsky 1995) (e.g. by postulating that lexical items have some inherent features or by postulating that there is an interaction of some verbal category such as aspect with structural position). Alternatively, some thematic role could be postulated which determines the assignment of a particular structural case and is able to account for the distribution of the syntactic accusative vs. partitive Case, as within Government and Binding. In both theories, and with structural case in general, the semantics which a particular alternating case is seen to express is derived from the construction, which then determines the assignment of a specific syntactic case. This structurally derived semantics is thus construction-specific and absolute, and in the end, fails to account for the variety of related meanings (because generalisations over contextual effects are required, as a result of which the core or basic meaning of only a small set of constructions can be accounted for). More importantly, a structural approach to semantically based case alternations cannot explain optionality in alternations. This poses a challenge to such approaches, since there is evidence that case alternations in Estonian can be optional (see the results of the study described in section 5.2.2). Some of these optional alternations can be predicted by context (and are also mentioned in the grammars of standard modern Estonian), while others may be relatively random and depend also on extra-linguistic matters, i.e. they are pragmatically driven. Furthermore, since in the structuralist approach Case is assigned in specific syntactic

positions, the semantically motivated alternation between nominative and the partitive Case in the subject marking, as in (4) above, is extremely tricky to account for, and tends to be left unexplained.

In the light of this, the present thesis has two main aims: first, to provide an explanatory and illuminating account of case which would capture the case alternations across different syntactic functions such as subjects and objects, as well as between the alternating cases themselves (genitive and nominative); second, to provide an account which can also capture optionality. To this end, this thesis explores the idea that there is substantial evidence to claim that there is essentially no difference between structural (or grammatical) and semantic case; in other words, that grammatical case has semantics. At first glance, this idea may not seem altogether new, since for instance, Jakobson (1936/1990) tried to associate the use of each grammatical case with the expression of some general semantic concept; Wierzbicka (1981) too has argued for some basic meaning for each case, including grammatical case. More recently, Kracht (2003) has maintained that cases have meanings (called case functions), and argues that one case marker can signal either a syntactic case or a case function (i.e. meaning). However, it is worth emphasising that Kracht's theory takes the form of 'either x or y, but not both': when a case marker signals a syntactic case, it cannot signal a case function (i.e. the meaning). In his theory then one sign or case marker can be used in two different ways, which means that, in essence, a distinction between the syntactic and semantic uses of case is preserved.

In this thesis, however, a different idea is entertained. It is hypothesised that grammatical case has semantics, and may signal both semantic and syntactic information at the same time. This hypothesis may seem to be at odds with standard theories of grammar which keep syntactic and semantic notions separate, but it becomes more plausible if one drops the thesis of the autonomy of syntax, and studies the semantically motivated alternations from the perspective of morphological case-marking. In other words, in this thesis I take morphological marking at face value and explore how interpretations of different alternation constructions can be derived from the semantics of the case and its interaction with the linguistic context in which the case-marked item occurs. Interactions with context are especially important since this provides a means of accounting for optionality in semantically based case

alternations, as well as accounting for various patterns in a unified manner. The interactions which are particularly relevant take place between the meaning of the case marker and the item it marks, on the one hand, and between the case-marked item and its immediate context (e.g. the properties of the item with which it co-occurs), on the other. Case alternations themselves can be studied from an entirely semantic point of view, which in turn opens up the possibility of focusing on the contrasts expressed, i.e. how the case meanings themselves interact, depending on linguistic and possibly non-linguistic context. This approach then captures the semantic contrast expressed by the overt morphology in a natural and explanatory way: rather than focussing on structural case and deriving the semantics from the construction, the meaning is ascribed directly to morphological case-marking.

This move seems especially attractive since it removes the somewhat redundant dichotomy between structural and morphological case on the one hand and between structural and semantic case, on the other. Also, there is no need to postulate syncretism in order to correlate morphological expressions of case with structural ones, as is the case when genitive singular and nominative plural in (3) above are analysed from the structuralist perspective. More importantly, case need not be assigned configurationally. Altogether, this provides a truly unified approach to case.

This view in fact has several similarities to the approach to case described in Cann et al. (2005) which adopts a processing (and hence also context-dependent) view of case, and one which is further pursued in Cann (2007). The idea that grammatical case may express (subtle) semantic contrasts is also discussed in Butt (2007). Yet, the account explored in this thesis remains fairly distinctive in that it combines the hypothesis about the semantics of grammatical cases with the assumption that the meaning it encodes is context-dependent, and may be even pragmatically inferred.

I begin in Chapter 2 by providing a detailed description of case alternations in Estonian and the background of how they are accounted for in the standard grammars of Estonian. Some alternative views are also presented, such as Hiietam's account of case marking in Estonian within the Transitivity Hypothesis (Hopper and Thompson 1980). In Chapter 3, I turn to the question of accusative, as illustrated in (3) above, and examine the evidence in favour of adopting the accusative case in Estonian. The

issue of accusative is addressed both from the diachronic and synchronic perspective, since arguments for the accusative are often based on diachronic assumptions. The synchronic evidence relies mainly on Hiietam's (2003, 2004) argumentation, which will be critically evaluated. Chapter 4 takes the question of accusative even further, and discusses the issue primarily from the perspective of structural case. I show that the notion of structural case is not justified on the basis of Estonian data. This conclusion leads to the exploration of a different approach in Chapter 5, where I focus on morphological case and argue for treating grammatical case as having meaning, which gives rise to different interpretations, or no interpretation at all, depending on context. In Chapter 6, I return to the main question raised in Chapter 3, i.e. the interpretation of genitive singular and nominative plural as in (3) above, but from an entirely different perspective. Chapter 7 summarises the discussion, as well as combines the analyses of the three core cases argued for in Chapters 5 and 6.

2 Estonian data: morphological case distinctions

This chapter gives an overview of some basic properties of the grammatical system of Estonian. The main focus is on morphological case in general and on the case marking of subjects and objects in particular. The latter relates to one of the most intriguing topics in Finnic linguistics, i.e. alternations in the case marking of subjects and objects. Thus the emphasis is on providing a detailed overview of case alternations and how they are accounted for in the standard grammar of modern Estonian. Also, where relevant, the characteristics of Estonian are given in a wider context, in comparison with its surrounding languages (the Circum-Baltic area¹). Some other features of Estonian grammar, such as basic word order and expression of aspect, are also briefly discussed. This chapter thus provides a basis for the following chapters and introduces the data which are central to this thesis.

2.1 The Estonian case system

Estonian has a system of 14 cases. Traditional grammars of Estonian divide these into grammatical cases (nominative, genitive and partitive) and semantic ones. The full declension paradigm of the cases is given in Table 1 below, which features the regular nouns *raamat* ‘book’ and *sõber* ‘friend’ both in singular and plural.

¹ The Circum-Baltic area includes the following language families: Finnic, Baltic, Slavic, Germanic.

Table 1. Estonian case paradigm for *raamat* ‘book’ and *sõber* ‘friend’

CASE	NUMBER			
	SG	PL	SG	PL
NOMINATIVE	raamat	raamatud	sõber	sõbrad
GENITIVE	raamatu	raamatute	sõbra	sõprade
PARTITIVE	raamatut	raamatuid	sõpra	sõpru
ILLATIVE	raamatusse	raamatutesse	sõbrasse	sõpradesse
INESSIVE	raamatus	raamatutes	sõbras	sõprades
ELATIVE	raamatust	raamatutest	sõbrast	sõpradest
ALLATIVE	raamatule	raamatutele	sõbrale	sõpradele
ADESSIVE	raamatul	raamatutel	sõbral	sõpradel
ABLATIVE	raamatust	raamatutest	sõbralt	sõpradelt
TRANSLATIVE	raamatuks	raamatuteks	sõbraks	sõpradeks
TERMINATIVE	raamatuni	raamatuteni	sõbrani	sõpradeni
ESSIVE	raamatuna	raamatutena	sõbrana	sõpradena
ABESSIVE	raamatuta	raamatuteta	sõbrata	sõpradeta
COMITATIVE	raamatuga	raamatutega	sõbraga	sõpradega
		‘book’		‘friend’

The semantic cases can be grouped into interior local cases (illative, inessive, elative) and exterior local cases (allative, adessive, ablative), and other oblique (translative, terminative, essive, abessive, comitative). Both interior and exterior sets make a three-way distinction between lative (moving toward), locative (being at), and separative (moving away from) relations.

From a typological perspective, Estonian is predominantly a dependent-marking language, in which grammatical functions are marked by nominal and pronominal case forms. In broad terms, the case system distinguishes the direct object in transitive clauses from the subject, thus amounting to a nominative-accusative language. However, the issue turns out to be more complicated than this, as will be described more fully in the following sections. Here it is simply noted that the nominative, which has no morphological marker itself, is not only systematically used to mark subjects (S/A) in Estonian, but also (direct) objects, among other functions. Furthermore, the direct object may be marked by the genitive case in some contexts. This means that the genitive has two primary functions: it marks attributes and attributive-possessives and also the (direct) objects with singular NPs in transitive clauses. Similar to the nominative, the genitive has no morphological marker except in a small set of nouns (see Table 2 below). In addition, the form of the genitive singular is the basis for the morphological formation of other cases in the singular

paradigm, while its plural form is the basis for the plural paradigm, as can be seen in Table 1 above. However, this does not extend to nominative and partitive in both singular and plural. Partitive is the case that marks both (direct) objects and intransitive subjects, among other functions. The case markers of Estonian grammatical cases are given in Table 2. It should be noted that in Table 2, the plurals of nominative and genitive are given as *-d* and *-de/-te*, respectively; yet EKG I (1995:195) states explicitly that these cases lack any distinct marker (both in singular and plural), and the markers *-d*, *-de/-te* are regarded as a plural marker, the *-t/* plural (see also section 6.1.1).

Table 2. Grammatical case markers in Estonian

	Nouns SG	Nouns PL	Personal pronouns
NOMINATIVE	–	<i>-d</i>	–
GENITIVE	–	<i>-de/-te</i>	–
PARTITIVE	<i>-t/-d/Ø/-da</i>	<i>-d/Ø</i>	<i>-d/-da</i>

Since in the later chapters parallels will be drawn with cases in Finnish, I here also present grammatical case markers in Finnish (from Koptjevskaja-Tamm & Wälchli (K-T&W) 2001:650) (see Table 3). The difference between Estonian and Finnish grammatical case markers will be particularly relevant in discussions of syncretism in Chapter 3, especially the fact that in Estonian, personal pronouns do not have a distinct accusative form unlike in Finnish.

Table 3. Grammatical case markers in Finnish (K-T & W 2001:650)

	Nouns SG	Nouns PL	Personal pronouns ^a
NOMINATIVE	–	<i>-t</i>	–
ACCUSATIVE	<i>-n</i>	<i>-t</i>	<i>-t</i>
GENITIVE	<i>-n</i>	<i>-n/-(C)en</i>	<i>-n</i>
PARTITIVE	<i>-(t)a/ä</i>	<i>-(t)a/ä</i>	<i>-(t)a/ä</i>

^a This table disregards some further complications in the inflection of pronouns.

Adjectives in Estonian (and in Finnic in general) agree with the noun they modify in case and number (this is often referred to as DP internal agreement in the literature). The agreement is very regular, apart from in one closed group of adjectives and some nouns, which do not agree in case but appear in the genitive form instead, e.g. *germaani* ‘germanic’, *katoliku* ‘catholic’, *inglise* ‘english’; while a few nouns occur in

nominative, e.g. *joobnud* ‘drunken’, *valmis* ‘done, ready’ (EKK 2007:533). Also, the last four oblique cases in Table 1 above are an exception to the rule: they do not agree with the modified noun in case, but are rather marked by genitive. As specified in EKK (2007:533), the agreement in case between the adjective and the modified noun used to be rather irregular and still is in some dialects, especially in illative and allative cases. In the genitive plural, the modifying adjectives had a tendency not to agree in number.

2.1.1 Word order in Estonian

Considering the rich system of cases, it is somewhat predictable that Estonian has very flexible word order at the sentence level. Although all six combinations of SVO are possible, the neutral and thus predominant word order is SVO (Vilkuna 1998). However, the identification of SVO as the unmarked word order has been challenged by Ehala (2006), who notes that word order in Estonian varies extensively (more than in Finnish), and argues that a deeper analysis suggests that the base order of grammatical constituents in Estonian is actually SIOV (‘I’ standing for the auxiliary). This word order, as Ehala (2006:80) specifies, has been ‘stable’ over centuries and has not changed even under the influence of contact with German.

The apparently ‘neutral’ and ‘predominant’ word order in Estonian is in fact determined by information-structural factors. Accordingly, the topic (or given information) normally precedes the comment (or new information). Placing new information somewhere other than the final position yields an unacceptable word order (EKK 2007:524). Yet there are several emphasising particles (e.g. *ka* ‘also, too’; *ju* EMP.PTC; *isegi* ‘even’; *hoopis* ‘quite’, etc.) which enable a speaker to indicate new information somewhere in the sentence other than in the final position, the only restriction being that these particles have to immediately precede the word which is given a focus.

Another tendency which is often mentioned with respect to word order in Estonian is its V2 bias (EKK 2007:524-525, among others). Normally, the finite verb occurs on

the second position in Estonian. This observation holds with main (or independent) clauses which are affirmative, but in subordinate clauses and negated sentences the finite verb often takes either the first position or the final one (EKK 2007:526-528, Vilkuna 1998). Since Estonian is a ‘pro-drop’ language, the verb may appear in the first position because of the omitted subject argument. In comparison with other Finnic languages, the V2 tendency seems to be distinctive feature of Estonian only (K-T&W 2001).

While the V2 bias and word order flexibility are normally treated as two distinct phenomena in descriptions of Estonian (see, e.g., EKK 2007:524-525), Ehala (2006) relates them both and argues that ‘the main function of V2 is to allow the smooth organisation of given and new information in the sentence’ (2006:59). He thus analyses V2 as a ‘discourse-configurational rule’ and not as a rule of syntactic configurationality; that is, V2 is seen as organising given and new information at the sentence level. As Ehala explains, processing of linguistic expressions ‘online’ proceeds from left to right, being thus a linear process, and in the end it is the rules of discourse which matter rather than those of syntax. For instance, V2 occurs both in SVO and SOV languages, and in both cases the discourse-configurational rules can override the syntactic order of constituents, i.e. that of the subject and object. This also explains, as Ehala notes, why the most common word order in Estonian is SVO: the subject is most likely to coincide with the topic function. While there is a general consensus that the predominance of SVO word order in Estonian indicates the overlapping of topic and subject functions, this interaction with discourse tends to be ignored in various accounts of grammatical case in Estonian, especially in descriptions of the associated interpretations of nominative (more detailed discussion of this point will be provided in section 6.1.2).

The flexibility of word order in Estonian pertains to clause level only (this is in fact true for both Estonian and Finnish). At the phrase level, rigid word order is shown, for instance, in noun phrases, where the adjectival attributes and genitive-marked attributes have to precede the modified noun. At the same time, the word order of adpositions exhibits a mixed adpositional system. Estonian (similarly to Finnish) uses predominantly postpositions, but possesses a restricted set of prepositions as well (e.g. *enne* ‘before’, *ilma* ‘without’, *kuni* ‘until’). There are additionally some adpositions

which may either precede or follow the noun they select (e.g. *vastu* ‘against’, *mööda* ‘along, by’) (EKK 207:191-195) Adpositions in Estonian vary in their case selecting properties. For instance, most postpositions occur with a genitive-marked nominal and only a few postpositions have a case other than genitive on the noun they govern; these cases may be nominative, partitive, elative, or comitative. Prepositions, in contrast, normally occur with a noun in partitive but, again, only a few prepositions select nouns marked by other cases (these include allative, terminative, abessive). Further information about adpositions in Estonian and the frequency of the cases they govern is outwith the scope of this thesis, but more details can be found in Ehala 1994, 1995).

2.2 Alternations in object marking

As mentioned above, the object function can be signalled by three different forms in Estonian: genitive, partitive, and nominative. The object NP in (1) is traditionally referred to as the ‘total’ object, the marking of which is dependent on number: genitive is used on singular NPs and nominative on plural NPs.

- (1) Kass sõi hiire / hiired (ära).
 cat.NOM.SG eat.PAST.3sg mouse.GEN.SG / mouse.NOM.PL (up)
 ‘The cat ate the mouse/the mice.’

The choice between genitive and nominative, as in (1), is rather straightforward: genitive occurs on the ‘total’ object when

- the sentence is a transitive clause which has a subject in nominative (although as will be discussed in section 4.2, ‘pro-drop’ does not count)
- the clause is affirmative (as opposed to negated)
- the object is in the singular.

The nominative form is used on the ‘total’ object when:

- the object is in the plural, as in (1) above
- the verb is imperative, as shown in (2)
- the verb is the *da*-infinitive, as in (3)

- the object occurs in the impersonal construction, as in (4)

It should be noted, however, that first and second person pronouns, as well as reflexives, never occur in the nominative case as the object. Rather, they occur in the partitive case.

- (2) Kirjuta artikkel / *artikli!
write.IMV.SG article.NOM.SG/ article.GEN.SG
'Write an article!'
- (3) Palun näidata talle istekoht / *istekoha kätte!
Please show.INF s/he.ALLAT.SG seat.NOM.SG/ seat.GEN.SG hand.INESS.SG
'Please show him/her the seat!'
- (4) Raamat / *raamatu oli (läbi) loetud.
book.NOM.SG / book.GEN.SG be.PAST.3SG through read.PAST.PTC
'The book was read (through).'

The partitive case marks the object NP which is traditionally referred to as 'partial' object, and it occurs both in the singular and plural, as shown in (5). Also, partitive case is the only option when the object NP occurs in the scope of negation, as in (6). For this reason, partitive is generally considered the default object case in Finnic (e.g. Heinämäki 1984, Sulkala 1996), and this observation is borne out by Tauli's (1968) study in Estonian (for more detail, see section 4.1).

- (5) Kass sõi hiirt / hiiri.
cat.NOM.SG eat.PAST.3SG mouse.PRTV.SG / PRTV.PL
'The cat was eating a mouse / mice.'
- (6) Kass ei söönud hiirt/hiiri (ära).
cat.NOM.SG NEG eat.PTC mouse.PRTV.SG/PRTV.PL (up)
(i) 'The cat did not eat a mouse / mice.'
(ii) 'The cat did not eat the mouse / mice up.'

It appears then that in Estonian, the object case alternation is partly syntactically and partly semantically determined. Syntactic considerations apply mostly to the alternation between genitive and nominative, while semantic considerations pertain to the alternation between partitive and genitive/nominative (or between 'partial' and 'total' object) (although it should be noted that this alternation is also dependent on negation, which tends to be regarded as a syntactic condition). The semantically determined alternation between partitive and genitive is one of the most extensively

discussed issues in Estonian (and Finnic in general). In order to account for the distribution of partitive vs. genitive, academic grammars of modern Estonian (such as EKG II (1993)), divide Estonian verbs into different classes on the basis of their case-governing properties. As a result, broad categories of verbs have been established. Thus Estonian verbs are traditionally divided into the following groups, as given in EKG II (1993: 49-51):

- verbs that select only partitive case, called ‘partitive’ verbs
- verbs that select only genitive or nominative, called ‘perfective’ verbs
- verbs that allow case alternation between partitive and genitive/nominative, referred to as ‘aspectual’ verbs.

These categories have constantly been under discussion and revision (for an overview, see Klaas 1999). For instance, it has been pointed out that the list of ‘partitive’ verbs in EKG II (1993) actually includes a subgroup of verbs, which allow their object to be marked by genitive/nominative instead of partitive. This is possible when a verbal particle or a locative adverbial also occurs in a clause (e.g. Klaas 1999, Kerge 2001), as in (7).

- (7) a. Mari kuulas uudist / uudiseid / *uudise / *uudised.
 M. listen.PAST.3SG news.PRTV.SG / PRTV.PL / *GEN.SG / *NOM.PL
 ‘Mary was listening/listened to the news.’
- b. Mari kuulas uudise/uudised ära/lõpuni.
 M. listen.PAST.3SG news.GEN.SG/NOM.PL off/until the end
 ‘Mary listened to the news until the end.’

With ‘aspectual’ verbs, the alternation between partitive and genitive/nominative case in affirmative finite clauses is accounted for in terms of boundedness (*piiritletus*) in EKG II (1993), along the lines of the grammars of modern Finnish. Accordingly, the object case selection of these verbs is based on the following two criteria:

- the un/boundedness of the activity denoted by the verb
- the quantitative limitedness or un/boundedness of the entity referred to by the object NP (EKG II 1993:51).

The un/boundedness of the object NP is seen to correlate with the traditional notions of ‘partial’ and ‘total’ object, marked by partitive and genitive/nominative case, respectively. The selection of the object case is explained by the ‘plus principle’ (e.g. Verkuyl 1993), whereby both verbal and nominal properties determine the properties

of the VP. Genitive/nominative (or the ‘total’ object) is said to be chosen if both the denoted action and the entity referred to are bounded (EKG II 1993:51), as in (8-11) (examples are taken from EKG II 1993:51).

- (8) Ta luges raamatu läbi.
s/he.NOM read.PAST.3SG book.GEN.SG through
‘S/he read the book through.’
- (9) Poiss ostis malendid.
boy.NOM.SG buy.PAST.3SG chess.NOM.PL
‘The boy bought a chess [game].’
- (10) Poiss sõi supi ära.
boy.NOM.SG eat.PAST.3SG soup.GEN.SG up
‘The boy ate the soup up.’
- (11) Tõin sulle kaks saia.
bring.PAST.1SG 2sg.ALLAT. two.NOM.SG pastry.PRTV.SG
‘I brought you two cakes.’

All the examples from (8) to (11) are described as resultative and completed by EKG II (1993: 51). The object NP is said to refer to a ‘thing’ in (8), a sentence which has a singular count noun; to a ‘set’ in (9), a sentence which has a plural noun; to a quantitatively determinate entity² in (10) and (11), the sentences which have a mass noun and a numeral quantifier phrase, respectively.

Partitive case (or the ‘partial’ object) is chosen if both the denoted activity and referent of the object NP are unbounded, or if only one of these conditions holds (EKG II 1993:52). This is illustrated in (12-14) (these examples are taken from EKG II 1993:52). In (12), for instance, the object NP is said to be quantitatively determinate (or bounded), but the action denoted by the verb is described as unbounded, and therefore the object NP gets partitive marking. In (13) and (14), by contrast, the denoted action is viewed as bounded, as the result of which the object NP can only be a mass or plural term (e.g., ‘old letters’ or ‘honey’ respectively) expressing a quantitatively indeterminate³ amount (or unboundedness) (EKG II 1993:52).

² The Estonian counterpart is the term *kvantitatiivselt piiritletud*.

³ The Estonian counterpart is the term *kvantitatiivselt piiritlemata*.

- (12) Poiss joonistas päikest.
 boy.NOM.SG draw.PAST.3SG sun.PRTV.SG
 ‘The boy was drawing the sun.’
- (13) Ta leidis pööningult vanu kirju.
 s/he.NOM find.PAST.3SG attic.ELAT.SG old.PRTV.PL letter.PRTV.PL
 ‘S/he found [some] old letters in the attic.’
- (14) Ta viis vanaemale sünnipäevaks mett.
 s/he take.PAST.3SG granny.ALLAT.SG birthday.TRANSL.SG honey.PRTV.SG
 ‘S/he took [some] honey to granny for her birthday.’

What has been said so far can be summarised as follows. The traditional account of the alternation in object marking takes it that cases express the distinction between ‘total’ and ‘partial’ objects. In finite transitive clauses, the ‘total’ object is marked by the genitive in the singular and by the nominative in the plural, while in non-finite clauses (e.g. imperatives and impersonals) the ‘total’ object occurs in the nominative both in singular and plural. On the other hand, the ‘partial’ object is marked by the partitive case. The distribution of ‘total’ versus ‘partial’ objects is explained in terms of boundedness: when either the verb or the object NP (or both) is unbounded, the ‘partial’ object (or partitive case) is selected; when both the verb and object NP are bounded, the ‘total’ object (or genitive and nominative) is chosen instead.

The notion of boundedness itself seems to rely on the inherent properties of nouns (i.e. count-mass distinction) as well as on the inherent properties of verbs (i.e. Aktionsart). It is worth pointing out that terms such as boundedness and perfectivity are used interchangeably in EKG II (1993:51), as well as in the relevant literature in general. That is, partitive case is often associated with imperfectivity in addition to unboundedness, and genitive/nominative is associated mainly with perfectivity (e.g. Rajandi & Metslang 1976, Dahl 1985, Klaas 1999, Kerge 2001, Vaiss 2004), although sometimes also with telicity (e.g. Ackerman & Moore 1999, Hiietam 2003).

The differential case marking of objects in Estonian is also seen to correlate with the definite-indefinite distinction, especially with plural and mass nouns (e.g. Rajandi & Metslang 1979, Hiietam 2003, Rätsep 1979). Thus the partitive case is described as expressing indefiniteness, as in (15a) and (16a), while genitive and nominative are

said to express definiteness, as in (15b) and (16b) below (examples from Rajandi & Metslang 1979:25-26).

- (15) a. Oskar ostis Olgale jäätist. (indefinite)
 O.NOM. buy.PAST.3SG O.ALLAT. ice-cream.PRTV.
 ‘Oskar bought Olga (some) ice-cream.’
- b. Olga pillas jäätise põrandale. (definite)
 O.NOM drop.PAST.3SG ice-cream.GEN.SG floor.ALLAT.SG
 ‘Olga dropped the ice-cream on the floor.’
- (16) a. Oskar saatis Olgale roose. (indefinite)
 O.NOM. send.PAST.3SG O.ALLAT. rose.PRTV.PL
 ‘Oskar sent Olga (some) roses.’
- b. Olga jagas roosid töökaaslastele. (definite)
 O.NOM. give.PAST.3SG rose.NOM.PL colleague.ALLAT.PL
 ‘Olga gave the roses to her colleagues.’

2.2.1 An alternative account of object case alternation: The Transitivity Hypothesis

In contrast to the analysis which has been presented in the preceding section, Hiietam (2003) offers an alternative account of the alternation in the case marking of objects in Estonian, namely in terms of the Transitivity Hypothesis (TH) proposed by Hopper and Thompson (1980). TH treats transitivity as a gradable and multi-factorial concept: the features which contribute to high transitivity include both subject and object parameters, such as volitionality and an object’s affectedness, respectively. Also, definiteness or individuation, event properties such as perfectivity, affirmativity and realis are considered. If some of the semantic features which are seen to contribute to high transitivity are missing, a construction is said to rank lower on the transitivity scale.

Based on this transitivity scale, several hierarchies of verb types have been proposed (e.g., Tsunoda 1981⁴, Malchukov 2005, and others). The verb types which are seen to conform to high transitivity are those which satisfy the Effectiveness Condition (as in

⁴ As cited in Malchukov (2005).

Tsunoda 1981) or the affectedness of the object in more general terms. What is meant by affectedness (or effectiveness) is whether or not the object undergoes some change (of state), as with verbs like ‘kill’ and ‘break’ (Malchukov 2005). Verbs whose object is less affected, e.g. verbs of liking and fearing, are ranked lower on the hierarchy. The level of affectedness of the object is seen to correlate with telicity: the more affected an object of the verb is, the more likely it is that the activity denoted by the verb has an endpoint and is thus completed, i.e. is perfective or telic, and correspondingly, the less affected an object is, the less likely it is to be telic. As Malchukov (2005:77) points out, there seems to be some cross-linguistic evidence that verb types which deviate from the canonical transitive construction prefer a particular case-frame, e.g. in Finnish those verbs which are lower on the hierarchy, i.e. select a less affected object, take the object in partitive case instead of the accusative.

Along these lines, Hiietam (2003) proposes an account of object case alternation with has the aim of establishing a connection between case variation and definiteness. Following the Transitivity Hypothesis, she assumes that a typical object is definite: ‘the object of a telic action and totally affected’ (2003:231). That is, the difference in case marking of the object, as in (17) below⁵, is explained as a difference in the values of the transitivity parameter, e.g. in aspect (telicity), in affectedness of the object, and individuation of the object.

- (17) a. Koer hammustas kassi.
 dog.NOM.SG bite.PAST3SG cat.PRTV.SG
 ‘The dog bit a cat.’
- b. Koer hammustas kassi vigaseks.
 dog.NOM.SG bite.PAST3SG cat.ACC.SG⁶ cripple.TRANSL.SG
 ‘The dog bit the cat crippled.’
- c. Koer hammustas kassi vigaseks.
 dog.NOM.SG bite.PAST.3SG cat.PRTV.SG cripple.TRANSL.SG
 ‘The dog was biting the cat crippled.’

⁵ The original examples are (8.28), (8.29) and (8.30) on pages 241, 243 in Hiietam (2003).

⁶ Hiietam (2003) argues that Estonian has accusative case which is realized as genitive in singular and nominative in plural (for more detail, see Chapter 3).

For instance, (17a) denotes an action which is atelic, not punctual, the object of which is not totally affected and not highly individuated. By contrast, (17b) refers to an event which is telic and punctual ‘since there is a specified endpoint of the action’, and the object is totally affected, ‘having changed its state from being unbitten to being bitten with the result that it is crippled’, and the object is ‘more individuated’ than in (17a), since ‘it is still an animate noun but now it refers to a specific referent’ (Hiietam 2003:242). On the basis of the differences in the mentioned values of the parameter, Hiietam (2003) concludes that (17b) ‘ranks higher on the scale of transitivity’ than (17a), as the latter includes a non-prototypical object in the partitive. As for the difference between (17b) and (17c), Hiietam (2003:243) explains that although the object NP is interpreted as ‘specific’ and ‘limited’ in both examples, ‘[t]he partitive argument has given the sentence a progressive reading’. This is taken to indicate that ‘the partitive argument is incompatible with a telic interpretation’ and that ‘the different case marking on object phrases indicates telicity or the aspect of the clause, rather than the definiteness of the object NP’ (ibid.). Hiietam (2003) concludes that the Estonian data conforms to the Transitivity Hypothesis in that the partitive case in Estonian marks ‘reduced transitivity’, while accusative⁷ is the case which occurs in highly transitive constructions. Thus she finds that the case alternation on the object is first of all ‘sensitive to the telicity of the clause’ which can override ‘the boundedness and definiteness of the object noun phrase’ (2003:243). In other words, the primary function of partitive case is to mark the ‘atelicity of the clause’, whereas the indefiniteness of the object NP is secondary. The unifying factor between telicity, boundedness and definiteness is said to be transitivity.

Hiietam’s (2003) account, however, does not explain examples like (18) below. In (18), the object is marked by partitive case, although the verb is highly transitive and the object refers to a highly individualised and definite entity. That is, the sentence denotes a highly telic event, but instead of the object being marked by the ‘accusative’, the object receives partitive case, a ‘reduced transitivity’ marker.

- (18) Mary lõi oma venda eile.
M.NOM.SG hit.PAST.3SG her brother.PRTV.SG yesterday
‘Mary hit her brother yesterday.’

⁷ See the previous footnote.

It could be said that the verb ‘hit’ in Estonian is a ‘partitive’ verb which selects objects only in partitive case. Yet, as Malchukov (2005) explains, highly transitive verbs are usually divided into subgroups in terms of resultativity, so that ‘irresultative’ verbs such as ‘hit’ and ‘touch’ form a group of verbs which may differ in behaviour from the ‘resultative’ subtype of effective action verbs. This indicates that accounting for the distribution of case requires a rather different analysis than (simply) associating case with certain semantic concepts (for an extensive discussion of this issue, see Chapter 5).

2.3 Alternations in subject marking

In transitive clauses in Estonian, the subject always occurs in nominative in Estonian, as illustrated by a number of examples above, e.g. from (5) to (17). The subject of a transitive clause behaves as a canonical subject in the sense that:

- it precedes the verb
- it occurs in nominative form
- it agrees with the verb in person and number.

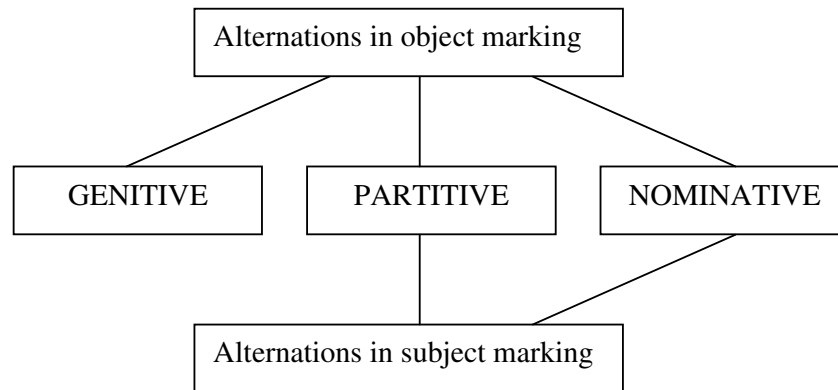
However, while in transitive sentences the subject never occurs in any form other than the nominative, in intransitive clauses it can be marked by the partitive case, as in (19).

- (19) a. Inimesed sõitsid maale.
 people.NOM travel.PAST.3PL countryside.ALLAT.
 ‘People travelled / were travelling to the countryside.’
- b. Inimesi sõitis maale.
 people.PRTV travel.PAST.3SG countryside.ALLAT.
 (i) ‘Some [of the] people travelled / were travelling to the countryside.’
 (ii) ‘There were people travelling to the countryside.’

Thus, subject NPs also undergo variation in case marking, just as object NPs can. Yet, whereas object NPs may occur in three different case forms (i.e. genitive, partitive and nominative (as in imperatives and impersonals)), the alternation on the subject is

restricted to two different forms only, i.e. nominative and partitive. Genitive is not allowed on the subject in any construction in Estonian (unlike in Finnish: see section 6.2). The alternations in case marking of subjects and objects is illustrated in Figure 1 below (adapted from Koptjevskaja-Tamm & Wälchli 2001:647).

Figure 1. Alternations in case marking of objects and subjects in Estonian



It should be noted that the partitive-marked subject, as in (19b) above, does not agree with the verb in person and number. The verb occurs in the third person singular form instead. It should further be noted that the more neutral position for the partitive-marked subject is after the verb, as in (20). The case alternation on the subject may thus occur both in the preverbal and postverbal position.

- (20) a. Laual oli/olid raamat / raamatud
 table.ADES.SG be.PAST.3SG/PL book.NOM.SG / book.NOM.PL
 ‘On the table there was a book / were books.’
- b. Laual oli raamatuid / *raamatut
 table.ADES.SG be.PAST.3SG book.PRTV.PL / book.PRTV.SG
 ‘On the table there were [some] books.’

2.3.1 Existential sentences

In general, when the subject of intransitive clauses occurs in postverbal position, these intransitive clauses are referred to as ‘existential sentences’ (ES) in Estonian (and Finnic) linguistics; in this thesis also the term ‘existential construction’ is used.

Nemvalts (1996:20), who has carried out an extensive study on existential sentences in Estonian, defines ES as follows:

From the point of view of semantics alone, one is justified in saying that ES is used to claim the existence (or non-existence) of some unit or some class of units in the world or a certain part of it. So, when constructing an ES, one departs from the presupposition that something exists / does not exist somewhere; the construction begins from a locality. This component can be seen as a theme or at least the nuclear part of the theme of ES (Nemvalts 1996:20).

Verbs which typically occur in ES denote a range of possibilities, including being (commonly expressed by the copula verb), existence of some entities in some place or period of time, coming into existence or ceasing to exist, movement or gathering (Koptjevskaja-Tamm & Wälchli 2001:657). It is often pointed out in formal theories of Finnish that it is mainly (or only) unaccusative verbs which occur in existential constructions (e.g. Nelson 1995, Kiparsky 2001). Yet, as Vilkuna (1989) comments on Finnish, these sentences can also contain unergative verbs (Estonian data also supports this observation) (see also section 4.2.2.1). In addition, as Koptjevskaja-Tamm & Wälchli (2001:657) note, even verbs which denote action, such as ‘work’, may be used in existential clauses, when the interpretation of existence is emphasised enough. However, differences can be found across Finnic, as Koptjevskaja-Tamm & Wälchli (2001:658) observe. They note that in Finnish all the verbs which occur with a partitive-marked subject can take a nominative subject in canonical intransitive clauses; and in Veps transitive verbs in existentials may combine with partitive-marked subjects. In Estonian, there is a set of verbs which never occur with nominative subject but only with partitive-marked subjects. Nemvalts (1996:77) lists these verbs as follows: *jaguma* ‘to suffice’; *jätkuma* ‘to last’; *piisama* ‘to be enough’; and *tunduma* ‘to be felt’. There are a few verbs in Estonian which allow only nominative subjects. These verbs are: *algama* ‘to begin’, *võpatama* ‘to wince’, *meeldima* ‘to like, be to your liking’, as in (21) (Nemvalts 1996:75).

- (21) a. Tüdrukud võpatasid. * Tüdrukuid võpatas.
 girl.NOM.PL wince.PAST.3PL girl.PRTV.PL wince.PAST.3SG
 ‘The girls gave a start.’
- b. Poisile meeldivad autod.
 boy.ALLAT.SG like.PRES.3PL car.NOM.PL
 ‘The boy likes cars.’

c. * *Poisile meeldib autosid.*
 boy.ALLAT.SG like.PRES.3SG car.PRTV.PL

The choice of case in existential clauses is determined by two factors, as EKG II (1993:43) states:

- negation, i.e. when the subject is in the scope of negation, it always occurs in the partitive (similarly to the object NPs)
- the quantitative determinacy (or boundedness) of the entity denoted by the subject NP.

It is worth emphasising that partitive case cannot be used on singular count nouns in affirmative clauses, such as in (20b) above, shown by the asterisk. In negated sentences, however, partitive occurs as a rule, regardless of whether the subject NP is a mass noun or a count noun, as in (22) (for further discussion of this phenomenon, see section 5.3.1).

(22) *Laual polnud raamatuid / raamatut*
 table.ADES.SG be.NEG.PAST.3SG book.PRTV.PL / book.PRTV.SG
 ‘On the table there were no books / was no book.’

In affirmative clauses, as EKG II (1993:43) explains, the only subjects which undergo alternation in case marking are those which denote unbounded entities, e.g. mass nouns (*liiv* ‘sand’, *vesi* ‘water’) and bare plurals (*lilled* ‘flowers’, *aknad* ‘windows’). Subject NPs which are quantitatively limited occur only in the nominative form and show no alternation in case marking. Thus, count nouns (e.g. *inimene* ‘person, human’; *maja* ‘house’, etc.), collective nouns (e.g. *perekond* ‘family’ and *haritlaskond* ‘academics, the intellectuals’, etc.), and nouns referring to sets (e.g. *vanemad* ‘parents’, *kingad* ‘shoes’, etc.) are all described as always having nominative form in existentials (EKG II 1993:43). However, it is possible to interpret nominative subject as referring to an unbounded entity (or quantitatively indeterminate amount), when the sentence includes some expression that supports this reading (EKG II 1993:44). For instance, in (23) this expression is the adverb *ka* ‘also’ which induces an unbounded reading of the nominative noun ‘Ukrainians’ (example taken from EKG II 1993:44).

- (23) Külas elavad ka ukrainlased.
 village.INESS.SG live.PRES.3PL also Ukrainian.NOM.PL
 ‘In the village, there live also Ukrainians.’

It is also pointed out in EKG II that it is not always possible to contrast partitive case with the nominative: there are some instances where the alternation in subject marking does not express any difference in meaning, as in (24) (EKG II 1993:44).

- (24) Aknast hoovas tупpa külm õhk /
 window.ELAT.SG stream.PAST.3SG room.INESS.SG cold.NOM.SG air.NOM.SG
 / külma õhku.
 cold.PRTV.SG air.PRTV.SG
 ‘From the window, cold air flowed into the room.’

While in general the alternation in subject marking in Estonian is accounted for in terms of quantitative limitedness (or boundedness), Hiitam (2003), providing her account in terms of the Transitivity Hypothesis, states that nominative on the subject function is associated with semantic features such as [+definite] and [+limited]. Nominative subjects thus come across as ‘highly individuated’, whereas partitive subjects, having features such as [–definite] and/or [–limited], are seen as ‘less individuated and specified’.

In general, the semantic conditions which must hold for the choice of partitive on the subject, viz. quantitative indeterminacy (or unboundedness) and indefiniteness, are the same as for the selection of partitive on the object. The only difference is that with subjects, it is only the nominal properties which are seen to determine the choice of case in instances where the alternation is possible, while with objects it is the verbal properties which are taken to be primary and nominal ones are secondary in selecting the case. In other words, alternation in case marking on the subject is said to express no aspectual differences unlike on the object, and the marking of aspectual contrasts is often seen as the main function of alternating cases in Finnic (more detail on this point will be provided in the discussion of formal accounts of object case assignment in section 4.1).

2.4 Alternations in subject and object marking in the CB area⁸

The semantically and syntactically determined case alternations on the subject and object, as described with respect to Estonian above, are not exclusive to Estonian (or Finnish) alone, but common to the languages in the Circum-Baltic (CB) area in general. In addition to Finnic languages such as Estonian and Finnish, the CB area includes language families such as Baltic and Slavic. These all have alternations in the case marking of the subject and object, although the morphological cases involved differ in a rather complex way (see Table 4 below). It was shown above in Figure 1 that the three cases involved in the alternations in Estonian are genitive, partitive and nominative. Finnish closely resembles Estonian in this respect, although the genitive form in Finnish is traditionally regarded as a realisation of accusative (for an empirical overview of why genitive should be preferred to accusative in the Finnish case paradigm, see Kiparsky 2001:316-322). In Baltic and Russian, however, it is the genitive case that expresses functions similar to the Finnic partitive. The alternating cases both on the subject and object in these languages are given in Table 4 below (from Koptjevskaja-Tamm & Wälchli 2001:648). Note that despite the difference in cases and also in semantic conditions (which will be discussed below), the same concepts, i.e. ‘total’ and ‘partial’, are applicable to them all (Koptjevskaja-Tamm & Wälchli 2001:648).

Table 4. Total and Partial subject and object marking (Koptjevskaja-Tamm & Wälchli 2001:648)

	Total	Partial		Total	Partial		Total	Partial
subj	NOM	PRTV	subj	NOM	GEN	subj	NOM	(GEN)
obj	GEN ^a	PRTV	obj	ACC	GEN	obj	ACC	
Finnish			Lithuanian/Russian/Polish			Standard Latvian		

^aThe original table in Koptjevskaja-Tamm & Wälchli (2001: 648) has accusative instead of genitive.

As can be seen in Table 4, the subject in CB area can either occur in the nominative or else it is marked by the partitive/genitive case. Similarly to Finnic, the alternation on the subject is possible only in intransitive sentences and mostly in existential constructions, although this construction may be defined differently in each language. As either (2001:656-658) point out, ‘partial’ subjects in all the CB languages tend to

⁸ In this section, the information provided about Baltic and Slavic languages heavily relies on Koptjevskaja-Tamm and Wälchli (2001).

occur postverbally and show no agreement with the verb in person and number. Also, the distribution of the alternating cases is determined by the same conditions, i.e. negation and quantitative indeterminacy. Yet, as Koptjevskaja-Tamm & Wälchli (2001:658-660) note, the variation in subject cases is ‘significantly restricted’ in Baltic and Russian in comparison with Finnic; in the latter it is most grammaticalised and therefore also most common.

However, on closer examination, the alternation in case marking of objects across the CB languages is not as straightforward as it might seem from Table 4 above. Firstly, the table does not show the alternation between the cases which occur on the ‘total’ object, i.e. accusative (or genitive in Finnic) and nominative (more detail on this will be provided in the following subsection). Secondly, as mentioned above, the status of accusative as a separate case is questionable in Finnic. For instance, Estonian does not show any distinct accusative form, as can be seen in Table 2 above (and as will be further discussed in Chapter 3). Koptjevskaja-Tamm & Wälchli (2001:650) mention though that it is the partitive form of first and second person singular pronouns that ‘covers, so to speak, both the partitive and the accusative uses’. Note that these pronouns never occur in nominative in the object function in imperatives and impersonals, a characteristic which distinguishes them from common nouns. The status of accusative is not entirely unproblematic in Finnish either, hence the accusative case is replaced with morphological genitive in Table 4 above, following Kiparsky (2001), who treats the accusative as morphological genitive on common nouns, recognising only personal pronouns as having a distinct accusative form. Similarly to Finnish, the accusative as a distinct form is present only on a certain class of words in Russian, i.e. on singular first declension nouns ending in *-a*, while all the other inanimate nouns show syncretism with nominative, and animate nouns show syncretism with genitive. In standard Latvian, according to Koptjevskaja-Tamm & Wälchli (2001:649), there is only one case for objects, namely the accusative, and the alternation between nominative and genitive on the subject is disappearing.

The conditions which determine the distribution of ‘total’ object versus ‘partial’ object vary significantly across the CB languages. The difference is primarily related to whether and how each of the CB languages marks aspect. While Finnic languages are seen to express aspectual contrasts (e.g. perfectivity vs. imperfectivity; or

completed vs. uncompleted event) by case marking on the object, Slavic and Baltic languages use variation in the verb forms to encode aspect (mostly in terms of prefixed versus non-prefixed forms). Thus, as Koptjevskaja-Tamm & Wälchli (2001:652-653) put it, although aspect plays a role in determining the distribution of object cases in Finnic systems, it is less relevant, if not irrelevant, in Slavic or Baltic languages. In Lithuanian, for example, the ‘partial’ object is not used to express aspect in affirmative transitive clauses, but only ‘indefinite quantity’. Yet Lithuanian imperfective verb forms always select a partial object (in genitive case); and the latter always occurs in negated sentences. Polish, which Koptjevskaja-Tamm & Wälchli (2001:653) consider representative of several Slavic languages, also has partial object (marked by genitive) obligatorily in the scope of negation. In positive clauses, however, the partial object has a restricted use: it occurs only with *perfective* verbs and is said to refer to ‘quantitatively undelimited’ entities (ibid.). The same rules as in Polish are followed in Russian too, although to a lesser extent. In Russian, the partial object is used optionally in the scope of negation, not obligatorily; and genitive-marked objects, which refer to ‘quantitatively unlimited’ entities like in Polish, occur with perfective verbs and are generally rather marginal. Note, however, that Northern Russian dialects differ from standard Russian in this respect: they use genitive-marked objects more freely and also with imperfective verbs (Koptjevskaja-Tamm & Wälchli 2001:652-655).

It is worth emphasising that in Finnic, partitive objects can occur both with unbounded (or imperfective) and bounded (perfective) verbs. In Slavic, however, partitive objects occur only with perfective verbs. Thus in Slavic and also in Baltic, the partial object is used only to refer to indefinite quantity (or to quantitatively unlimited entities), and cannot be analysed as being determined by the aspectual properties of the verb. It is only in Finnic languages where the partitive case can occur on discrete entities (count nouns) in affirmative sentences, and since this cannot be analysed as referring to indefinite quantity, the Estonian (or Finnish) partitive is taken to express imperfective aspect (or atelicity, depending on the approach taken). This in turn requires postulating two conditions for explaining the distribution of partial versus total object, either of which can determine the partial object: the unboundedness of a verb (or imperfectivity) and the unboundedness of a nominal (or indefinite quantity). It should be noted, however, that there is scope for debate as to

how justified it is to rely on the aspectual properties of the verb for explaining alternation in case marking in Finnic, especially when it is borne in mind that Finnic does not have a verbal category of aspect (see also section 2.6), and it is the *lexical* properties of verbs that seem to be relevant for case selection (as explained in section 2.2 above).

2.4.1 Nominative object

As mentioned in section 2.2 above with respect to Estonian, alternations in the case marking of objects occur not only between total and partial objects, but also in the case marking of the total object itself. It was also mentioned that the case variation on the total object is seen to be determined by syntactic conditions, as opposed to the alternation between total and partial object, which is semantically motivated. Thus, the total object occurs in the nominative in Estonian in various constructions: with imperative verbs, as in (2); in non-finite, *da*-infinitive clauses, as shown in (3) above; and in sentences which lack an explicitly expressed subject, e.g. impersonal constructions, as in (4) above. In other constructions, the total object is marked by the genitive case when the object NP is singular, and by the nominative case when the object NP is plural.

It was also noted above that some personal pronouns (e.g. first and second person) never appear in the nominative form in the object function, but are marked by partitive case instead. This is demonstrated in (25) below (an imperative clause): in (25a) the common noun ‘children’ has a nominative form, as do the third person singular ‘s/he’ and plural ‘they’ in (25b). The first person pronouns in (25c), however, would be ungrammatical in nominative and receive partitive marking instead.

- (25) a. Võta lapsed kaasa.
take.IMV.SG children.NOM along
‘Take the children along.’
- b. Võta ta/nad kaasa.
take.IMV.SG 3SG/PL.NOM along
‘Take her/him along.’

c. Võta mind/meid / *mina/meie kaasa.
 take.IMV.SG 1SG/PL.PRTV 1SG/PL.NOM. along
 ‘Take me/us along.’

The conditions for the nominative object in Finnish are similar to those in Estonian, with the exception that *all* personal pronouns are marked by the accusative case (as opposed to Estonian partitive, see Table 3 in section 2.1 above). This is why the nominative form of the object NP tends to be regarded as a realisation of the accusative in Finnish rather than the nominative form per se.

The nominative objects of imperatives, impersonals and certain non-finite clauses are not an idiosyncrasy of Finnic alone, but a feature which is common to several languages of the CB area, such as Baltic and Northern Russian dialects; nominative objects have also been attested in Old Russian documents, as noted by Koptjevskaja-Tamm & Wälchli (2001:660). For a comprehensive list of the constructions which require the object in the nominative form instead of the accusative in Baltic and Modern Northern Russian, see Koptjevskaja-Tamm & Wälchli (2001:661). Note, however, that the three basic contexts for nominative objects are the same as described with respect to Estonian above, i.e.:

- objects of infinitives
- objects of impersonals
- objects of imperative verbs.

In these languages the same constraints apply to the lexical classes which may appear in the nominative form in the object function: none of them allows personal pronouns and reflexives in the nominative (a phenomenon which is referred to as the animacy hierarchy in the literature; see, e.g. Koptjevskaja-Tamm & Wälchli 2001:662, Timberlake 1974⁹). Finnish does not apply the nominative rule on any of the personal pronouns, and applies it only optionally on the interrogative pronoun *kuka* ‘who’. In Baltic, the nominative rule holds only with first and second person pronouns and reflexives, while in Old Northern Russian none of the personal pronouns, adjectival pronouns and animate masculine nouns is attested in the nominative form in the object function (Koptjevskaja-Tamm & Wälchli 2001:661). It appears then that

⁹ As cited in Koptjevskaja-Tamm and Wälchli (2001:661).

Estonian resembles Baltic more than Finnish in this respect, since, unlike Finnish, it allows the third person pronoun in the nominative form in the object function.

On the whole, the nominative rule (which does not apply to personal pronouns but only to common nouns) indicates explicitly that the grammars of these languages treat nominative arguments in these syntactic environments as syntactic objects rather than as subjects. Priority is given to distinguishing between the subject and object function rather than to distinguishing between the total and partial object. That is, personal pronouns generally refer to most salient participants in the discourse, which act as the agents of the denoted event and are thus syntactically encoded as the subject. Accordingly, they are less typically found in the object function. If CB languages did not use this nominative rule, there would be a conflict between the typical role of personal pronouns and the syntactic function which they are assigned in impersonal, imperative and some non-finite clauses.

2.5 Object-like adverbials

In Estonian, there is what Metslang (2005) calls a ‘peripheral subtype’ of adverbials which are marked by the same cases as objects, and exhibit the same case marking pattern as objects do. These adverbials express duration, amount, or measure, and are generally referred to as extent or quantity adverbials. In Estonian linguistics, they are identified as ‘adverbials of direct object case’ (*sihitisekäändelised määrused*), and as Metslang (2005) emphasises in her study, the qualities of these adverbials are similar to both adverbial and object.

Firstly, these quantity adverbials are marked by the same cases as objects: genitive case marks adverbials in the singular (26), while (inherently) plural nominals or numerals occur in the nominative (27).

- (26) Ootasin *tunnikese* ja tulin siis koju
wait.PAST.1SG hour.DIM.GEN. and come.PAST.1SG then home.INESS.SG
‘I waited for an hour and then came home’

- (27) Ta viibis Londonis kolm nädalat
 s/he.NOM. stay.PAST.3SG L.INESS.SG three.NOM.SG week.PRTV.SG
 ‘S/he stayed in London for three weeks’

Secondly, genitive or nominative may alternate with the partitive case on these adverbials and in the same way as on the direct object, as shown in (28).

- (28) a. Mari jooksis ühe kilomeetri
 M.NOM run.PAST.3SG one.GEN.SG kilometre.GEN.SG
 ‘Mary ran one kilometre’
- b. Mari jooksis ühte kilomeetrit
 M.NOM run.PAST.3SG one.PRTV.SG kilometre.PRTV.SG
 ‘Mary was running one kilometre’

Thirdly, the occurrence of these cases on adverbials is determined by the same syntactic conditions as on the object: the adverbials occur in the nominative (instead of genitive) in constructions which lack an explicitly expressed subject (as in imperatives (29), impersonal constructions (30), or clauses which are non-finite, such as the *da*-infinitive clause in (31)) (data from EKK 1997:SY48). Also, under negation these ‘measure’ phrases receive partitive case marking like objects (32).

- (29) Oota mõni minut!
 wait.IMV.SG some.NOM.SG minute.NOM.SG
 ‘Wait a minute!’
- (30) Suusatati terve vaheaeg
 ski.IMP.PAST whole.NOM.SG vacation.NOM.SG
 ‘There was skiing for the whole vacation’
 (lit.: ‘It was skied for a whole vacation’)
- (31) Isa astus tuppa kavatsusega vaadata
 father.NOM.SG step.3SG.PST room.INESS.SG intention.COM.SG watch.INF.
 mõni minut televiisorit.
 some.NOM.SG minute.NOM.SG TV.PRTV.SG
 ‘Father entered the room with the intention of watching TV for a minute.’
- (32) Ma ei sõrkinud seitset kilomeetrit-ki.
 I.NOM. NEG jog.PRES.PTC seven.PRTV.SG kilometre.PRTV.SG-EMP.
 ‘I did not jog (even) seven kilometres’

The alternation between genitive/nominative and partitive on quantity adverbials gives rise to aspectual readings, as in (28) above, in a way that is similar to the

alternation in case marking of objects discussed in section 2.2 above. For instance, (28a) is usually understood as perfective, while (28b) is most likely to be interpreted as an ongoing activity. Yet, aspectual readings are conveyed only with those adverbials which do not allow any locative interpretation. Locatives exclude the possibility of applying an object reading to the adverbial and therefore also exclude the aspectual readings. For instance, the partitive-marked NP in (33) can only be understood as expressing an unspecified duration of time (this example is taken from EKG II 1993:83).

- (33) Käisime terveid õhtuid maasikal
 go.PAST.3PL whole.PRTV.PL evening.PRTV.PL strawberry.ALLAT.SG
 ‘(We) spent whole evenings picking (wild) strawberries’

From the perspective of case marking, the question is whether the adverbials which undergo the same case marking as objects have the syntactic status of object arguments or of adjuncts. That is, if they are objects, it is reasonable to assume that they receive the same case marking. If they are adjuncts, however, this means that the same cases which mark the core arguments also appear on adjuncts. Some adverbials which have the same case marking as objects are unambiguously adverbials, e.g. in examples (26) to (33). The only exception is (28) where the measure phrase can also be analysed as the object argument. Yet, as Metslang (2005) observes, quantity adverbials in Estonian are similar to the direct object not because of their object-like behaviour, but because there is a choice in case marking. As with objects, these quantity adverbials can be marked by either genitive/nominative or partitive. Note, however, that partitive case on adverbials, especially those expressing duration, is significantly less common than on the object (EKG II 1993:83, Metslang 2005).

There are several reasons why these quantity adverbials in Estonian should definitely be categorised as adjuncts and not as arguments. First, as Metslang (2005) points out in her study, they can easily be replaced by typical adverbials which are not either noun phrases or quantifier phrases in the object case, e.g. *kaua* ‘for a long time’ (adverb); *aasta jooksul* ‘during the year’ (PP); *sageli* ‘often’ (adverb); *palju* ‘many, much, a lot’ (quantity adverbial). Also, these phrases can be replaced by the same question words as the prototypical adverbials, e.g. *kui kaua?* ‘for how long?’, *kui tihti?* ‘for how often?’, *kui palju?* ‘how much, many?’. That is, they do not correspond

to questions of the direct object such as *kes?* ‘who?’; *mis?* ‘what?’; *kelle?* ‘whose?’; *mille?* ‘of what?’; *keda?* ‘whom?’; *mida?* ‘what?’, but to the questions of adverbial (EKK 2007:494). Metslang also notes that object-like quantity phrases are neutral to case government, i.e. those verbs which normally co-occur with partitive-marked objects as a complement do not impose any restrictions on the case marking of quantity adverbials as a complement: they normally occur in the genitive/nominative. Finally, it is worth emphasising that when object-like measure phrases undergo case alternation similarly to objects and induce aspectual readings, as in (28) above, they are actually regularly distinguished from the object in negated sentences. Under negation, these phrases are as a rule also given the *-ki* emphasising particle, as shown in (32) above. The omission of this affix indicates contrastive reading on the adverbial in the same way as genitive and nominative do on the object of a negated verb (this will be discussed in more detail in section 5.2.1 below). Besides, the measure phrases under discussion occur with both transitive and intransitive verbs.

In Finnish, however, the analysis of the object-like adverbials appears rather controversial. Nelson (1995), for instance, considers this type of measure phrases to be internal arguments, whereas Kiparsky (2001) argues that they are definitely adverbial modifiers, because they cannot be impersonalised or passivised. Yet Nelson (1995:173) supports her argument by pointing out that ‘measure phrases in Finnish appear to ‘passivise’, surfacing in nominative case in impersonal passives’. As mentioned with respect to Estonian, morphological case on these measure adverbials is sensitive to syntactic environment, so that genitive-marked adverbials occur in the nominative with impersonal, passive, and imperative verbs. However, this does not provide unequivocal evidence for the status of these case-marked adverbials as internal arguments; at most, it can be taken as evidence for structural case marking on adverbials, as is done by, e.g., Svenonius (2002) and Kiparsky (2001).

In terms of the CB languages as a whole, the same general patterns of alternations in case marking of quantity adverbials are also present in Baltic, Polish, and Northern Russian. However, it should be noted that none of these languages shows a complete parallel between object and adverbial marking, e.g. Polish keeps the accusative marking (as opposed to genitive) on adverbials under negation, and Finnish tends to

prefer the accusative (*n*-form) (as opposed to nominative) on adverbials in impersonals constructions (Koptjevskaja-Tamm & Wälchli 2001:671).

2.6 The expression of aspect in Estonian

In formal accounts of Finnish grammatical case, aspect as a verbal (or functional) category appears to play a crucial role in determining the case marking of objects (an overview of some of these theories will be provided in sections 4.1 and 5.1). Since Estonian and Finnish are similar in their case marking of objects, the theories which describe Finnish can also be evaluated on the basis of Estonian data. This section therefore briefly describes how aspect is expressed in Estonian, in order to provide a background for the subsequent chapters.

Despite the fact that formal theories tend to treat aspect in Finnic as (primarily) the property of verbs, there is no verbal category of aspect in Estonian and Finnish. As Metslang (2001:443) puts it, aspect in Estonian ‘has not developed into a consistent grammatical category’. It is expressed peripherally by resultative constructions (34), progressive constructions (35), by pseudo-adverbials or ‘bounders’ (36), and by alternation in the case marking of objects (37) (data from Metslang 2001:443-444, EKK 2007:441, 463).

(34) Poisist kasvas mees.
 boy.ELAT.SG grow.PAST.3SG man.NOM.SG
 ‘The boy had grown up and become a man.’
 (lit.: from the boy a man had grown)

(35) Staadionil on toimu-mas meeste kaugushüpe.
 stadium.ADESS.SG be.PRES.3 takeplace-PROG. man.GEN.PL longjump.NOM.SG
 ‘In the stadium, men’s long jump is taking place.’

(36) Lind ehitas pesa valmis.
 bird.NOM.SG build.PAST.3SG nest.GEN.SG ready
 ‘The bird (has) built the nest.’

(37) a. Raul ehitas suvila-t.
 R.NOM. build.PAST.3SG cottage-PRTV.SG
 ‘Raul was building a cottage.’

- b. Raul ehitas suvila.
 R.NOM. build.PAST.3SG cottage.GEN.SG
 'Raul built a cottage.'

Example (34) is a typical (source-marking) resultative clause that can be either intransitive or transitive. Its characteristic is an elative-marked nominal which functions as an adverbial and occurs in the topic position (for more detail on source-marking resultative clauses in Estonian, see Erelt 2005). Progressive constructions, as in (35), are periphrastic progressive *-mas*-constructions which refer to an on-going but non-dynamic event. These grammatical constructions have been taken as evidence of a developing grammatical category of progressive in Estonian (e.g. Metslang 1993). The example in (36) exhibits the most explicit means of expressing perfectivity in Estonian, viz. pseudo-adverbials. Often it is only these adverbials which unambiguously convey whether the denoted event is completed or not, since case alternation on the object, as shown in (37), may not be effective or explicit enough: the distinction between different case forms is often neutralised because of the extensive apocope processes which have taken place in Estonian phonology, such that a noun may have identical forms in the nominative, genitive and partitive, e.g. *pesa* 'nest' in (38) below (Metslang 2001:444). In instances such as (38), it is either the context which determines the aspect of the sentence or an adverbial (a similar example is (36) above).

- (38) a. Lind ehitas pesa.
 bird.NOM.SG build.PAST.3SG nest.PRTV.SG
 'The bird was building a nest.'
- b. Lind ehitas pesa.
 bird.NOM.SG build.PAST.3SG nest.GEN.SG
 'The bird built the nest.'

Perfectivity in Estonian is often expressed by predicative possessive constructions, as demonstrated in (39). Literally, the sentence in (39) would be rendered 'I have this book read'.

- (39) Mul on see raamat (läbi) loetud.
 1sg.ADESS. be.PRES.3 this.NOM. book.NOM.SG through read.PAST.PTC
 'I have read this book.'

Yet imperfective-perfective contrasts in meaning typically appear to be expressed by the opposition between the total and partial object, as Metslang (2001:443) concludes. Her conclusion is based on the results of using questionnaires on aspectual typology (as used in Dahl 1985) on Estonian. Still, the number of contexts where the contrast perfective-imperfective is explicitly expressed by the alternation in case marking is rather limited because of contextual effects (more detail will be provided in section 5.2 below).

2.7 Summary

In this chapter, I have given an overview of the morphological case distinctions in Estonian. The Estonian case system of 14 cases was briefly described, followed by an account of the basic word order in Estonian. It was shown that Estonian word order is highly flexible and interacts with information-structural factors at the sentence level. The main focus in this chapter was on alternations in case marking which involve both subjects and objects, and an overview was provided of the standard account of the distribution of alternating cases. In order to demonstrate that alternations in the case marking of subjects and objects are not an idiosyncratic feature of Estonian only (or the Finnic languages), comparisons with neighbouring languages (in the Circum-Baltic area) were drawn. Finally the verbal category of aspect was briefly discussed, since alternations in case marking are often associated with the expression of aspect, and it was pointed out that although Estonian does not have a verbal category of aspect it was the object cases that are taken to encode aspectual contrasts.

3 The Accusative Hypothesis

The alternations in the case marking of objects described in the previous chapter were mainly explained in terms of ‘total’ and ‘partial’ object. The total object is marked by genitive and nominative and the partial object is marked by partitive case. It is the cases of the ‘total’ object which is of concern in this chapter. Specifically, the issue is whether the two different forms which mark the same function count as one case, e.g. accusative, or not. If yes, what is the evidence for calling this case accusative? In other words, this chapter explores the claim that Estonian has accusative case (e.g. Hiietam 2003, 2004), a claim referred to here as the accusative hypothesis.

3.1 The issue of accusative in Estonian

It should be noted at the outset that the concepts of ‘total’ and ‘partial’ object seem to be semantically motivated in the sense that, in simplistic terms, the total object is associated with the interpretation of “totally” affected entities, while the partial object is related with interpretations of “partially” affected entities. However, these notions are treated as syntactic categories in the grammars of modern Estonian. This was evident in section 2.2 above, where the distribution of alternating cases was explained as the distribution of total vs. partial object. That is, the alternating cases are identified with the syntactic function they encode, and hence the two cases, genitive singular and nominative, are identified with the total object. The obvious conclusion seems then that genitive and nominative are realisations of some other case, such as accusative. However, the paradigm of Estonian morphological cases (as given in Table 1 in section 2.1 above) does not recognise any additional case such as the accusative. Indeed, as emphasised throughout the previous chapter, there is no distinct morphological form which would support postulating an extra case, such as accusative, in Estonian.

The *Handbook of Modern Estonian (EKK)* (1997:M52) explains that due to phonological reduction, what was formerly an accusative case has collapsed with the genitive. Although it acknowledges that there is no accusative case in Estonian (any more), an informal distinction is still made by referring to the genitive which marks attributive function as the attributive-genitive and to the genitive which marks the object as the object-genitive (e.g. EKK 1997:M52, EKG I 1995:52). The case marking of the total object is thus described in terms of case realisation, whereby syntactic conditions are provided for the use of each case: the ‘total’ object in the plural occurs always in the nominative, as in (1) (EKK 1997:SY37).

- (1) Viisin lapsed lasteaeda.
 take.PAST.1SG child.NOM.PL kindergarten.ILLAT.SG
 ‘I took the children to the kindergarten.’

The ‘total’ object in singular is marked by genitive, when the sentence is declarative (or interrogative), as in (2). Nominative case is used in the singular only when the sentence is impersonal or imperative, as in (3) and (4) respectively (data from EKK 1997:SY37).

- (2) Kass sõi hiire (ära).
 cat.NOM.SG eat.PAST.3SG mouse.GEN.SG (up)
 ‘The cat ate the mouse (up).’
- (3) Raamat pandi riiulile tagasi.
 book.NOM.SG put.IMP.PAST shelf.ALLAT.SG back
 ‘The book was put back to the self.’
- (4) Anna võti siia.
 give.IMV.SG key.NOM.SG here
 ‘Give me the key.’

The informal distinction between object-genitive and attributive-genitive suggests that the genitive which marks the object is (informally) taken as syncretic with the genitive which occurs in the attributive function. However, the status of nominative is left unclear: it is described as a case whose main function is to encode the subject, and whose list of other functions includes marking ‘total’ object under certain conditions (EKG I 1995:52).

Hiietam (2003, 2004), in contrast, argues explicitly in favour of the accusative as a separate case in Estonian, one which should be included in the paradigm of grammatical cases. She maintains that although the distinct morphological form for encoding the total object is lost, the syntactic accusative exists in Estonian and has a ‘unique realisation’ in the form of genitive in singular and nominative in plural (this is discussed in more detail in the subsequent sections). The case paradigm including the proposed accusative would look like what is given in Table 5.

Table 5. Paradigm of grammatical cases including the proposed accusative

	Nouns SG	Nouns PL	Personal pronouns
NOMINATIVE	–	-d	–
GENITIVE	–	-de/-te	–
ACCUSATIVE	–	-d	–
PARTITIVE	-t/-d/Ø/-da	-d/Ø	-d/-da

It is worth emphasising that Hiietam (2003) actually proposes including a *morphological case*¹⁰ in the paradigm, although it would be determined only syntactically. As shown in Table 5 above, there is no morphological evidence for the proposed accusative, which means that an absolute syncretism is postulated with genitive, on the one hand, and with nominative, on the other. Thus the question is how justified it is to postulate such syncretism.

The question of syncretism, or postulating accusative case in Estonian, boils down to the difference between (traditional) descriptive grammars and more theoretically oriented approaches. The former need to provide merely a list of different functions that each morphological case encodes in a language, whereas formal approaches face a challenge: they either have to introduce syncretism directly (as in e.g. Lexical Functional Grammar) or indirectly, in the form of syntactic (or abstract) case which is realised by relevant morphological (surface) forms, i.e. genitive and nominative (e.g. Government and Binding / Minimalist Program, Optimality Theory). The approaches which argue for syncretism therefore assume that there is an independent accusative case in Estonian: e.g. a form such as *lapsed* ‘children’ in (1) above shows syncretism between nominative and accusative case, and the form *hiire* ‘mouse’ in (2) shows syncretism between genitive and accusative. Yet this approach cannot provide a

¹⁰ That is, a ‘non-autonomous’ case as defined in Blake (2001).

coherent analysis of the word form such as *võti* ‘key’ in (4), as will be discussed in sections 3.2 and 4.2 below.

An alternative would be to pursue a different approach to grammatical case itself. Instead of postulating syncretism, i.e. relying on syntactic functions which morphological cases are seen to realise, an alternative would be to try to keep syntactic case and morphological case separate, and take morphological case seriously. For instance, Spencer and Otaguro (2005) persuasively demonstrate that morphological case and syntactic case are ‘distinct properties’ and should be treated as such. In what follows, both morphological and syntactic evidence for the existence of accusative case in Estonian is explored in more detail. This is necessary for determining what the implications of treating case in Estonian are.

3.2 Examination of the Accusative Hypothesis

This section focuses on the accusative hypothesis and brings out the arguments for and against the existence of this case in Estonian, as given in the literature. It also provides a diachronic perspective to the issue and draws attention to the fact that historical evidence does not offer any definite basis for arguing for the existence of accusative in Estonian which has now disappeared.

3.2.1 The synchronic point of view

Since there is no morphologically distinct form of the accusative in present-day Estonian, the concept of accusative is rather elusive. For instance, the ways in which accusative has been identified in the literature are as follows:

- accusative as a paradigmatic or ‘non-autonomous’ case
- syntactic accusative
- accusative as an umbrella term

Yet there are no straightforward criteria for distinguishing between the different interpretations of accusative, as shown below.

Ackerman & Moore (1999) treat the genitive singular and nominative plural which occur on the total object as accusative. They associate this with telicity marking, and distinguish it from the partitive case, which is linked to atelicity. They assume that the genitive and nominative are realisations of the accusative in finite transitive clauses. The accusative is seen as a surface case which alternates with partitive on the direct object. Its distribution correlates with the proposed proto-patient property entailment TELIC ENTITY¹¹. In later work on Finnic cases, Ackerman & Moore (2001) provide an explanation of the use of the term ‘accusative’, including references to the historical evidence for its existence (e.g. Abondolo 1998). They conclude:

In sum, there is consensus opinion among Finnic scholars that there has been an historical conflation of accusative and genitive singular markers as well as between accusative and nominative plural markers for lexical nominals. This has created a synchronic situation in Finnish and Estonian where it seems reasonable to refer to ACCUSATIVE as a cover term for certain object encodings (Ackerman & Moore 2001:89).

Note that Ackerman & Moore (1999:5) seem to treat accusative as a surface case, i.e. they state that accusative/partitive alternation does not correspond to a contrast in grammatical function, since in both cases the case-marked nominal functions as a direct object. They emphasise that the alternation between genitive/nominative and partitive is ‘one of surface case only’. Yet, Ackerman & Moore (2001) are less clear in explaining the accusative case: occasionally they rely on the descriptions from their 1999 article (e.g., p. 90), and they also follow the Finnish tradition which operates with the notion of abstract (or syntactic) accusative by referring to it as ‘(abstract) accusative object’ (p. 96) or ‘objects representing abstract accusative case and realised in the morphological cases nominative, accusative, and genitive’ (p. 95).

Similarly, Lees (2004) uses the term ‘accusative’ for the non-partitive object case. It is referred to as a ‘blanket term’ and described as being manifested by the genitive in singular and nominative in plural. Lees appears to assume that there is an abstract accusative case (‘accusative object’) whose ‘surface’ cases vary depending on the syntactic environment.

¹¹ BOUNDING ENTITY in Ackerman & Moore (2001)

Hiietam (2003, 2004) argues for the paradigmatic accusative case in Estonian by stating that ‘the syntactic accusative exists in Estonian and ... it has a unique realization of morphological case marking’ (2004:1). Although the claim for accusative as a paradigmatic case may not be quite so straightforward in Hiietam (2004), a new paradigm of grammatical cases which includes accusative is offered in Hiietam (2003). Thus Hiietam sees accusative as an independent case which is identical, in form, to either nominative or genitive case, depending on the syntactic environment (p.c.). She gives the following arguments in favour of positing the accusative case in Estonian (Hiietam 2004):

- The genitive which is used for marking objects in the singular is not a true genitive but a form which happens to be homophonous with the morphological genitive. If it were a true genitive, it would retain its case marking in the plural.
- The nominative which is used for object marking in plural is not a true nominative, because when the argument in the object function is in the singular, it receives a different case marking than in the plural; again, if it were a true nominative it would retain the same form in both.
- The verb agrees with its nominative-subject but not with its nominative-object, therefore the nominative on plural objects cannot be a true nominative; instead it must be accusative.
- ‘[d]efinite objects have always had a distinct case marking in Estonian’: ‘it is not a matter of historical development, where a category disappears from a language through bleaching or enters a language’ (Hiietam 2004:9).
- ‘Typologically, the case associated with definite objects is referred to as accusative. Given the fact that the case on objects in highly transitive constructions was neither a true genitive nor a true nominative we can assume that this case is accusative, although it only becomes apparent on the syntactic level. Morphologically, however, the case of definite objects is identical in form to either the genitive or the nominative’ (Hiietam 2004:9).

Note that Hiietam (2004) argues for a separate case for *definite objects* in Estonian. What she means by ‘definite’ is explained as follows (2003:53): ‘[i]n addition to identifiability, definiteness is seen as consisting of inclusiveness and uniqueness’.

In general, it appears then that the claims for the existence of the accusative case in Estonian are all based on syntax: a distinct syntactic function is taken as a starting point for postulating syncretic case forms. Arguments against the accusative case in Estonian are based on morphology. In summary form, these run as follows:

- there is no evidence for positing the accusative case in Estonian because there is no individual case form for the direct object
- the direct object in Estonian can be expressed by more than one case, i.e. genitive, nominative, and partitive (with personal pronouns)
- the syntactic function of accusative disappeared together with the morphological form of accusative (e.g. Saareste 1926, EKG II 1993, EKK 1997/2007).

Thus, as mentioned above, the arguments for and against accusative in Estonian basically represent two different types of case: syntactic and morphological. From the perspective of morphological case, there is no explicit evidence for the accusative. The question thus arises what inspired the proponents of accusative in the first place. For a possible answer, I will focus on the diachronic data in the next section.

3.2.2 The diachronic perspective

As mentioned above, the paradigm of morphological grammatical cases does not provide any support for postulating accusative case in Estonian. If it is nevertheless hypothesised, it is assumed to be syncretic, i.e., with the genitive in the singular and nominative in the plural. From a diachronic perspective, however, there is a long tradition of assuming that a distinct accusative case marker, *-m*, once existed and was shared by all the Uralic languages, before it collapsed with the genitive singular in the proto-Baltic-Finnic stage. The genitive singular is thought to have had the suffix non-palatalised **-n* (Hakulinen 1961:68-69).

More specifically, there is a traditional interpretation (see, e.g., Abondolo 1998, Janhunen 1982, Wickman 1955) which maintains that the reconstruction of the Uralic nominal case marking system points to the existence of an originally Proto-Uralic accusative with the distinctive ending **-m* (which has retained its original form in

Mari). It is believed that during the proto-Baltic-Finnic stage, a sound change occurred from *-m* to *-n* in a word-final position due to which the accusative collapsed with the genitive singular, e.g. *kala-m > kala-n. The *-n* ending later disappeared in Estonian, e.g. kala < kalan, but is still present in Finnish. In addition, Alvre (1989:178) notes that an ancient lative case ending *-n* underwent the same change, resulting in a situation where the present-day genitive form represents three different cases (i.e. genitive, accusative and lative), but has not retained any distinct form in Estonian. In Finnish the genitive with the dative function is still well preserved, while in Estonian it can be found only in folk songs (ibid.).

There is, however, an alternative view, represented by Künnap (2006) and Marcantonio (2002). Both these researchers question the validity of reconstructing a distinct accusative suffix (*)-*m* which is common to all the Uralic/Proto-Uralic languages. Künnap (2006:21) draws attention to the fact that ‘the Finnic language matter has never fixed any incidence with the supposed accusative ending *-*m* in its primary form *-m(-)*’, and he argues therefore that the suggested development of syncretism between accusative and genitive as a result of Finnic word-final sound shift from *-m* to *-n* cannot be regarded as ‘reasonable’. He maintains that in Finnic languages the direct object cases both in singular and plural are the ‘suffixless nominative, the genitive with the suffix (*)-*n(-)* and the partitive with the suffix (*)-*tA(-)* and offers as ‘reliable’ the assumption that the genitive ending *-n* has been ‘one of the earliest Finnic object cases’ (Künnap 2006:18).

In the next section, I briefly examine the status of the postulated accusative in proto-Uralic. Then an overview of the languages is given where the traces of this distinct accusative marker are thought to be present, but actually have a disputed status.

3.2.2.1 The status of the postulated accusative case in proto-Uralic

According to Janhunen (1982) and Abondolo (1998), proto-Uralic (PU) possessed a system of nominal declension which included both (a) grammatical and (b) semantic cases, as shown in Table 6. Janhunen (1982:30) lists three grammatical cases

(absolute/nominative, accusative and genitive), while Abondolo (1998:18) seems to regard only two of them as cases, i.e., accusative and ‘genitive/prenominalizer’. Both Janhunen and Abondolo agree that there were at least three semantic cases: locative, ablative, and dative. Notice that Abondolo (1998) refers to them as local cases, and uses the terms ‘locative’, ‘separative’, and ‘lative’, respectively.

Table 6. Nominal declension in PU (Janhunen 1982:30)

	SG	PL
(a) absolute (nominative)	Ø	-t
genitive	-n	-j
accusative	-m	
(b) locative	-nâ/-nä	
ablative	-tə	
dative	?-kə, -ŋ	

As Table 6 shows, the postulated reconstructed accusative has a suffix *-m, genitive is marked by suffix *-n, and nominative is the unmarked form. Among the reconstructed semantic cases are locative *-nA, ablative/separative *tA~*tI, and the dative/lative(s) *-k (and/or *-ŋ) and *-c^j (and/or *-n^j) (Abondolo 1998:18). Plural was indicated by two different suffixes in PU. The *-t was a plural marker for the absolute/nominative and the form *-j was used as a ‘general plural oblique case’ in grammatical functions (Janhunen 1982:29-30). In other functions, as Janhunen (1982:30) hypothesises, the plural might not have been combined with case marking.

There seems to be a general consensus that in the *early* stages of proto-Uralic (PU) the case paradigm was only in the singular, and plural was expressed in the nominative only. It is assumed that *numerus absolutus* was used in PU. This assumption is based on the fact that (i) the distribution of reconstructable plural endings is defective and (ii) the PU endings are missing in several languages that have entirely new plural endings instead, thus indicating a relatively recent origin for the morphological plural as a grammatical category (Marcantonio 2002:231, Rätsep 1977:28). Also, there are a number of nominal constructions in many Finno-Ugric languages which point to the limited use of plurality. These include the following (data from Hakulinen 1961:66, Rätsep 1977:28, Marcantonio 2002:233):

- use of singular forms to refer to several entities at the same time (i.e. collective singular), as in Mari *pi jimä* ‘tooth dull, the teeth are dull’
- use of singular to refer to dual body parts and the relevant clothing, as in Estonian *kingad on jalas* lit. ‘shoes are in foot’ (I have shoes on); *võtan kindad käest* lit. ‘I take gloves from hand’ (I will take the gloves off); *ma ei vaata sellele hea silmaga* lit. ‘I do not look at it with [a] good eye’ (I don’t approve this)
- use of the word meaning ‘half’ (in Estonian *pool*, in Finnish *puoli*) for referring to only one item of the dual body parts, as in Finnish *jalkapuoli* ‘one-legged’ or in Estonian *ma pole sellest poole kõrvagagi kuulnud* lit. ‘I have not heard of it even with half an ear’, which suggests that the singular form of ‘ear’ referred to both ears
- use of singular form while referring to each of several owners who has one item only, as in Finnish *laki-t lensi-vät pää-stä* ‘hat-pl flew-pl head.sg-from’ (The hats flew from the heads)
- use of singular after a numeral, as in Estonian *kolm meest* ‘three.nom.sg man.prtv.sg’ (three men).

The limited use of plurality and the lack of a well-developed plural paradigm are often relied on when explaining why the reconstructed accusative has a distinct form only in the singular. For instance, Alvre (1989:179) writes that ‘the *-m* accusative case in plural could not develop because there was no plural for oblique cases’. Yet the plural paradigm of the reconstructed nominal declension in PU (as in Table 6 above) seems to indicate something else. First, there never was any distinct accusative marker in plural, but a marker which was shared with the genitive plural. Hakulinen (1961:63) specifies that the *i (-j)* element may have been the old derivational suffix which was used to form possessive nouns such as the Finnish *huhti-kuu* ‘April’ (lit. ground-clearing’s month [from snow]) or *lehmi-karja* ‘cattle’ (lit. cow’s animals), and which later became part of the nominal paradigm and began to be used as the marker for genitive plural. In the early stages of proto-Baltic-Finnic, the genitive plural became the ‘basis on which other oblique cases in the plural were built, with the result that

i/(j) began to be felt as a plural marker, i.e. gave rise to *i*-plural (in addition to the *t*-plural)¹² (Hakulinen 1961:63, Rätsep 1977:10).

Second, as Table 6 above shows, nominative and accusative did not fall together in the plural: if there had been accusative, it would sometimes occur in *-t* (in the nominative) and sometimes in *-j* (in the genitive), but there is no evidence for this. The *-t* seems to be associated with nominative form only, and regarded as a plural marker (i.e. the */t/-*plural) and not a case marker (Hakulinen 1961:67). One of the explanations why *-t* is restricted to the nominative form is that it originates from the plural in predicative nouns, e.g. “bird: flying ones” (in Finnish, *lintu lentävät*) and was only later extended to the subject noun, as in “birds: flying ones” (in Finnish, *linnut lentävät*) (Hakulinen 1961:65). This explanation is probably motivated by the fact that the same marker as the nominative plural *t* also occurs as a plural marker in the conjugation of verbs, e.g. in Finnish the 3rd person plural verb form in the present and past ends in *-t*: (*he*) *saava-t* ‘they get’, *saiva-t* ‘they got’ (originally *he sait*) (for more detail, see Hakulinen 1961:64). The use of *-t* in Finnish personal pronouns (which is now considered the accusative marker) and in interrogatives such as *ken:minut* (me), *sinut* (thee), *hänet* (him/her), *meidät* (us), *teidät* (you), *heidät* (them), *kenet* (who(m)?) is said to appear after the Proto-Finnic period, and appears first in the plural pronouns due to the analogy with marking plural on common nouns (Hakulinen 1961:68). It is worth emphasising that the paradigm of the reconstructed cases in PU, as in Table 6 above, shows the accusative plural sharing the plural marker with the genitive, rather than nominative; thus the idea that there was ever a unique realisation of the accusative case as genitive/accusative in singular and nominative in plural is not borne out. As Hakulinen (1961:62-64) and Rätsep (1977:17-18) theorise, it was during the proto-Baltic-Finnic stage when the nominative plural *-t* ‘contaminated’ the genitive plural, and during the later stages of development spread from the genitive plural to the other cases (see also section 6.1.1).

With respect to the distribution of cases, Janhunen (1982:29-31) speculates that the absolute/nominative form was used for ‘independent’ arguments in the sentence (e.g. subject, a nominal predicate), while ‘dependent’ nominals such as attributes and the

¹² There are at least two plurals in Finnic: the */i/-*plural and */t/-*plural.

object were marked by the genitive and accusative, respectively. It is worth noting that the distribution of the nominative suggests that its status is best understood not as a true case but rather as an unmarked form of the nominal. The genitive, on the other hand, as Janhunen (1982:30) suggests, seemed to have a wider range of functions than marking attributes: it is also said to encode the instrumental function. Accusative is associated with the direct object only, but when the verb had an imperative form, its object occurred in the absolute/nominative instead of the accusative (ibid.). Janhunen also notes that the use of grammatical cases might have been related to ‘an inherent category of definiteness’: genitive and accusative were likely to imply definiteness in the noun, while the absolute/nominative form was favoured with an indefinite noun – even in the functions of attribute and object, which were normally marked by genitive and accusative respectively. Yet, as Janhunen (1982:31) admits, ‘the category of definiteness never took any strict formal expressions in PU’.

3.2.2.2 What motivates the reconstruction of accusative *-m?

In the light of the controversial interpretations of the diachronic data, the question arises as to why a distinct accusative marker **-m* is reconstructed in PU in the first place. On the basis of the data provided above, it appears that:

- genitive and accusative shared a common form in plural (see Table 6)
- genitive had a wider range of functions than marking nominal attributes, i.e., it was also used in adverbial function to mark the ‘instrumental qualifier of a verb’ (Janhunen 1982:30)
- accusative was not used with finite verbs in the imperative mood (Janhunen 1982:31)
- both genitive and accusative tended to imply that the noun was definite (Janhunen 1982:31)
- there is no trace of the accusative suffix **-m* in its primary form *-m(-)* in the Finnic languages (Künnap 2006:21)

In the Finno-Ugric languages as a whole there appears to be no trace of a unique suffix *(*)-m* which would confirm that accusative once existed in these languages. For

instance, Abondolo (1998:19) concludes for the Ugric sub-branch that it provides little evidence, if not no evidence at all, of the accusative **-m* (apart from South Mansi). He considers it implausible that the Hungarian possessive suffixes s1 *-m*, and s2 *-d* are sequences of the PU accusative (< **-m-mV*, **-m-tV*), and he finds no trace of an accusative marker **-m* in Khanty. In Mansi, the direct object is marked only in the Western dialect Pelym and the South Western dialect North Vagilsk; in the other dialects the object occurs in the unmarked form (Marcantonio 1993:23). In those dialects where the object carries a case marker, it is *-n* ending which is traditionally referred to as accusative. Yet Marcantonio (1993:20) questions even the status of *-n* as an accusative marker (in those dialects of Mansi where it occurs) and claims that *-n* is neither an accusative case ending nor a definiteness marker, as is widely believed. She draws attention to the fact that the *-n* suffix occurs on the object only under certain conditions, and is also used for marking other disparate functions, such as:

- ‘the ending point of a movement’ (*kol-nə miney-əm* ‘home go-I’)
- the recipient, in verbs of saying
- the role of Agent (although quite rarely).

Hence Marcantonio (1993:24-25) argues that the *-n* suffix is actually the lative marker *-nə/-ne* and not an accusative at all. She also emphasises that in the Finno-Ugric languages the objecthood relationship is not very well established, and she offers an analysis whereby the suffix *-n* is used to encode thematic items in the discourse. This also entails that the associated definiteness comes by default, as ‘thematic elements, whether known or not, are indeed definite elements (by definition)’ (Marcantonio 1993:39). Künnap, however, draws attention to the further consideration that Mansi is spoken ‘in the immediate neighbourhood of Samoyed languages’ (2006:28). Samoyedic languages (a subfamily of Uralic languages, sister of the Finno-Ugric branch according to the traditional analysis) are described as having accusative forms such as *myad^o-m* ‘tent-acc.sg’ in Tundra Nenets and *mâât-əm* ‘tent-acc.sg’ in Taz Selkup, both of which can be taken as reflections of a PU accusative **-m* (Abondolo 1998:19). Künnap (op. cit.) also points out that the *-m* suffixes found in Sami and Mari are different from the one which occurs in dialectal Mansi. Thus he seems to suggest that this suffix occurs in dialectal Mansi as a result of language contact rather than because of the original *-m* suffix. As for the suffix *(*)-m* in Samoyed, Künnap (2006:30) doubts whether it had a role as a grammatical object marker as such, and

assumes that it rather encodes some semantic contrast along the lines of indefiniteness vs. definiteness (or indeterminativeness vs. determinativeness).

In general, therefore, the Ugric sub-branch provides no unambiguous basis for the postulation of a distinct accusative marker *-m*. Likewise, the Permian languages show rather hypothetical evidence: there are vocalic accusative suffixes such as *-ë*, *-e* in the first person singular pronouns, as in Komi *men-ë*, and Udmurt *mon-e* that are regarded as continuations of the stem-final vowel which were protected by a final **-m* but then lost (Abondolo 1998:19).

The Finno- sub-branch of the Finno-Ugric languages appears to have more evidence for the PU accusative **-m* at first glance. For instance, Western Sami has denasalized reflexes, as in *goade-v* ‘hut-acc.sg’ of Lule Sami (Abondolo 1998:19). However, Künnap (2006:21) emphasises that instances of *m*-accusative in Sami are ‘irrelevant’ to the **-m* accusative in Finnic, since Itkonen (1999) and Koivulehto (1999)¹³ reject the idea of postulating Proto-Finnic-Sami.

With respect to the Fennic languages, Abondolo (1998:19) assumes that the accusative **-m* has collapsed with genitive **-n* in word final position, and observes that most of the North Fennic dialects have retained the accusative in *-n*, and that ‘morphophonemic traces of a suffix at least similarly shaped may be found elsewhere in Fennic’. He exemplifies this claim with the Estonian weak-grade *-nn-* as in *venna* ‘brother.gen.sg’, as opposed to strong-grade *-nd* in *vend* ‘brother.nom.sg’. He also assumes that the accusative collapsed with the genitive in Mordva. Specifically he postulates that in Mordva an independent process of syncretism may have taken place between accusative and genitive:

both of these cases [accusative and genitive] are now marked with *-n'*, presumably after **m > n* in final position and with analogical spread of the automatically palatalized variant in front-prosodic sequences; the details are not clear, however (Abondolo 1998:19).

In comparison, Künnap (2006) considers that the genitive with the suffix *-n* was the original Mordvin object case. He states that ‘at best there is some evidence that only

¹³ As cited in Künnap (2006:21).

the **n*-genitive is used as a case of the object and the supposition about a onetime Mordvin accusative ending **-m* is not substantially based on anything' (Künnap 2006:19, 24). It appears then that Mari is the only language in Finno-Ugric which has the accusative marker *-m*. Yet again, Künnap concludes that the origin of the accusative suffix in Mari is likely to have some source other than the common PU suffix **-m*, and considers the Mari accusative *-m* suffix a 'peculiar development' (2006:26-27), because no trace of it can be found in Finnic, Mordvin, or Permic which could be interpreted as having a unique origin. Therefore, Künnap (2006:21) regards it as 'reliable that the genitive with the suffix *-n* has really been one of the earliest Finnic cases of the object'.

To conclude, the only case markers which can be found in *all* of the Uralic languages at the same time, and are thus pertinent to the comparison and reconstruction, are the local cases (locative, ablative, lative), as observed by Marcantonio (2002:205). What emerges very clearly from the above is that diachronic data about the accusative in Finnic is extremely scarce and no strong argument for a distinct accusative case can be based on it.

3.3 Arguments for the accusative case in Estonian (Hiietam 2004)

Although the advocates of the accusative hypothesis tend to rely on historical data for evidence in support of the hypothesis (see, e.g., Ackerman & Moore (2001) and Hiietam (2004) mentioned in section 3.2.1 above), the previous section has shown that the historical evidence for the accusative case in Estonian is rather insufficient and open to debate. To my knowledge, Hiietam (2003) and Hiietam (2004) are the only sources which provide arguments for the accusative case in Estonian from the *synchronic* perspective. In this section, I present and discuss the reasons for accusative as identified by Hiietam (2004) and introduced in section 3.2.1 above, but I will go on to argue that these motivations are less compelling than they may seem at first glance. In brief, Hiietam (2003, 2004) compares the 'syntactic behaviour of the object case' (which is genitive in the singular and nominative in the plural) with

‘genuine’ genitive and ‘genuine’ nominative, as explained in more detail in the subsequent sections.

3.3.1 The genitive which marks the direct object is not a true genitive

According to Hiietam (2004),

The genitive case which marks the object in singular is ‘not a true genitive, but a form which happens to coincide with the morphological genitive’. If it ‘really were a true genitive it would carry the same case marking in the plural’ (Hiietam 2004:6).

This is the first argument which Hiietam (2004) presents in support of the existence of the accusative case in Estonian: if the case form of the direct object NP in (2) above (repeated as (5) below) were a genuine genitive, it would be the same in the plural, as in (6). Yet the genitive plural form in (6) is ungrammatical, and the direct object occurs in a case which is identical to nominative instead, as in (7). According to Hiietam, the genitive plural can be used only in the attributive function, as in (8).

- (5) Kass sõi hiire (ära).
cat.NOM.SG eat.PAST.3SG mouse.GEN.SG (up)
‘The cat ate the mouse (up).’
- (6) *Kass sõi hiirte (ära).
cat.NOM.SG eat.PAST.3SG mouse.GEN.PL (up)
the intended meaning: ‘The cat ate the mice (up)’
- (7) Kass sõi hiired (ära).
cat.NOM.SG eat.PAST.3SG mouse.NOM.PL (up)
‘The cat ate the mouse/the mice (up).’
- (8) Kass sõi hiirte juustu (ära).
cat.NOM.SG eat.PAST.3SG mouse.GEN.PL cheese.GEN.SG (up)
‘The cat ate the cheese of the mice (up).’

Hiietam adds that if the case form on the singular object in (5) were genitive, then numeral modifiers in an object NP should occur in the genitive as well. Yet, they do not receive genitive marking as in the case of the genuine genitive in (9), but occur in

an identical case to nominative, as in (10). (Note that with numerals from ‘two’ onwards the modified noun is marked by partitive singular.)

(9) Kass kraapis kahe tooli jalad ära.
 cat.NOM.SG scratch.PAST.3SG two.GEN.SG chair.GEN.SG leg.NOM.SG off.
 ‘The cat scratched the legs of two chairs.’

(10) Kass sõi kaks /*kahe hiirt eile.
 cat.NOM.SG eat.PAST.3SG two.NOM.SG/ GEN.SG mouse.PART.SG yesterday
 ‘The cat ate two mice yesterday.’

However, there are several difficulties with this proposal. Firstly, it is worth pointing out that the genitive marks a dependency relation phrase-internally (i.e. attributive-possessive function in (9) above), while the numeral in (10) functions as a modifier in an NP which occurs as the object argument. That is, the genitive case is being compared here in two different functions, and hence does not count as a valid argument. The same objection applies to (6) and (7) above. In essence, Hiietam’s argument assumes identity between the case and the function it marks. This is why the genitive that occurs on the object is expected to behave similarly to the genitive that marks attributive-possession function. The latter seems to be regarded as the genuine genitive.

Further, although the ‘true’ genitive is said to be the case form which marks the attributive-possessive function, it has to be emphasised that both in Estonian and cross-linguistically, genitive case is used in functions other than the possessive. For instance, in Estonian the genitive marks quantity adverbials (as discussed in section 2.5 above; example repeated here in (11)), as well as complements of postpositions (12).

(11) Ootasin tunnikese ja tulin siis koju
 wait.PAST.1SG hour.DIM.GEN. and come.PAST.1SG then home.INESS.SG
 ‘I waited for an hour and then came home’

(12) laua all
 table.GEN.SG under
 ‘under the table’

Additionally, the genitive marks the semantic role of agent in the attributive function of nominalisations (13). The modifiers of nouns in cases such as translative, essive, abessive (14) and comitative also occur in genitive, instead of agreeing phrase internally as the other semantic cases do. Also, genitive is the case used with coordinated nouns in the aforementioned instances, as shown in (15). It is not obvious which of these uses of genitive counts as ‘true’ genitive.

- (13) *Rottide* *puretud* *beebi* *läheb* *lastekodusse*.¹⁴
 rat.GEN.PL attack.PAST.PTC baby.NOM.SG go.PRES.3SG orphanage.INESS.SG
 ‘The baby attacked by rats is taken to the orphanage.’
- (14) *Korvitäie* *õunteta* *Mari* *juba* *külla ei tule*.
 basketful.GEN.SG apple.ABESS.PL M.NOM already visit NEG come
 ‘Mary would never come and visit without a basketful of apples.’
- (15) *Jüri* *arutas* *seda* *küsimust* *sõprade* *ja*
 J.NOM discuss.PAST.3SG this.PRTV.SG question.PRTV.SG friend.GEN.PL and
töökaaslastega.
 colleague.COMIT.PL
 ‘John discussed this issue with his friends and colleagues.’

Cross-linguistically, the genitive case marks the complement of a few verbs in Latin, e.g. *oblīvīscī* ‘to forget’ and *miserērī* ‘to pity’ (Blake 2001:149). In Old English, the genitive occurred with objects of verbs such as *helpan*, which typically had an object in the dative but occasionally in the genitive, as in *þonne þū hulpe mīn* ‘when you helped me’, where *mīn* is a pronoun in the genitive form (Barber 1993:118). In Scottish Gaelic the genitive case occurs with object complements, as explained in Ramchand (1997). In Slavic (Polish, Russian) and Baltic languages, the genitive case marks the object in affirmative sentences when the object denotes indefinite quantity, i.e. partitive function and with negated verbs (for more detail, see Moravcsik 1978, or section 2.4 above). Thus, neither in Estonian nor in other languages is the genitive case exclusively adnominal.

As mentioned above, Hiietam appears to identify case with the function it encodes, hence the accusative is proposed for a single syntactic function, i.e. the total object (or ‘definite’ object, according to Hiietam). Yet generally the accusative case in typical Indo-European accusative languages (e.g. Greek, German) is not limited to the direct

¹⁴ <http://www.postimees.ee/120307/esileht/siseuudised/248847.php>

object function, but also marks “secondary” functions such as (a) indicating direction after verbs of movement, (b) temporal extension, i.e. denoting a stretch of time, (c) spatial extension, i.e. denoting a spatial measure (see, e.g., Kuryłowicz 1964:181). This shows that the functions which are marked by genitive in Estonian are marked by accusative in other languages. Also, core cases are not normally proposed unless it is definite that the case also marks some “secondary” or semantic function (otherwise one ends up with a distinct case for each possible function). This, in turn, would undermine the role of case.

Secondly, from the perspective of morphological case, the argument that the genitive in the direct object function cannot be genuine simply because a different case form is used in the plural, does not come across as convincing. Among those Indo-European languages which do have accusative, it is not uncommon for plural to be encoded differently from singular, and often in the form which is syncretic with nominative (see, e.g., Carstairs 1984). For instance, in Latin it is the nominative plural which is postulated to be syncretic with accusative plural in all the declensional classes (i.e. 3rd, 4th and 5th) apart from ā-stem feminine nouns and o-stem masculine nouns (see Table 7 in section 3.3.2). Thus a syntactic argument may be marked differently in the singular and plural paradigm (cf. Chapter 6).

Thirdly, the case marking of personal pronouns is problematic if the genitive on the object is taken to be accusative. Specifically, the first person and second person plural pronouns are always marked by the partitive case and never occur in the genitive (i.e. the proposed accusative) in the total object function (16b), unlike third person pronouns or common/proper nouns (16a). In the singular, the first and second person pronouns may optionally occur in the partitive instead of genitive, as in (16c). This means that first and second person pronouns do not show the distinction between total and partial objects (EKG II 1993:53), or as Rätsep (1979:25) puts it, the partitive has taken over some of the functions of accusative. Therefore, the claim that the accusative is an independent case which should be included in the paradigm is undermined.

- (16) a. Nad jätsid Peetri / *Peetrit maha.
 they.NOM. leave.PAST.3PL P.GEN / PRTV behind
 ‘They left Peter behind.’
- b. Vanemad jätsid meid/teid / *meie/teie koju.
 parent.NOM.PL leave.PAST.3PL 1PL./2PL.PRTV / 1PL./2PL.GEN home.ILLAT.SG
 ‘The parents left us/you home’
- c. Nad jätsid mind = minu / sind = sinu maha.
 they.NOM. leave.PAST3PL. 1SG.PRTV = GEN / 2SG.PRTV = GEN behind
 ‘They left me/you behind.’

3.3.2 Nominative which marks the direct object is not a true nominative

The second argument proposed by Hiietam (2004) is as follows:

Nominative which occurs on the object in the plural is not a true nominative, because when the argument in the object function is in the singular, it receives a different case marking than nominative (Hiietam 2004:7-8).

Another argument in favour of a separate case on the ‘total’ object concerns the nominative, and is based on the same singular vs. plural test as described in the previous section. Hiietam (2004:7-8) argues that the nominative which occurs with postverbal arguments (objects) is not a genuine nominative, unlike the one which occurs on the preverbal argument (the subject). That is, the object argument in plural occurs in nominative, as in (7) above, but receives genitive marking when it is in the singular, as in (5) above. If it were a ‘genuine’ nominative case, it is argued, its morphological marking would not change because of number, as is the case with the nominative in the subject function (17).

- (17) a. Kass söi hiire (ära).
 cat.NOM.SG eat.PAST.3SG mouse.GEN.SG (up)
 ‘The cat ate the mouse (up).’
- b. Kassid söid hiire (ära).
 cat.NOM.PL eat.PAST.3PL mouse.GEN.SG (up)
 ‘The cats ate the mouse (up).’

However, more than one challenge can be brought to bear on this argument too. In principle, example (17) and examples in (5)-(7) in the previous section could be taken as evidence for the accusative case in Estonian. However, this evidence would be based only on syntactic case or argument realisation, in the case of which it is assumed that if two different morphological cases realise the same argument, there must be a (syntactic) case whose realisations they are. Hiietam's singular vs. plural test seems to be motivated by the very same assumption. Also, the examples given above are actually part of a paradigm argument and do not demonstrate that there is a distinct function which could be called accusative. More specifically, in order to prove a slot in a case paradigm, and hence argue for syncretism, there should be at least one item which is morphologically distinctive either in a given context or generally; otherwise the lack of formal differentiation is most likely to be taken as irrelevant from the syntactic point of view (see, e.g., Baerman et al. 2005, Carstairs 1983). For example, in Latin (see Table 7) and in some other Indo-European languages, the neuter nouns (e.g. Latin *bellum*) do not show any inflectional marking in the direct object function, and appear identical to the form in nominative. What allows us to interpret this uninflectedness as syntactically relevant, i.e., as syncretism or homonymy, is that *in the same function* masculine and feminine nouns do have distinct case forms for the accusative.

Table 7. Latin case paradigms (Blake 2001:4)

	1	2		3a	3b	4	5
	ā-stems feminine <i>domina</i> 'mistress'	o-stems masculine <i>dominus</i> 'master'	Neuter <i>bellum</i> 'war'	cons.stems <i>cōnsul</i> 'consul'	i-stems <i>cīvis</i> 'citizen'	u-stems <i>manus</i> 'hand'	ē-stems <i>diēs</i> 'day'
Singular							
Nominative	<i>domina</i>	<i>dominus</i>	<i>bellum</i>	<i>cōnsul</i>	<i>cīvis</i>	<i>manus</i>	<i>diēs</i>
Vocative	<i>domina</i>	<i>domine</i>	<i>bellum</i>	<i>cōnsul</i>	<i>cīvis</i>	<i>manus</i>	<i>diēs</i>
Accusative	<i>dominam</i>	<i>dominum</i>	<i>bellum</i>	<i>cōnsulem</i>	<i>cīvem</i>	<i>manum</i>	<i>diēm</i>
Genitive	<i>dominae</i>	<i>dominī</i>	<i>bellī</i>	<i>cōnsulis</i>	<i>cīvis</i>	<i>manūs</i>	<i>diēi</i>
Dative	<i>dominae</i>	<i>dominō</i>	<i>bellō</i>	<i>cōnsulī</i>	<i>cīvī</i>	<i>manuī</i>	<i>diēi</i>
Ablative	<i>dominā</i>	<i>dominō</i>	<i>bellō</i>	<i>cōnsule</i>	<i>cīvī, cīve</i>	<i>manū</i>	<i>diē</i>
Plural							
Nominative	<i>dominae</i>	<i>dominī</i>	<i>bella</i>	<i>cōnsulēs</i>	<i>cīves</i>	<i>manūs</i>	<i>diēs</i>
Vocative	<i>dominae</i>	<i>dominī</i>	<i>bella</i>	<i>cōnsulēs</i>	<i>cīves</i>	<i>manūs</i>	<i>diēs</i>
Accusative	<i>dominās</i>	<i>dominōs</i>	<i>bella</i>	<i>cōnsulēs</i>	<i>cīvīs, cīves</i>	<i>manūs</i>	<i>diēs</i>
Genitive	<i>dominārum</i>	<i>dominōrum</i>	<i>bellōrum</i>	<i>cōnsulum</i>	<i>cīvium</i>	<i>manuum</i>	<i>diērum</i>
Dative	<i>dominīs</i>	<i>dominīs</i>	<i>bellīs</i>	<i>cōnsulibus</i>	<i>cīvibus</i>	<i>manibus</i>	<i>diēbus</i>
Ablative	<i>dominīs</i>	<i>dominīs</i>	<i>bellīs</i>	<i>cōnsulibus</i>	<i>cīvibus</i>	<i>manibus</i>	<i>diēbus</i>

Likewise, the plural forms of dative and ablative across the whole paradigm are identical in Latin, and hence the distinction between these two cases in the plural could be interpreted as not relevant at all from the syntactic perspective, since morphology does not make any overt distinction. However, as Table 7 shows, in singular the distinction between the dative and ablative functions is encoded by separate forms on all declensional classes apart from the second: ā-stem feminine nouns (*domina*), consonant stems (*cōnsul*), i-stems (*cīvis*), u-stems (*manus*), and ē-stems (*diēs*) all have different forms in dative and ablative. Another reason why this systematic homonymy between dative and ablative plural is considered genuine as opposed to apparent is that when either dative or ablative singular nouns are conjoined the resulting noun phrase is syntactically plural; hence any modifying participial phrase is expected to agree with it both in number and case according to the pattern with other cases in Latin (Carstairs 1987:93ff). That is, it is more plausible to assume syncretism between dative and ablative plural in Latin than to consider the lack of overt morphological distinction as syntactically irrelevant. In general then, there is no reason to postulate a case for each function.

Secondly, in Estonian the first and second person pronouns never occur in the nominative form in the object function, unlike common nouns and the third person pronouns, but are instead marked by the partitive case (see also example (16) in the previous section). Again, this undermines Hiietam's second argument for the accusative case, because it would not extend to the majority of personal pronouns and reflexives in contexts where the argument is clearly an object and is expected to occur in accusative, as in an imperative clause (18) (repeated from (23) in Chapter 2). The common noun (18a) and third person pronoun (18b) occur in the nominative on the object with imperative verbs, whereas the first and second person pronouns (18c) are obligatorily partitive.

- (18) a. Võta lapsed kaasa.
 take.IMV.SG children.NOM along
 'Take the children along.'
- b. Võta ta/nad kaasa.
 take.IMV.SG 3SG/PL.NOM along
 'Take her/him along.'
- c. Võta mind/meid / *mina/meie kaasa.
 take.IMV.SG 1SG/PL.PRTV 1SG/PL.NOM. along
 'Take me/us along.'

As explained in section 2.4.1 above, the personal pronouns generally refer to the most salient participants in the discourse and are thus highly individuated and definite. Accordingly, they have to be encoded differently from the typical subject function when they occur in the object function, and in terms of the Transitivity Hypothesis which Hiietam uses (see section 2.2.1 above) they should be marked by the accusative case and not partitive (which she associates with indefiniteness). As Blake observes, '[p]ersonal pronouns are definite and mostly animate and typically share any marking for animate and/or specific patients. In some languages only pronouns bear accusative marking' (2001:120), and Finnish is an obvious example of this. In Finnish, only personal pronouns have a distinct accusative marking both in the singular and plural, while common nouns are homonymous with either the nominative or genitive, depending on the syntactic environment. Thus Finnish demonstrates that if a certain noun class in a language is marked by an independent case, that class is likely to be the pronouns. This, however, is in contradiction with Hiietam's argument.

Thirdly, nominative case is not restricted to the total subject and total object function in Estonian, as the claim made by Hiietam seems to imply. Nominative is the most frequent form with quantity adverbials (Metslang 2005), as in (19); but it also occurs with apposition (20); with the subject complement (21); with vocative (22) among other functions (see also section 6.1). Again, as with the genitive case, it is not particularly straightforward to identify which of these functions reflects the ‘true’ nominative form and which not.

- (19) Ta viibis Londonis kolm nädalat.
 s/he.NOM. stay.PAST.3SG L.INESS.SG three.NOM.SG week.PART.SG
 ‘S/he stayed in London for three weeks.’
- (20) Kirjutage avaldus doktor Jürgensonile.
 write.IMP.PL application.NOM.SG doctor.NOM.SG J.ALLAT.SG
 ‘(Please) write an application to doctor Jürgenson.’
- (21) Ilm on vihmane.
 weather.NOM.SG be.PRES.3SG rainy.NOM.SG
 ‘The weather is rainy.’
- (22) Ka sina, Brutus!
 also 2SG.NOM. Brutus.NOM.
 ‘You too, Brutus!’

3.3.3 Agreement

According to Hiietam (2004),

The verb agrees with its nominative-subject but not with its nominative-object, therefore the nominative on plural objects cannot be a true nominative (Hiietam 2004:7).

Hiietam (2004) also uses agreement as an argument for a separate case for the total object. Specifically, the verb is said to agree only with the nominative NP that occurs as the subject (23a, b), and not with the nominative NP which occurs as the object (23c), hence the agreement picks out the subject-nominative as the ‘true’ nominative, while indicating that the object-nominative must be some other case.

- (23) a. Kass sõi hiired (ära).
 cat.NOM.SG eat.PAST.3SG mouse.NOM.PL (up)
 ‘The cat ate the mice (up).’
- b. Kassid sõid hiired (ära).
 cat.NOM.PL eat.PAST.3PL mouse.NOM.PL (up)
 ‘The cats ate (the) mice (up).’
- c. * Kass sõid hiired (ära).
 cat.NOM.SG eat.PAST.3PL mouse.NOM.PL (up)
 ‘The cats ate the mice (up).’

Traditionally agreement is considered a property associated with the grammatical subject by Estonian linguists, and it is the S/A function which normally triggers agreement with the finite verb in Estonian. Yet agreement is not a reliable test to use with Estonian data. For instance, the question which immediately arises is whether the arguments in existential sentences are subjects or objects, and ultimately, whether they are marked by the true nominative or some other case. The fact is that nominative arguments in existential sentences agree with the verb in person and number, but they are ascribed some object properties. That is, one of the tests which is used for identifying object arguments in Finnic is the negation test (Holmberg & Nikanne 2002, Hiietam 2003). According to this test, if an argument occurs in the non-partitive case and becomes partitive under the scope of negation, it is an object. However, if it retains the original non-partitive case marking, it is a subject. Nominative arguments in existential constructions receive partitive marking when in the scope of negation, as demonstrated in (24), therefore they should be objects. Yet, as mentioned above, they agree with the verb in number and person. It is therefore not obvious whether these arguments occur in the ‘genuine’ nominative form or not.

- (24) a. Seal olite teie.
 there be.2PL 2PL.NOM
 ‘It was you who were there’
- b. Seal ei olnud teid.
 there NEG be.PTC. 2PL.PRTV.
 ‘You were not there.’

Nominative arguments in periphrastic impersonal constructions also behave as counterexamples to the claim that agreement distinguishes the ‘true’ nominative (i.e. the subject-nominative) from the case which is only identical to nominative (i.e. the object-nominative). For instance, the paradigm of impersonals in Table 8 shows that the status of the nominative arguments of impersonal verbs in the compound tense is rather vague. Traditionally they are analysed as objects, and this analysis is supported by the partitive marking on the personal pronouns which occur in the same function (see also section 4.2.1 below). However, in the past perfective tense the argument may optionally agree with the verb in the affirmative (due to the analogy with predicative constructions), thus showing the subject properties.

Table 8. Inflectional paradigm of impersonal: ‘total’ object

	Affirmative	Negation
Present	<i>raamatud loetakse läbi</i> book.NOM.PL read.IMP.PRS through	<i>Raamatuid ei loeta läbi</i> book.PRTV.PL NEG read.IMP.PRS through
Past	<i>raamatud loeti läbi</i> book.NOM.PL read.IMP.PST through	<i>Raamatuid ei loetud läbi</i> book.PRTV.PL NEG read.IMP.PST through
Prs.Perf.	<i>raamatud on läbi loetud</i> books.NOM.PL be.PRS.3 read.PTC through	(i) (?) <i>Raamatuid ei ole läbi loetud</i> book.PRTV.PL NEG be.PRS.3 read.PTC through (ii) <i>Raamatud ei ole läbi loetud</i> book.NOM.PL NEG be.PRS.3 read.PTC through
Pst.Perf.	<i>raamatud oli(d) läbi loetud</i> book.NOM.PL be.PST.3(PL) read.PTC through	(i) (?) <i>Raamatuid ei olnud läbi loetud</i> book.PRTV.PL NEG be.PST.3 read.PTC through (ii) <i>Raamatud ei olnud läbi loetud.</i> book.NOM.PL NEG be.PST.3 read.PTC through

The negation test also yields contradictory results with nominative arguments in impersonal constructions: some native speakers who were consulted on the forms shown in Table 8 reject the versions under (i) in the table as not being acceptable constructions in Estonian. This might be interpreted as evidence for the subject properties of the object argument in impersonal construction, but it is more likely that these are unacceptable because of discourse factors (see, e.g. section 6.1.2). Yet the conclusion is that some nominative arguments in impersonal constructions also show

subject properties (e.g. agreement and retaining the case marking with negated verbs). Hence, as mentioned above, agreement does not provide a reliable means for distinguishing between the ‘genuine’ nominative form and a form such as the accusative which only looks identical to the nominative.

3.3.4 Definite objects have always had a distinct case marking in Estonian

The final argument presented by Hiietam (2004) is as follows.

‘Definite objects have always had a distinct case marking in Estonian’: ‘it is not a matter of historical development, where a category disappears from a language through bleaching or enters a language’ (Hiietam 2004:9).

The main challenge which can be brought to bear on this argument is that when arguing for the accusative case in Estonian, the issue of definiteness is irrelevant. Definiteness (i.e., previously known from the discourse, identifiability, familiarity, uniqueness) does not provide any evidence for the syntactic accusative or a separate case which could be identified as accusative. It is true that cross-linguistically the accusative case tends to be associated with interpretations such as definiteness and specificity, but it does not necessarily follow that these objects which are understood as definite in Estonian are marked by the accusative. Yet there is a tendency to associate the alternation between genitive/nominative and partitive cases with definiteness marking in addition to aspect marking (see, e.g., Hiietam & Börjars 2003, Hiietam 2004, Rajandi & Metslang 1979). It is argued here, however, that the definiteness reading of the object argument seems to arise due to prosodic and positional effects in a clause, rather than being encoded by the total (or ‘definite’) object which then receives the relevant case marking. This is discussed in more detail in Chapter 6, but here it is worth pointing out that in Estonian, definiteness is not a grammatical category which is expressed by a dedicated case marker (e.g. accusative), but is rather a pragmatic and discourse concept. Thus even the partitive case, which Hiietam (2003) associates with indefiniteness and atelicity, can mark an object which has a definite reference, while the verb denotes a telic event, as in (25).

- (25) Jorge külastas oma nooremat õde.
J.NOM visit.PRES.3SG his younger.PRTV.SG sister.PRTV.SG
'Jorge visited his younger sister.'

Finally, the very fact that the alternation between the genitive/nominative and partitive objects may give rise to definiteness-indefiniteness in some contexts but to the aspectual readings (e.g. completed vs. uncompleted event) in some other (or they may show no semantic contrast at all, as in examples (23) and (24) in section 2.3.1 above), indicates that the total object does not express definiteness directly. Hence there is no concept such as the 'definite' object in Estonian, which could be associated with a distinct case marking.

3.4 Conclusion

In this chapter, I have demonstrated that the evidence for the accusative case as a real, independent case, which should be included in the paradigm of Estonian grammatical cases, is illusory. The data does not support the existence of a separate case which can be identified as accusative. One can argue for the syntactic accusative, but this would be only syntactically motivated and, in essence, means arguing for an abstract property that is not shown or supported by the "surface" morphology. That is, one has to choose whether to take the data at face value or postulate a case which is not reflected in the morphology. Hence the question, what is there to be gained if the accusative case is postulated? Answers to this question are sought in the next chapter.

4 What is gained by positing accusative case in Estonian?

I have shown in Chapter 3 that on the basis of the available diachronic evidence one cannot argue for a distinct accusative case in Estonian. I also presented Hiietam's claims for the accusative and demonstrated that from a morphological perspective they are not well founded. The only reason for arguing for the accusative case in Estonian is syntactic: one can construe some syntactic evidence for the accusative, providing at least a theoretical motive for postulating the (abstract) accusative. Yet, as will be shown in this chapter, positing a syntactic (or abstract) accusative in Estonian brings no advantages. First I will discuss the distribution and productivity of the accusative and then proceed to the question of the nominative which turns out to be rather problematic if an extra case, i.e. accusative, is posited.

More generally, this chapter focuses on syntactic accounts of case in Finnic and presents evidence against earlier proposals regarding Finnic case. It also serves to demonstrate that syntactic accounts of semantically driven alternations of Finnic cases fail to explain much of the Estonian data and thus this chapter sets the background for an alternative approach which is suggested in the following chapters, Chapter 5 and Chapter 6.

4.1 Where would the proposed accusative appear?

As discussed in the previous chapter, Hiietam (2003, 2004) argues for an extra case in the Estonian case system, i.e. accusative, which means that one more slot should be added to the paradigm of morphological cases. The proposed paradigm was given in Table 5 in section 3.1; here a slightly different version is provided in Table 9 below, which focuses on the morphological expression of the proposed syntactic accusative.

Table 9. Morphological forms of the proposed accusative

	SG	PL
NOMINATIVE	nominative	nominative
ACCUSATIVE	<i>genitive/nominative</i> ¹⁵ / <i>partitive</i> ¹⁶	<i>nominative</i>
GENITIVE	genitive	genitive
PARTITIVE	partitive	partitive

As discussed in section 3.3.1 above, the functions of accusative as a paradigmatic case normally range from apparently “purely” grammatical or structural functions (such as the direct object of a transitive verb, internal object (cognate object), or the subject of subordinate infinitive) through to apparently “purely” semantic concepts, such as indicating the extent (in space), the duration (of time), or place (as a goal) of an event. This section focuses on how well the proposed accusative meets the criteria of the accusative as a member of the paradigm. In order to do this, I will first consider the productivity and distribution of the proposed accusative, relying on Tauli’s (1968) study.

Tauli (1968) carried out a quantitative study of objects in Estonian literary texts which provides an insight into the occurrence of the proposed accusative case. Although he does not use the specific term ‘accusative’, employing instead a semantic notion of ‘total’ object, exactly the same function is referred to as the accusative in the proposals of Hiietam (2003), i.e. ‘total’ object in transitive clauses, which occurs in the genitive with singular objects and in the nominative with plural objects. Tauli found that in the observed texts, where the entire number of objects identified was 2252, the number of ‘total’ objects was less than one third of the whole, i.e. 644. Tauli notes that some verbs have a tendency to occur with a partitive object; for some other verbs this is not just a tendency, but the only grammatical option. On the basis of these data, he concludes that in Estonian the object normally occurs in the partitive and only in certain cases is the ‘total’ object used. According to him, the ‘total’ object (or ‘accusative’) occurs if (and only if) the following two conditions are met at the same time:

¹⁵ Hiietam (p.c.) claims that no object is marked by nominative case in her theory, as the objects in impersonals which have nominative case marking pass behavioural tests for subjecthood; hence they are marked by the ‘subject’ case, i.e. nominative. Yet, it is difficult to see the object in imperatives such as *Eat the sandwich up!* behaving as a subject (see section 4.2 for more detail).

¹⁶ Theoretical approaches which assume structural Case may analyse partitive as one of the cases which realises abstract/structural Accusative, e.g. Kiparsky (2001).

- (1) (i) the sentence expresses resultativity (result or goal)
(ii) the object NP refers to the whole of the denoted entity (Tauli 1968:216).

In the same study, Tauli divides Estonian verbs into three different groups according to the verb's ability to express resultativity:

- A. Verbs which can express resultativity without adverbial modifiers, e.g. *tegema* 'to do', *viima* 'to take/bring', *rikkuma* 'to spoil, blemish, infringe', etc. He notes that both types of objects ('total' and 'partial') may occur with these verbs.
- B. Verbs which normally do not express resultativity, i.e. irresultative verbs. For instance, *abistama* 'to assist, help', *armastama* 'to love', *puudutama* 'to touch', *solvama* 'to offend', etc. As Tauli observes, these verbs may gain resultative meaning only exceptionally in a very specific context and together with an adverbial, as in (2) (data from Tauli 1968:217); otherwise their object is always 'partial' and marked by partitive.

- (2) a. abista-s ta rikka-ks
help-past.3sg s/he.gen.sg rich-transl.sg
'(S/he) helped her/him to become rich'
- b. *abista-s ta
help-past.3sg s/he.gen.sg
- c. abista-s teda
help-past.3sg s/he.prtv.sg

- C. Verbs which are irresultative, but may often express resultativity when occurring together with an adverbial, e.g. *kiitma* 'to praise', *lugema* 'to read', *nägema* 'to see', *lükka* 'to push', etc. The object of these verbs, as Tauli points out, may be 'total', but only together with an adverbial, as in (3). The 'partial' object may also occur in the same syntactic environment, but only if either no resultativity or totality is expressed, as in (4) (examples from Tauli 1968:218). Furthermore, some constructions of the verb plus adverbial are always irresultative and the object has to be partitive in these, e.g. *silmas pidama* 'to have in mind' (lit. 'to consider in the eye'), *pealt vaatama* 'to

watch' (lit. 'to look from above') (Tauli 1968:218). The latter are actually complex verbs, or full lexical units with idiosyncratic meaning.

- (3) a. Ta lükka-s õhukese triibulise tekikese pealt ...
 s/he push-past.3sg thin.gen.sg striped.gen.sg blanket.dim.gen.sg. on.ablat.
 'S/he pushed the thin little striped blanket off her/him...'
- b. *Ta lükkas õhukese triibulise tekikese
 s/he push-past.3sg thin.gen.sg striped.gen.sg blanket.dim.gen.sg.
- (4) ... lõi põlvede-lt ja kleidiserva-lt lahtist
 slap.past.3sg knee-adess.pl and dresstail-adess.sg loose.prtv
 mulda maha ...
 soil.part down
 '(she) slapped off some soil from her knees and the tail of her dress'

In all the cases when the 'total' object was used, it was the verb plus adverbial combination which dominated, including type A verbs. While the entire number of 'total' objects was 644, of these 61.4% (395) appeared in constructions where resultativity was expressed together with an adverbial. The number of those 'total' objects which occurred with type C verbs was 65 (10.1%) (Tauli 1968:218). Overall, this study demonstrates that the 'total' object in transitive clauses (or accusative) has a very limited distribution and that it is dependent on the lexical properties of the verb.

Predicting the occurrence of the 'accusative' is therefore rather complicated: its appearance can only be explained on semantic grounds,¹⁷ and not on the basis of its syntactic behaviour. Syntactically, the accusative would be identical to the partitive case in contexts where it is allowed; hence the entirely *semantic* conditions in (1) above which attempt to account for the distribution of the 'total' object in transitive clauses. It is possible to provide a generalisation in terms of syntax, namely that the accusative occurs in constructions where the resultativity of the verb is expressed overtly by an adverbial (cf. Kiparsky 2001), but this would yield wrong results in instances such as (4), which has an overt result adverbial but a partitive marked object. In fact, both 'total' and 'partitive' objects can be used freely in (4). Also, although with type A verbs the accusative would occur more frequently together with

¹⁷ This explains the use of the semantic notion 'total' object as opposed to the 'partial/partitive' object by Estonian linguists.

an adverbial, there are still occurrences of ‘accusative’ when no overt resultative marker (i.e. adverbial) is present, as in (5a). In (5), there is no adverbial expressing result or goal, therefore the resultativity of the verb appears to be determined solely by condition (1ii): the verb may select an object either in the ‘accusative’, as in (5a) which is understood as perfective or telic; or in the partitive, as in (5b), which is usually understood as imperfective or atelic. Altogether, in order to predict the occurrence of accusative in affirmative clauses, one has to rely entirely on semantic conditions.

- (5) a. Mari kirjutas luuletuse.
 M.nom. write.past.3sg poem.gen.sg
 ‘Mary wrote a poem.’
- b. Mari kirjutas luuletust.
 M.nom write.past.3sg poem.prtv.sg
 ‘Mary was writing a poem.’

There is another challenge to be met if the accusative is proposed: any such analysis has to be able to provide an explanation for why some quantity adverbials in Estonian exhibit the same case marking pattern as objects do (these adverbials were described in more detail in section 2.5 above). The problem is that the genitive singular and nominative plural on adverbials are identical to the proposed accusative (i.e. genitive and nominative), and although one might argue that these quantity adverbials are objects (or complements), it was shown in section 2.5 above that they are actually adjuncts. Thus the same cases which mark the core arguments also appear on adjuncts, and any analysis that proposes an accusative case in Estonian must be able to capture the similar case marking patterns both on objects and adverbials.

As was discussed in 3.2.1 in the previous chapter, the accusative which Hiietam (2003) proposes is an independent case which is identical in form either to the genitive or nominative, depending on the syntactic environment. In other words, she proposes full syncretism and construes the accusative on a par with morphological case. As we have seen (section 2.2.1 above), her analysis of the grammatical cases in Estonian is based within the Transitivity Hypothesis, and the way that she accounts for the distribution of the accusative is essentially the same as in Tauli (1968), with different terminology: the verb has to be telic and the object NP has to be definite (or

limited). This account, however, leaves unclear how telicity is related to the accusative. Another question is what determines telicity in instances such as (5) above. That is, if accusative is taken as a property of the whole predicate, so that two semantic conditions have to be met at the same time in order to receive accusative marking, it is not clear when it is the aspectual properties of the verb which determine the case selection, and when it is the properties of the object itself.

In contrast to Tauli's (1968) observation that 'partial' objects (marked by the partitive) are far more frequent, and that the 'total' object (or accusative) is used only in certain contexts, Hiietam (2003:248) considers the 'accusative objects as the prototypical ones' within the Transitivity Hypothesis analysis. Specifically, in her account the typical object is definite, 'the object of a telic action and totally affected' (2003:231), and since these are generally regarded as the properties of highly transitive constructions, she takes accusative as the marker of a 'typical' object. The partitive case, however, has the function of indicating 'primarily the atelicity of the clause and secondarily the indefiniteness of the object noun phrase' (Hiietam 2003:248). (The status of the partitive case in her analysis is discussed later in section 4.3 of this chapter.) It is clear that Hiietam's account of the accusative cannot be generalized to adverbial marking. The occurrence of the accusative in her theory is associated with high transitivity, i.e. with telicity of the verb, affectedness of the object, and high individuation. There is nothing in the concept of accusative in her theory which would predict that the same case can occur on adverbials.¹⁸ In fact, Hiietam analyses the nominative in measure phrases as a separate case, i.e. nominative (p.c.), which shows that the concept of the accusative that she proposes is postulated for one syntactic function only, i.e., the direct object which occurs in highly transitive clauses and refers either to a definite or limited entity. She does not provide any explanation for the genitive singular on adverbials, as in (6) and (7) below (examples from EKK 1997:SY48).

¹⁸ In comparison, it has been argued (e.g. by Localist Theories) that the marking of the direct object by the accusative in Greek or Latin is a 'grammaticalised' marking of such semantic concepts as extent of space (distance), extent of time (duration), or even extent of effect.

- (6) Vanaisa jalutab igal õhtul.
 grandpa.NOM.SG walk.PRES.3SG every.ALLAT. evening.ALLAT.SG
mõne kilomeetri.
 some.GEN.SG kilometre.GEN.SG
 ‘Grandfather walks a kilometre (or so) every evening’
- (7) Ootasin tunnikese ja tulin siis koju
 wait.PAST.1SG hour.DIM.GEN. and come.PAST.1SG then home.INESS.SG
 ‘I waited for an hour and then came home’

Thus, the similar case marking pattern on both direct objects and adverbials remains unexplained in her theory. As a result, the theory is empirically not very well grounded: on the one hand, it is postulated that one more case should be recognised and added to the paradigm of Estonian grammatical cases, but on the other hand the proposed accusative is equated with the syntactic function of the ‘total’ object.

While Hiietam’s analysis of the accusative in Estonian is single-level, i.e. morphological cases are taken to mark syntactic functions directly, there are several accounts of the accusative in Finnish which are multi-level, and operate with an extra notion, ‘abstract Case’ (or a structural Case). The latter is the type of case relevant to the Case Filter (Chomsky 1981) and based on Rouveret and Vergnaud (1980); it is required to be present in all nominals in any language, regardless of whether a given language displays this case overtly or not. If overt or morphological marking is present in a language, its only function is to pronounce or realise the abstract Case, which itself is basically a syntactic concept and correlated with grammatical relations (for a detailed discussion of this correlation, see, e.g. Ura 2001). In the rest of this section, the idea of implementing the accusative in Estonian will be pursued in terms of abstract Accusative, in order to evaluate the basis of the *syntactic* accusative and how much is gained by positing it in Estonian. Thus, in what follows the focus will be on multilevel analyses, which are often regarded as more suitable for explaining the distribution of morphological cases in languages which use more than one distinct form to realise a particular structural relationship (such as the direct object in Finnish (e.g. Kiparsky 2001:322)). Note that while in Hiietam’s theory accusative is postulated as an independent, non-autonomous case, which is syncretic with the genitive on singular definite objects and with the nominative on plural definite

objects, accusative as an abstract Case is structural, and realised morphologically by the genitive in the singular and the nominative in the plural.

Kiparsky (2001) proposes a paradigm of Finnish morphological cases which has no accusative on common nouns. The morphological (and morphosyntactic) accusative occurs only with personal pronouns, since they show a distinct case form. The morphological genitive and nominative which occur on the object are treated as a proper morphological case in the sense that they are not analysed in a one-to-one relationship with a syntactic function as Hiietam (2003) does; instead they may realise nominals in both subject and object function, as well as on adverbials. It is worth emphasising that, as discussed in the previous chapter, Hiietam claims that in the object position the genitive singular is not a ‘true’ genitive and the nominative plural is not a ‘true’ nominative, but accusative instead. This results in a situation where Hiietam (2003) proposes an accusative in Estonian which has no distinct form either on common nouns or personal pronouns, while Kiparsky (2001) argues that there is no morphological accusative on common nouns in Finnish, although personal pronouns have a distinct form in the accusative (see Kiparsky 2001:316-322 for an empirical justification).

In Kiparsky’s (2001) model, the distribution of Finnish morphological cases is explained in the framework of Optimality Theoretic Correspondence Theory (McCarthy and Prince 1995). As mentioned above, his approach is multilevel, i.e. he uses the concept of abstract case in addition to morphosyntactic and morphological case. Yet these notions are somewhat confusing in comparison with standard generative theories: the notion ‘abstract Case’ corresponds to grammatical relations in his theory, and it is the morphosyntactic case which is an equivalent to the structural Case as understood in, e.g., Government and Binding (Chomsky 1981). Specifically, Kiparsky uses relational features such as [\pm Highest Role] and [\pm Lowest Role] to define abstract cases (i.e. grammatical relations) and the combination of these two features with two values each yields four abstract cases altogether. Kiparsky names these after Dixon’s mnemonic terms ‘A(agent)’, ‘S(ubject)’, ‘O(bject)’, and ‘D(ative)’, as given in (8) (Kiparsky 2001:326).

(8)	A:	Transitive Subject	[+HR, -LR]
	S:	Intransitive Subject	[+HR, +LR]
	D:	Higher (Indirect) Object	[-HR, -LR]
	O:	Lower (Direct) Object	[-HR, +LR]

The abstract cases (or grammatical relations) in (8) are identified on the basis of the hierarchically organised thematic roles at Semantic Form (the latter are determined according to the two-tiered lexical decomposition, e.g. Bierwisch 1983, 1986, Bierwisch and Schreuder 1992). Note that Kiparsky has four basic abstract cases (grammatical roles), and what is particularly relevant for our purposes is the fact that what is defined in Kiparsky's account as Lower (Direct) Object (or simply O), with the features [-HR, +LR], corresponds to what other theories identify as the structural *accusative*. At the same time, the grammatical relation of Higher (Indirect) object (or D), with the features specification [-HR, -LR], corresponds to the dative function. The two object functions appear to be motivated by the notions of R-object ('resultative object') and I-object ('irresultative object'), which are, in essence, equivalent to the 'total' and 'partial' object in Estonian, respectively. Since the R-object is governed by aspectually bounded predicates, including all resultative (telic) verbs, it is only ever assigned together with an 'extra resultative theta-role', which means that it is assigned only when a 'complex event' is referred to (Kiparsky 2001:340) (cf. Tauli's (1968) statistics above which showed that the total object occurs primarily with adverbials expressing result or goal). Thus the R-object corresponds to the dative function and has the featural specification [-HR, -LR]; while I-object corresponds to the object function, and is specified as [-HR, +LR]. In other words, the Estonian 'total' object or Finnish R-object is related to the dative function, whereas the Estonian 'partial' object or Finnish I-object is matched with the function of the direct object which corresponds to the structural accusative in other theories. Furthermore, these arguments are related to morphosyntactic and morphological structural cases by the same relational features, as given in (9) below (Kiparsky 2001:327). It can also be seen from (9) that the partitive is actually matched to the grammatical relation which is normally correlated with the structural accusative, whereas the dative function is expressed by the accusative (only with personal pronouns).

(9)	-∅	nominative	[]	(the unmarked case)
	-(t)a	partitive	[-HR]	(the unmarked complement case)
	-t	accusative	[-HR, -LR]	(the marked complement case)
	-n	genitive	[+HR]	(the specifier case)

The features in (9) specify that the nominative in Finnish is treated as underspecified case, and is not associated with any of the abstract cases (or grammatical relations), while the partitive is considered to be a general or default complement case, which is why it is related to the grammatical relation of object via the feature [-HR]. (The nominative and partitive case will be discussed in more detail later in this chapter, in sections 4.2 and 4.3 respectively.) The genitive is linked to both transitive and intransitive subjects (A/S) via the feature specification [+HR], which indicates that it is a default ‘specifier’ case,¹⁹ as was originally posited by Vainikka (1993). For instance, Vainikka views the genitive as a proper paradigmatic case which occurs in a variety of constructions and is not restricted to adnominal function only (cf. Hiietam 2003). The morphological accusative has exactly the same feature specification as Kiparsky’s abstract Dative (or R-object), [-HR, -LR], which means that it is treated as a marked case which is exceptionally assigned. It is worth emphasising that the morphological accusative occurs only on pronominal R-objects, whereas common nouns that are R-objects may be case-marked by all the other morphological structural cases, as shown in (10) (Kiparsky 2001:332):

- (10) a. by *partitive* if at least one of the following two conditions holds:
- the R-object is in the scope of sentence negation, or
 - the R-object has a quantitatively indeterminate denotation
- b. by *accusative* if the object NP is a personal pronoun
- c. by *genitive* if the R-object is a singular NP in the domain of a properly licensed subject
- d. by *nominative* if the R-object is a plural NP or not in the domain of a properly licensed subject.

It appears then that the R-object may be realised by *all* morphological structural cases in Finnish. That is, the genitive, accusative, nominative, and partitive may occur on the R-object. Notice that (10) above holds with respect to Estonian, the only exception being (10b), because personal pronouns in Estonian do not differ from the case marking of common nouns (as was explained in section 2.1 above). This shows again

¹⁹ In comparison, Asudeh (2003) offers a feature representation [/+HR] for genitive in Finnish in his unification-based analysis in order to relate it to singular noun R-objects.

that there is no distinct accusative case form in Estonian. As can be seen in (10), the morphological partitive which is usually associated with the I-object in the literature (e.g. Vainikka 1993, Nelson 1995, Kratzer 2002, Asudeh 2003, among others) can actually realise the R-object in Kiparsky's (2001) model. Yet it is treated as a 'quantitative partitive', expressing 'quantitative indeterminateness' of the object NP, as opposed to the 'aspectual partitive' which expresses unboundedness, or irresultativity (for more detail see section 5.1.2 and Kiparsky (1998)). The quantitative partitive is posited to occur in instances such as (4) above, or (11) below (an Estonian equivalent of similar contexts in Finnish), where the verb selects the R-object because of the covert result theta-role (i.e. predicate denotes a complex, telic event), but the object NP refers to an indeterminate quantity. Kiparsky proposes an empty or 'null quantifier', which is similar to overt quantifiers such as *paljon* 'much, many', in order to account for the partitive in these contexts. Thus, the different, non-aspectual meaning of partitive in sentences such as (11) is explained in terms of syntax by hypothesising an empty quantifier phrase on R-object (Kiparsky 2001:343).

- (11) Ma leidsin raha.
 I.nom.sg find.past.1sg money.prtv.
 'I found (some) money.'

Example (11) indicates clearly that in order to provide a detailed descriptive generalization of the distribution of partitive on a structural basis, one has either to claim that partitive realises R-object, as Kiparsky (2001) does, or else one is not able to extend the generalization to sentences such as (11), as is the problem with, for example, Nelson's (1995) model. Specifically, Nelson (1995) associates accusative Case with assignment of an aspectual theta-role, and partitive Case with assignment of a non-aspectual theta-role (θ_{mod}). Both theta-roles are assigned by V at D-structure. Her model, however, wrongly predicts that the object NP in (11) should receive abstract Accusative Case, surfacing as a morphological accusative, because the predicate is telic. In fact, though, the object NP can be partitive, as shown in (11). To put it differently, in this account, the assignment of partitive is associated with a non-aspectual theta-role, i.e. Mod, which is 'assigned by statives and which specifies that no bounded interpretation is possible in an otherwise aspectually underdetermined

predications' (Ramchand 1995:103)²⁰, but the event denoted in (11) is clearly bounded and telic, and should be realised by some other case than partitive, i.e. accusative. Yet, as shown in (11), partitive is possible in contexts that are interpreted as bounded.

It is apparent then that it is no easy task to associate the morphological expression of structural cases in Finnic in such a way that the morphology would reflect the structural or abstract case. As mentioned above, Kiparsky (2001) takes partitive to express the grammatical relation (his abstract case) which is treated as structural accusative in other theories. Also, the R-object, which is usually opposed to partitive (and the I-object), can be realised by the partitive case. That is, if one distinguishes syntactic accusative, this distinction will not be recoverable on the surface morphology, as effectively illustrated in Table 9 above. This may be taken as another motive for why it is unsatisfactory to operate with the notion of Accusative in Finnish,²¹ and even more so in Estonian. It simply proves too difficult to treat structure separately from semantics. The function of the postulated (syntactic) accusative in Finnic is always tied to a semantic notion, predominantly aspect. This is best illustrated by Vainikka (1993) who argues that in Finnish only those verbs which have the feature [+COMPLETED] assign accusative; it cannot be assigned by anything else nor by any other head than the verbs which have this feature (Vainikka 1993:157).

Thus, despite the fact that abstract case is a useful theoretical construct in structure-based theories, there is no empirical justification for implementing the notion of abstract accusative with respect to Estonian. It does not seem to function as a purely structural concept, since it is always necessary to associate it with some semantics in order to predict its occurrence, e.g. aspectual properties of the verb or predicate (e.g. Vainikka 1993, Nelson 1995, Kiparsky 2001). The idea of syntactic accusative in Finnic is not borne out.

²⁰ As cited in Nelson (1995:141).

²¹ With respect to Finnish, this applies to common nouns, and not personal pronouns, which do have a distinct accusative form.

Further support for this conclusion can be drawn from considering the work of Ritter & Rosen (2001), where an analysis of Accusative assignment in Finnish is provided within the terms of the Minimalist Program (Chomsky 1995). Slightly different difficulties emerge from weaknesses in their treatment of Finnic case. Specifically, Ritter & Rosen (2001) formalise Krifka's (1992) concept of quantization with respect to nominals and events, and propose that quantization [Quant] is a relevant feature in some languages in addition to Case and agreement features.²² These features, including the feature of [Quant] are taken to reside in the functional projection Agr-OP (which is equivalent to a functional projection of Aspect, as in, e.g., Ramchand 1997). They further assume that in languages such as Finnish an event is quantized only when the direct object is quantized, and they postulate that an agreement relation must hold between these two. Accordingly, in Finnish the verb is specified for the feature [Quant] and in order for the verb to agree with its direct object, it has to raise to the head of Agr-O. The object that bears the feature [Quant] has to move to the Spec of Agr-OP to get the [Quant] feature checked as well as the accusative Case. When the verb does not have a [Quant] feature, the object stays in VP and receives Partitive Case. In other words, the feature [Quant] serves as an indirect device for associating Accusative with an aspectual interpretation so that the distribution of the Accusative can be accounted for.

However, in Ritter and Rosen's account, the Accusative itself comes across as a redundant concept, which does not do anything on its own. Furthermore, Ritter and Rosen have no explanation for instances such as (11) above, where the event is 'quantized' but the direct object is not. Also, their account, similarly to Hiietam's (2003) theory, does not explain the assignment of case with ambiguous verbs (accomplishments), whose quantification appears to be dependent on the quantification of the object argument. In addition, as also pointed out by Kiparsky (2005), Ritter and Rosen's account assumes that Accusative and Partitive have different syntactic properties: the Accusative is treated as syntactically distinct from Partitive, since it is assigned in Agr-OP, which induces aspectual interpretation, whereas Partitive is checked in a lower projection. This is problematic because, as was emphasised at the beginning of this section, in declarative affirmative sentences

²² That is, object agreement features as found in languages such as Palauan.

there is no phrase structural difference between these two cases, and the only distinction lies in semantics.

Likewise, Kratzer (2002), who provides an account of Finnish object cases within Minimalism, identifies accusative with telicity. That is, she posits an interpretable *verbal* inflectional feature [acc], which is identical to [telic], and an uninterpretable nominal feature [acc], which occurs on DP (or the direct object). The uninterpretable nominal feature [acc] has to enter in an agreement relation with the *verbal* inflection [acc] (= [telic]), as a result of which the DP moves out of VP. The movement is assumed to be triggered by index features (cf. the EPP/D-feature in Chomsky (1995)) on verbal [telic], which attract a matching index feature on a DP. In other words, the uninterpretable [acc] on the direct object is an uninterpretable [telic]. This association of the accusative case with telicity is taken to account for the distribution of accusative. Yet, again, this move results in a syntactic difference between the object which is marked by accusative features, and the object which is marked by partitive features, since the former (i.e. objects with [acc]) are expected to move out of VP, while objects with partitive are expected to remain within the VP. It may further be noted that in Kratzer's theory there is no place for NP-related case semantics, since accusative is taken to be equivalent to telicity, with the result that telic verbs choose accusative objects and atelic verbs choose partitive ones (Kratzer 2002:22). For instance, Kratzer discards Kiparsky's (1998) NP-related partitive and posits an unpronounced D[eterminer] which 'bears' either accusative or partitive case, and occurs whenever 'the direct object of a verb is an indefinite 'bare' plural or mass NP' (2002:23). Thus, whenever a telic interpretation with an indefinite plural or mass NP is intended, the D would have accusative case, and whenever atelic reading or indefinite denotation of the NP is intended, the D has partitive case. This is another way of saying that in this account an accusative object is selected by telic verbs and a partitive object by atelic verbs, but what is left unexplained is what determines the case selection in sentences where aspectual readings do not come across, i.e. in predicative or existential constructions (see section 4.2.1.1 of this chapter). In common with other structuralist analyses of case, the attempt is made to provide a syntactic account of structural case in Finnish, but in doing so the end result is instead to provide a syntactic account of telicity in order to predict the distribution of accusative.

Additionally, just as Hiietam's (2003) notion of accusative could not be extended to the case marking of a subset of quantity adverbials, nor can the syntactic concept of accusative in theories such as Kiparsky (2001) and Nelson (1995) be extended to adverbials either. Although Kiparsky and Nelson treat accusative differently, this syntactic case has some common features, e.g. being structurally determined and contrasted to non-structural (or semantic) cases that are associated with semantics (i.e. theta-roles). Therefore, even if Estonian had accusative case, its function of signalling the direct object would be treated as different from its other, more semantic functions, such as marking extent of space or time. That is, one case with several functions would be treated non-homogeneously, as two separate cases – one structural and one semantic. One solution would be, for example, to argue that adverbials which receive similar case marking to objects in Finnish are actually complements; such an analysis is presented by Nelson (1995), for instance. However, Kiparsky (2001:322-323) shows that this set of measure adverbials are adverbials which receive structural case (because they become partitive under negation and the genitive singular changes into nominative in imperatives, as outlined in section 2.5 above). For the same reasons, Svenonius (2002:2) also argues that in Finnish and Icelandic 'some apparent instances of Semantic Case are actually structural'. Yet, there is no principled explanation provided for why adjuncts receive structural case.

On the basis of what has now been said, it appears that accusative in Estonian is not able to provide any predictions by itself. Instead, accusative is related to event interpretation and to object function only. This suggests that the postulation of accusative in Estonian is not motivated in terms of usefulness and efficiency: it has no function other than reifying the direct object, i.e. treating the syntactic function of direct object as an entity in the grammar of Estonian. What I would like to propose, therefore, is that it is preferable to rely instead on what data the language actually provides, and try to construe Estonian case system without the concept of accusative, since postulating it does not gain anything. This move is also motivated by the attempt to avoid positing a dichotomy between structural (or grammatical) and non-structural (or semantic) cases based on different functions of the same case – a dichotomy which is inevitable, if the concept of accusative is included in Estonian. The position taken here is that it is unhelpful to make a distinction between structural

and non-structural case: the fact that objects and certain adverbials have the same morphological case marking in Estonian and undergo the same case alternation seems to be indicative of something else, which occurs across the language and involves other elements of the sentence as well. This topic will be pursued in Chapter 5. Meanwhile, the next section will focus on a controversial issue surrounding the nominative case in Estonian, which poses a genuine puzzle, if accusative is proposed.

4.2 The issue of nominative

The questions to be addressed in this section concern the status of the nominative in Estonian: whether it is a case at all, whether it is a syntactically unmarked (or ‘elsewhere’) case; or whether it is a morphological case which has meaning. The status of the nominative will be discussed in 4.2.2. Another question which arises concerns the correlation between morphological cases and grammatical relations: to what extent does nominative (or any other case) signal grammatical relations? This leads to the question of syncretism: is the nominative in Estonian on non-subject arguments a nominative, or is it a realisation of accusative? In the previous chapter, an ample amount of data was provided to demonstrate that nominative case in Estonian is not restricted to subject function only, nor marking object function in certain syntactic environments, or indeed plural ‘total’ objects more generally. Instead, it was shown that its functions vary from marking subjects and direct objects to marking adverbials. It was also suggested that there was not enough empirical ground to argue for homonymy between nominative and accusative (cf. Ackerman & Moore 2001, Hiietam 2003). This claim is expanded further in this section, where it will be shown that if accusative is proposed, its realisation in the nominative plural tends to have the same semantics as the nominative which occurs on subjects.

4.2.1 Nominative and the question of grammatical relations

As pointed out in section 3.3.2 in the previous chapter, nominative case in Estonian occurs on singular ‘total’ objects in imperatives (12), impersonals (13), and *da-*

infinitival clauses (14) (examples from EKK 1997:SY37), as well as in ‘existential’ sentences (which are discussed in later subsections). Although in canonically transitive clauses the same singular objects would be marked by the genitive case, this is ruled out in these constructions, as shown in the following examples:

- (12) a. Osta mulle (üks) jäätis! / *jäätise
 buy.imp.sg I.allat. one.nom.sg icecream.nom.sg / icecream.gen.sg
 ‘Buy me an ice-cream!’
- b. Osta mulle jäätist!
 buy.imp.sg I.allat.icecream.prtv.sg
 ‘Buy me some ice-cream!’
- (13) a. See raamat nimetati auhinna vääriliseks
 this.nom book.nom.sg nominate.imv.past prize.gen.sg worthy.transl.sg
 ‘This book was nominated for a prize’
- b. * Selle raamatu nimetati auhinna vääriliseks
 this.gen book.gen.sg nominate.imv.past prize.gen.sg worthy.transl.sg
- (14) a. Minu ülesandeks on lahendada see küsimus
 my.gen. task.transl.sg be.pres.3 solve.inf. this.nom question.nom.sg
 ‘My task is to solve this question’
- b. *Minu ülesandeks on lahendada selle küsimuse
 my.gen. task.transl.sg be.pres.3 solve.infini this.gen. question.gen.sg

In Estonian, then, the same morphological case which is used for subject marking appears also on singular ‘total’ objects, as opposed to the partitive case which marks ‘partial’ objects, as in (12b). While nominative marked subjects agree with the verb, the nominative marked objects in impersonal or imperatives do not show any agreement relation on the verb.²³ However, the nominative argument in existential constructions does agree with the verb (this will be more fully discussed in section 4.2.1.1). It is also worth noting that in impersonals, first and second person pronouns always occur in the partitive, as shown in Table 10 below, while common nouns appear in the nominative, as in (13) above. This demonstrates that partitive is entirely legitimate in these syntactic constructions and the occurrence of the nominative case instead of the genitive cannot be explained only in terms of structural case, which changes under passive or with imperative verb morphology. (The sentence pattern

²³ In periphrastic constructions of impersonals, agreement is possible due to an analogy with active transitive sentences (see section 3.3.3).

used in Table 10 is the same as in (13) above, except that the common noun is replaced by personal pronouns.)

Table 10. Paradigm of personal pronouns in impersonals

	PERSON	NOMINATIVE	PARTITIVE	
SG	1	*Ma	Mind	nimetati...
	2	*Sa	Sind	nimetati...
	3	Ta/Tema ²⁴	Teda	nimetati...
PL	1	*Meie	Meid	nimetati...
	2	*Teie	Teid	nimetati...
	3	Nad/Nemad	Neid	nimetati...

Explanations which are traditionally provided for the occurrence of nominative on the singular ‘total’ object are all related to a missing Agent argument, as shown in (15) (for a detailed overview of various accounts see Nelson 1995:61-70). Since the factors which condition the occurrence of the nominative case instead of the genitive seem to be similar in Estonian and Finnish, at least on the basis of the literature, the references given may refer to either language.

- (15) a. Objects have nominative case when no A is present (e.g. Oinas 1966, Hopper and Thomson 1980,²⁵ EKG II 1993).
 b. Objects have nominative case when there is no overt subject and (hence) no productive agreement morphology on the verb (Nelson 1995).
 c. Singular NPs which are not in the domain of a properly licensed subject (i.e. external subjects bearing nominative structural case and agreeing with the verb) are nominative (Kiparsky 2001).

Hiietam (2003) observes, following Nelson (1995), that (15a) does not represent a valid generalisation. Firstly, data in Estonian and Finnish demonstrate that a nominative object may occur together with a nominative subject in imperatives, as illustrated by the Estonian example in (16) (data from Hiietam 2003:244). It should be emphasised that overt subject referents in Estonian may also occur pre-verbally, as in (16b), a position which is typical for canonical subjects in Estonian; thus, unlike in Finnish, they are not restricted to post-verbal position only (cf. Nelson 1995).

²⁴ The full, unshortened form of this pronoun has a demonstrative or contrastive use. The same applies to the plural version of this pronoun, *nemad* ‘they’.

²⁵ As cited in Hiietam (2003:240)

Secondly, as mentioned and illustrated in (12b) above, the partitive case may also be used on objects in imperative constructions.

- (16) a. Söö võileib ära!
 eat.2sg.imp sandwich.nom.sg up
 ‘Eat the sandwich up!’
- b. Sa söö võileib ära!
 2sg.nom. eat.2.sg.imp sandwich.nom.sg up
 ‘YOU eat the sandwich up!’
- c. Söö sa võileib ära!
 eat.2sg.imp 2sg.nom sandwich.nom.sg up
 ‘YOU eat the sandwich up!’

As for (15b, c) above, imperative verbs in Estonian do have agreement morphology, as illustrated in (17) (data from EKK 1997:M94):

- (17) 2SG: *ela* ‘(you) live’
 2PL: *ela-ge* ‘(you all) live’
 1PL: *ela-ge-m* ‘(let’s) live’

Thus, imperative verb forms in Estonian show agreement and may occur together with the subject. It could be argued, however, as Kiparsky (2001) does with respect to Finnish, that the overt pronominal subjects in imperatives are not properly licensed subjects, because they have ‘no true agreement relation’ (Kiparsky 2001:335). Furthermore, Toivainen (1993)²⁶ considers the subjects in Finnish imperatives as a type of vocative. These claims do not seem to apply to Estonian data, as demonstrated in (18): the proper and full nouns *Mari* ‘Mary’, *sõbrad* ‘friends’, and *kaasmaalased* ‘compatriots’ behave as vocatives and do not agree with the imperative verb forms; if they had the agreement relation with the verb, the verb would inflect for third person singular in (18a), and for third person plural in (18b, c). Instead, the imperative verb forms agree with their subject, the pronominal indicated overtly in the parentheses in (18). Overt pronominals together with a full noun in imperative constructions are rather infrequent in Estonian, but perfectly grammatical, if used emphatically and contrastively. Therefore, the explanations given in (15) above do not hold with respect to the Estonian data, as also concluded by Hiietam (2003). Note also that the

²⁶ As cited in Kiparsky (2001).

nominative case in Estonian is also used in non-finite clauses, as shown in (14) above. This example indicates that nominative can not always be tied to tense and agreement.

- (18) a. Mari, ela (sina) oma südame järgi!
 M.nom live.imp.2sg you.nom own heart.gen.sg according
 ‘Mary, live (you) according to your heart!’
- b. Sõbrad, elage (teie) oma südame järgi!
 friend.nom.pl live.imp.2pl you own heart.gen.sg according
 ‘Friends, live (you all) according to your heart!’
- c. Kaasmaalased, elagem (meie) rahu ja armastuses!
 compatriot.nom.pl live.imp.1pl we.nom peace.iness and love.iness
 ‘Compatriots, let us live in piece and love!’

With respect to case marking then, nominative objects in Estonian imperative constructions are problematic for structure-based theories of case within the generative approach. In these theories, nominative Case is associated with a particular syntactic position, specIP (at S-structure) which correlates with the grammatical relation of subject (Chomsky 1981, 1995). It is also closely related to the functional category of agreement, so that assignment of nominative Case is taken to be performed by Inflection. Furthermore, Pesetsky & Torrego (2001) claim that nominative is the expression of an uninterpretable Tense feature on the DP. Theoretically, situations are excluded where the same nominative, which is related to the subject position, also occurs on the direct object position, which is why there is the need to postulate a mechanism which will guarantee that the case which is correlated with the subject may also be assigned to the complement position. Nelson (1995:117), for instance, says that ‘[t]o account for the Finnish data, it is necessary to posit more than one possible structural position in which nominative case can be assigned’. In her model, it is Tense/Mood which assigns nominative case feature, and either T/M or one of its coindexed traces may assign nominative to three different positions: spec(AGRP), spec(T/MP), or spec(VP) (Nelson 1995:150). The single object argument in the imperative construction then has to move from the position of the internal argument, where it has been base-generated as a complement of V, to a position governed by T/M, where it can be assigned nominative Case at S-structure. The movement to the subject position is motivated by the observation that Finnish imperative constructions lack syntactically active external arguments (Nelson

1995:95), hence it is the internal argument (i.e. the direct object) that has to rise to a subject position to receive nominative Case, which is assigned as a default by Tense/Mood. This postulation yields a rather unmotivated result in which a lexical item ends up being case-marked twice: once at D-structure, where it is assigned an objective Case together with aspectual theta-role by V (Accusative), and also at S-structure, where it is assigned Nominative by Tense/Mood. The assumption of double case-marking leaves also some processes unexplained. An argument which receives double case features such as [+ACC] and [+NOM] surfaces in ‘zero-accusative’ case, which is formally treated as one of the realisations of accusative, and therefore homophonous with nominative. However, if a full DP receives case features [+PART] and [+NOM], it is argued to surface as partitive, due to the hypothesis that a partitive case feature ‘overrides’ a nominative case feature (Nelson 1995:157). Why nominative case feature is seen to override accusative in this syntactic environment is not clear, especially in light of the fact that one of the case features of accusative, *-n*, overrides zero (= nominative) in transitive constructions.

As mentioned above, a structure-based account of case, such as Nelson’s (1995), is problematic in light of Estonian data: the occurrence of the nominative case on the object in Estonian imperative constructions cannot be explained by the lack of the subject, or its syntactic inactivity. Therefore, a mechanism which assumes that the direct object receives a default nominative of the subject is not applicable. Likewise, an entirely feature-based theory of case within the generative approach, such as Ura’s (2000) account, would also be unsuitable with respect to Estonian data: although case features are not assigned to certain positions in his theory, they are still correlated with particular syntactic functions and grammatical relations, with the result that the nominative on the object position still remains problematic in his theory of multiple feature checking. For instance, the nominative objects which are discussed in Ura (2000) are those exhibiting DAT-NOM pattern in Dative Subject constructions. He claims that ‘the nominative object morphologically behaves like the ordinary “subject” in two respects: it is marked as nominative and it induces subject-agreement’ (Ura 2000:132). This allows him a ‘straightforward’ account: ‘The nominative object’s Case-feature and ϕ -feature enter into a checking relation with T at LF’ (ibid.). While this certainly holds with respect to similar constructions and ‘psych’ verbs in Estonian (although the dative is replaced by the allative), this type of

analysis cannot be extended to the nominative object in imperative constructions in Estonian, because the object does not induce any agreement. On the other hand, this example is illustrative of the tendency to correlate nominative with subject, so that these two are viewed as almost synonymous. This is clearly evident in Hiietam's (2003) account, in a different framework. Hiietam views nominative case on the object in imperatives, such as (12), (16) and (18) above, as nominative (= subject) marking instead of analysing it as an instance of accusative marking, which would be more in accord with her theory. Nominative marked objects of imperatives are rather uncommon cross-linguistically (Sadock and Zwicky 1985:174-5), and in accusative languages (e.g. Modern Greek, German) it is the accusative case which is used in imperative constructions. Hence it is surprising that Hiietam (2003), who argues for the accusative case in Estonian, does not extend its function to imperative constructions, claiming rather that the internal arguments which appear in imperatives are actually subjects, and that this is why they are marked nominative (p.c.).

Both Hiietam (2003) and Nelson (1995) consider all the arguments that receive nominative marking in imperatives and impersonals, as in (12) and (13) above respectively, and passive constructions, as in (19) below, as a homogeneous group where nominative case is assigned on the basis of one common reason.

- (19) Õunapuud on vanaisa istutatud.
 appletree.nom.pl be.3pres. grandpa.gen.sg plant.past.ptc
 'The apple trees are planted by the grandfather.'

Nelson (1995) postulates that since no external argument co-indexed with agreement is present in these constructions to receive the nominative case feature, the internal argument has to move to the positions where the nominative case feature can be assigned, and thus ends up being double case-marked by V and T/M. Hiietam (2003), as mentioned above, analyses the morphological nominative on the object in the aforementioned constructions as the 'subject' case. Specifically, she argues that the 'true' nominative, a subject case, is assigned to object arguments in impersonal constructions because they share some subject properties, further illustrating the tendency to identify nominative with the subject. However, this leads to the question of how straightforwardly syntactic roles can be associated or correlated with particular cases.

The previous sections of this chapter focussed on case marking in constructions where the status of grammatical relations was rather obvious. The subject and object functions discussed above were straightforward; hence it seemed elementary to postulate accusative marking, and to distinguish the nominative which marks subjects from the one which marks direct objects, i.e. to postulate syncretism (e.g. Hiietam 2003). However, in impersonal and existential constructions it is not so simple to determine the syntactic role of a single argument.

In impersonal constructions in Estonian, for instance, the nominative marked arguments show both subject and object properties, as noted by Hiietam (2003) (and also discussed in section 3.3). At first glance, it is not clear whether these arguments should be categorised as subjects or objects: depending on the animacy of the noun, they possess the subject property of controlling reflexivisation, as in (20) (data from Hiietam 2003:187); yet they also pass one of the syntactic tests for objects in Estonian, i.e. negation, according to which nominative becomes partitive under negation, as in (21b), unlike with subjects (Hiietam 2003: 246) (although this does not necessarily hold in periphrastic constructions, as mentioned above, and see also Table 8 in section 3.3.3). However, although the reflexive in (20) is subject-oriented, reflexivisation as a test for subjects is not very reliable in general. In English, for example, non-subjects can be the antecedents for reflexives, as in (22), so it is not uniformly the case that the ability to antecede a reflexive is a property of subjects.²⁷

(20) Laps_i pandi laua äärde oma_i koha
 child.nom.sg put.past.imp table.gen.sg side.ill.sg REFL. seat.gen.sg
 peale istuma.
 on.allat. sit.inf.
 ‘One sat the child at the table at on his/her own seat.’

(21) a. See raamat nimetati auhinna vääriliseks
 this.nom book.nom.sg nominate.imp.past prize.gen.sg worthy.transl.sg
 ‘This book was nominated for a prize’

²⁷ I am grateful to Prof. Caroline Heycock for pointing out this example to me.

- b. Seda raamatut ei nimetatud auhinna vääriliseks
this.part. book.prtv.sg NEG nominate.past.ptc prize.gen.sg worthy.transl.sg
'This book was not nominated for a prize'

(22) I showed John_i a picture of himself_i.

Hiietam, however, considers these arguments 'to lie somewhere in between a subject and an object' (2003:246), and does not categorise them as objects, unlike the grammar of standard Modern Estonian (i.e. EKG II 1993). Yet, she argues that objects in impersonal constructions receive subject marking (i.e. nominative) because of 'some subject properties'. This is a rather unexpected claim. Firstly, according to her, objects in impersonals have one subject property and one object property (reflexivisation and negation, respectively), hence we may ask why the 'subject' property is given greater significance than the 'object' property. Secondly, as Table 10 above shows, first and second person pronouns in Estonian occur only in the partitive case in impersonals. This could be taken as evidence that these arguments do not behave syntactically as subjects. That is, nominative case on first and second person pronouns would create a processing conflict in this context with the obligatory agreement morphology which these pronouns normally induce, since they tend to (i) be associated with Agent, (ii) occur as the subject, and (iii) show subject-verb agreement. Thus the fact that partitive case, which never shows agreement, is the only case allowed on these pronouns in impersonals suggests that in Estonian these arguments are not treated as subjects syntactically. Third person pronouns do not pose such a problem, since, according to Silverstein (1985),²⁸ they are essentially nominal, as their referent may be determined by a range of individuals in the discourse and by the syntactic rules. The referent of the first and second person, in contrast, is fixed, referring to the speaker and the hearer. This distinction in the syntactic behaviour between the first two pronouns and the third person seems to be reflected in the grammar of Estonian, as Table 10 above indicates.

²⁸ As cited in Alexiadou (2003:38).

4.2.1.1 Nominative in existential construction

Another type of construction where the syntactic roles of subject and object seem to have merged is the existential construction. These constructions (or existential sentences) were briefly discussed in section 2.3.1 above. An example of an existential sentence is repeated here in (23). The single argument in these sentences occurs in a post-verbal position, while an adverbial denoting place or time occupies a pre-verbal position. What sentences exactly qualify as existentials is an issue of debate, e.g. Nemvalts (1996) regards experiencer type oblique arguments (more generally known as Dative subjects) as existential sentences, whereas Hiietam (2003) considers them a non-prototypical subject. It is important to note that the order of the argument and adverbial can be reversed, giving rise to a canonical intransitive clause (these are discussed in the next section). In Estonian, though not in Finnish (see Nelson 1995), the argument in the nominative agrees with the finite verb in person and number, while the argument marked by the partitive case shows no agreement in either Estonian or Finnish, and occurs in the third person default form instead. An Estonian example is given in (23b).

- (23) a. Laual oli/olid raamat/raamatud
 table.ades.sg be.past.3sg/pl book.nom.sg/nom.pl
 ‘On the table there was a book / were books’
- b. Laual oli raamatuid
 table.ades.sg be.past.3sg book.prtv.pl
 ‘On the table there were (some) books’

Thus, the argument in existential constructions can occur in the nominative or it may be marked by the partitive case, depending on several semantic factors. However, if the verb is negated, the partitive case has to be used instead of the nominative. Personal pronouns behave similarly to full nouns in these constructions, but partitive marked pronouns referring to a single person are ruled out, as are the full nouns. In what follows, it will be shown that arguments in Estonian existential construction pose a real challenge when one tries to implement accusative in Estonian. First, in these constructions the single argument does not show any clear-cut syntactic properties which would allow us to decide on its syntactic role straightforwardly. Second, as it will be shown, the ambiguity with respect to syntactic function has

implications for case assignment. Also, it will be demonstrated that whatever grammatical relation is applied to these syntactic arguments, some of the associated interpretations of nominative will be the same as when it expresses structural accusative, i.e. as in the object function.

Traditionally, the argument in existential sentences has been analysed as the subject, e.g. EKG II (1993) and Nemvalts (1996). Hiietam (2003) also regards them as subjects, marked either by the ‘true’ nominative (i.e. the subject case) or by the partitive (to indicate low transitivity). Yet the grammatical status of these arguments is far from clear, as is also noted with respect to Finnish by Kiparsky (2001) and Vilkuna (1989), among others. In Estonian, the argument in existential constructions behaves like an object when negated, as the nominative form is replaced by the partitive, as in (24b). The nominative marking is retained only if the argument is used contrastively, as shown in (24c).

- (24) a. *Taevas lendasid kured.*
 sky.ades. fly.past.3pl stork.nom.pl
 ‘There were flying storks in the sky.’
- b. *Taevas ei lennanud kurgi.*
 sky.ades. NEG fly.past.ptc stork.prtv.pl
 ‘There were no storks flying in the sky.’
- c. *Taevas ei lennanud kured, vaid haned.*
 sky.ades. NEG fly.past.ptc stork.nom.pl but geese.nom
 ‘There were geese not storks flying in the sky.’

Also, as pointed out above, partitive marked arguments do not agree with the finite verb in intransitive constructions, including existentials. It is the argument marked by the nominative case which shows an agreement relation with the finite verb, and therefore allows us to interpret it as a subject and the nominative case on it as subject marking, e.g. Hiietam (2003). In Finnish, by contrast, nominative arguments in these constructions do not agree with the finite verb (Kiparsky 2001, Nelson 1995), a fact which enables Nelson (1995) to argue for unaccusative marking. Specifically, she views a single argument in existential constructions as an object, which is base-generated internal to VP, and is assigned an aspectual theta-role at D-structure (i.e. realised as either accusative or partitive case), and since no external argument is

licensed because of the lack of agreement morphology, the internal argument has to move to a higher functional projection, Spec (VP), which is associated with finite Tense so that it can receive Nominative case from Tense/Mood at S-structure. Thus the argument ends up being double case marked within VP, surfacing either as zero-accusative (or nominative) or partitive (see the discussion of case realisation with respect to imperatives above). In other words, Nelson treats a full NP in this type of construction exactly the same way as a sole argument in imperatives and impersonals, i.e. as an internal argument, which moves out of the original direct object position to receive nominative marking due to the absence of subject. Note also that nominative (or zero-accusative) in existential construction realises a case which is assigned together with an aspectual theta-role. This analysis is in contrast to Kiparsky's (2001) account, which argues that no aspectual interpretation is present in this type of sentence and only the reading of 'quantitatively determinate' is associated with nominative (i.e. the zero-accusative of Nelson 1995). Hiitam (2003), however, who argues for a subject case marking on these arguments, associates the nominative with limitedness and definiteness. It appears then that the same interpretations tend to be associated with nominative in this construction as on the direct object where nominative is taken to be accusative (e.g. Hiitam 2003) or the realisation of it (e.g. Nelson 1995, Ritter and Rosen 2001, among others).

An analysis which assumes that the verbs in existentials are all unaccusatives is not, however, supported by the Estonian data (as also discussed in section 2.3.1 above). In Estonian, unergatives are not uncommon at all in this type of constructions, as shown, for example, in (24) above. It is also worth emphasising that agreement morphology is present in Estonian existential constructions with nominative marked arguments. Therefore, a case theory which views case assignment as determined by a predicate or syntactic structure faces a real challenge in providing an empirically valid account of Estonian data in existential constructions. For instance, Kiparsky (2001), implementing an Optimality Theoretic approach, treats arguments in existential constructions as 'internal subjects' (2001:345-353). He claims that the internal subjects are not objects, although they receive the positional case feature of an object, [-HR]. They are assigned, however, an abstract case feature of the highest lexical theta-role, i.e. subject, [+HR]. This provides an elegant solution of 'mismatch' for the mixed syntactic properties of those arguments in Finnish. The nominative case is then

not associated with any particular grammatical relation in Kiparsky's model, but is instead construed as entirely underspecified (see also section 4.2.3).

Likewise, Vilkuna (1989:156) views existential constructions in Finnish as a neutralization of subject and object functions, which reflects the 'absolute sub-pattern' suggested by Moravcsik (1978) and Keenan (1984).²⁹ Thus Vilkuna does not demonstrate conclusively that a single argument in existentials is either subject or object, but not both. Instead, she emphasises that 'a verb-object pair and an intransitive verb-subject pair typically show a higher degree of semantic unity than a transitive verb-subject pair in terms of existence dependency, selectional restrictions, and variability of meaning' (Vilkuna 1989:156). The issue this raises – regarding the "fused" properties of intransitive subjects and direct objects – will now be discussed in the next sub-section, 4.2.1.2.

4.2.1.2 Nominative in intransitive clauses and the question of split-S ergativity

While in transitive clauses the subject is always marked by the nominative case, there is a choice of case on intransitive subjects, as was explained in section 2.3 above. In intransitive clauses, the partitive case may also be used on the single argument, yielding thus a phenomenon which is referred to as 'subject case alternation' by descriptive grammars (e.g. EKG II 1993). This is illustrated in (25) and (26). Again, as with arguments in the existential construction, nominative subjects agree with the verb in person and number, while subjects in partitive do not.

- (25) a. Inimesed sōitsid maale.
people.NOM travel.PAST.3PL countryside.ALLAT.
'People travelled/(were travelling) to the countryside.'
- b. Inimesi sōitis maale.
people.PRTV travel.PAST.3SG countryside.ALLAT.
(i) 'Some people travelled/(were travelling) to the countryside.'
(ii) 'There were people travelling to the countryside.'

²⁹ As cited in Vilkuna (1989:156).

- (26) a. Vein valgus laudlinale.
 wine.NOM. pour.PAST.3SG tablecloth.ALLAT.SG
 ‘(The) wine splashed onto the tablecloth’
- b. Veini valgus laudlinale.
 wine.PRTV. pour.PAST.3SG tablecloth.ALLAT.SG
 ‘(Some) wine spilt on the tablecloth.’

Note that the sentences in which the argument refers to a plural entity and is marked by the partitive case have several interpretations available when the verb is unergative, as in (25): either a partitivity reading or an existential reading may be applied to this example, depending on context. In fact, there appears to be a very fine line between simple intransitive clauses and existential constructions and, as pointed out by Vilkuna (1989), there is also a fine line also between existentials and impersonals.

Nemvalts (1996) finds that in intransitive clauses, the choice of case on the argument is primarily dependent on the verb. According to him, there are verbs which allow the argument to occur:

- a) only in the nominative, e.g. *algama* ‘to begin’, *võpatama* ‘to wince’
- b) only in the partitive, e.g. *jätkuma* ‘to suffice’, *tunduma* ‘to seem’
- c) both in the nominative and partitive, e.g. *kaasnema*, ‘to concur’, *tekkima* ‘to be generated’, *mängima* ‘to play’

Thus the marking of the single argument in an intransitive clause cannot be determined by syntax only, as the lexical meaning of a verb must also be taken into account. While it could be argued that verbs of type (a) receive nominative marking because they can only have an agent argument in terms of semantics, the argument of these verbs does not in fact exert any control over the activity as a typical agent does, and neither can the interpretation of these verbs be related to the expression of intention or volitionality. Likewise, one of the verbs of type (b) (i.e. *tunduma* ‘to seem’) may be freely used with the argument in nominative, contrary to Nemvalts’ (1996) claim. Hence the assignment of the partitive case to the arguments of these verbs cannot be explained by any object-like properties of the argument, i.e. their similarity to the direct object of the verb. Rather, the case-marking of the arguments of intransitive verbs appears to be dependent on the semantics of the case-marked term, in addition to the verb’s lexical meaning as well as pragmatics, as with type (c)

verbs. That is, as soon as a choice of case is allowed, nominal semantics is one of the factors which contributes to the case selection. For instance, the occurrence of the partitive case on singular count nouns is generally excluded in intransitive clauses, as the noun has to occur in the nominative (for more detail, see Chapter 5). Therefore, the nominative case on intransitive ‘subjects’, both in non-existential and existential clauses, does not behave as a structural case, which can be assigned by a functor (i.e. finite Tense).

More theoretical approaches attempt to explain the assignment of nominative in intransitive clauses in terms of Split-S Ergativity (or an ‘active’ pattern (Dixon 1994)). For instance, Nelson (1995:96) argues that Finnish has an ‘ergative subsystem’, which conforms to morphological ergativity. According to ‘active’ case marking patterns, a distinction is made between subtypes of S: those S which are semantically similar to A exert control over activity (S=A ~ ‘unergative’) and those S which are semantically similar to O are affected by the activity (S=O ~ ‘unaccusative’). The S_A would be signalled by the nominative case, as in (25a) and (26a) above, and S_O would be marked by partitive case, as (25b) and (26b). This entirely semantic distinction in an active pattern is usually conditioned by intentionality or volitionality (Dixon 1994), but Nelson (1995:101), for instance, argues that in Finnish a split-S pattern is conditioned by aspect, since aspect is associated with object complement position.

Specifically, Nelson (1995), using a structure-based approach to case, relates S_A to an external argument and S_O to an internal argument. The supposed semantic distinction is correlated with syntactic functions of subject and object, respectively. This means that nominative subjects in intransitive clauses, such as (25a) and (26a), are treated as canonical subjects, but there is no explanation for the partitive marked subjects in (25b) and (26b) above, because internal arguments (or S_O) are assumed to occur in existentials only, that is, postverbally. As described in the previous section, Nelson believes that it is unaccusatives which occur in existential constructions, and which surface either in nominative or partitive postverbally after a double case assignment (1995:166), and the choice of Case is determined by different aspectual roles being assigned. The fact that these arguments tend to occur postverbally is explained by the lexical properties of the verb: unaccusatives are one-place predicates which do not

license an external argument at the lexical level; hence they stay within VP after Case assignment like the direct object does. Yet, accounting for split-S in terms of syntax by equating nominative marked arguments with subjects and partitive marked arguments with objects leaves no explanation for partitive subjects which occur preverbally, as shown in (27b).

(27)	(a)	S(nom)	V	O(part/gen/nom)
	(b)	S(nom)	V	
		S(part)	V	
	(c)		V	S(nom)
			V	S(part)

According to Nelson’s theory, there is nothing which would motivate the internal argument, such as in (27c), which has been assigned a non-aspectual theta-role (partitive), to raise out of the VP so that a partitive marked subject could be generated in a preverbal position, as in (27b). Thus, implementing the hypothesis of split-S ergativity to account for the assignment of case in intransitive sentences provides only a partial explanation with respect to Estonian data. Also, as mentioned above, ‘unaccusatives’ are definitely not the only type of verb to occur in existentials in Estonian: most of the verbs in existentials, as in (27c), can also appear in non-existential intransitives with a nominative marked argument, such as (27b). This has also been noted for Finnish by Vilkuna (1989:155-160). Those intransitive verbs which have been referred to as ‘unergatives’ can occur equally well both in existential and non-existential intransitives, such as (24) and (25) above, respectively; and together with an argument which is marked either by partitive case or occurs in nominative.

More generally, it is not clear how aspect contributes to split-S ergativity. It seems that since aspect is related to a complement position in VP in Nelson’s (1995) account, its only function is to distinguish object-like arguments from subject-like arguments. However, as argued by Kiparsky (2001) and Vilkuna (1989), intransitive clauses, especially arguments in existentials, do not show aspectual contrasts. Kiparsky, for instance, states that ‘the aspectual character of the predicate never induces partitive case marking on internal subjects [i.e. arguments in existentials], any

more than on external subjects' (2001:348). It appears then that case alternation in intransitive sentences (both existential and non-existential) is indicative of something else, as will be discussed in the next chapter, rather than being related to aspect. Examples (23), (25) and (26) above demonstrate that the semantic contrast conveyed by the alternation of cases pertains to nominal semantics such as specificity, rather than to aspect. The latter is inferential, if present at all: (23) has a copular verb, and the semantic contrast is related to quantitative determinacy; in (25) and (26) the aspectual difference in terms of telicity or perfectivity appears to be secondary.

Hiietam (2003), by contrast, treats this semantic distinction in terms of semantics. In order to account for the occurrence of partitive case in 'subjects' in intransitive clauses, she proposes a new variable, viz. Individuation, within the Transitivity Hypothesis (Hopper & Thompson 1980). Those subjects which lack a feature of individuation receive the partitive case. This proposal, by which an exclusively object feature, i.e. Individuation, is assigned to a subject, suggests a semantic similarity between intransitive subjects and direct objects.

In sum, it is rather unlikely that the case marking pattern in intransitives in Estonian conforms to split-S ergativity, or 'active' system in Estonian. Whereas the 'active' system encodes primarily intentionality, this semantic encoding does not come across from the Estonian data, as demonstrated by examples (23), (25) and (26). Finally, it is worth emphasising that since arguments in intransitive sentences in Estonian do not show clear-cut syntactic functions, it is not plausible to correlate the nominative and partitive case in intransitive clauses in Estonian straightforwardly with grammatical relations.

4.2.2 The status of nominative

This section focuses on how the nominative form in Finnic has been analysed in different accounts. On the basis of the different approaches to nominative implied above, the question which needs to be addressed in more detail is whether the nominative in Finnic is a true case, and if so, whether it is a syntactically unmarked

(or ‘elsewhere’) case, or a real morphological case which may signal certain semantic interpretations, depending on context. For instance, within generative frameworks the nominative is treated as a structural case, which is assigned by Tense. That is, nominative Case is tied to the functional projection of Tense, and some recent works also argue for another, lower projection of Aspect where Nominative can be licensed (see, e.g. Alexiadou 2003). Whatever the functor to which Nominative is linked, it is perceived as having no interpretable features (Chomsky 1995, 1999). With respect to nominative in Finnish, there are at least three different ways of construing it in the literature: (i) nominative is not a case, (ii) nominative is an ‘elsewhere’ case, and (iii) a non-homogeneous approach, which posits syncretism between the nominative and the accusative. An overview of these will be given in this section.

First, there is a traditional view of nominative which assumes that nominative is not a case (e.g. Jakobson 1936). For instance, Vainikka (1993) argues within the Government and Binding model that the nominative form in Finnish is an instance of the absence of case, and does not involve any case assignment. This means that the subject in Finnish does not receive any case marking at all, and those non-pronominal objects³⁰ which are assigned the (abstract) accusative, surface without a case suffix, like full nouns do in English. Vainikka explains that the reason for full nouns surfacing without a suffix in the direct object function is that they do not have ‘an accusative form in the lexicon’ (1993:158). The same is stipulated for a single argument in imperative, passive, and impersonal sentences that is analysed as an accusative object. The accusative object does not receive any case marking; more specifically, it *remains* without a suffix in its surface realisation, because there is no agreement between the (matrix) verb and a nominative subject. That is, since nominative is not a case in Vainikka’s account, it is genitive, partitive, and elative which are to be taken as the structural default. Genitive, for instance, is the default structural case for the lexical items in the specifier position, Spec(XP). As for the surface realisation of the accusative on singular objects in transitive clauses, this is accounted for by means of feature percolation: since the genitive is associated with a syntactic *position* of a specifier, Spec(XP), it will realise a singular object only if the subject is present and if there is an agreement relation so that the subject can raise to

³⁰ Recall that in Finnish, personal pronouns have a distinct form referred to as accusative.

Spec(IP) position and strand its genitive case, which then percolates to the object position (Vainikka 1993:157-158). In other words, Vainikka's (1993) account of the core cases in Finnish treats nominative as 'no case'. This allows her to construe the other core cases, genitive and partitive³¹ as structural default cases, which are in one-to-one correspondence with syntactic positions such as that of specifier and complement respectively.

Another way that nominative in Finnish is treated is illustrated in Kiparsky (2001). In his theory, nominative is completely underspecified, so that it is construed as an 'elsewhere' case, and a parallel can be drawn with an absolutive pattern (Asudeh 2003). Using an Optimality Theoretic approach, Kiparsky expresses the status of nominative by a general constraint, * $[\alpha F]$, which states that 'everything gets nominative case' (2001:336). This constraint thus predicts nominative case on plural objects in transitive sentences where the verb agrees with a nominative subject, as well as on arguments in impersonal and imperative constructions. In order to preclude the nominative from occurring with the singular object in transitive clauses (i.e. accusative in Hiietam's (2003) account), Kiparsky (2001:336) uses a traditional notion from Finnish grammar, Jahnsson's Rule,³² which dominates the general constraint * $[\alpha F]$. The rule states that a morphologically endingless argument (i.e. nominative) must be a pivot, which, in other words, excludes nominative on singular objects in sentences which have a 'properly licensed subject' marked by nominative. The nominative case itself does not have any feature specified, and is thus represented as [] (as shown in section 4.1). In a way, therefore, this treatment of nominative does not differ much from the accounts just mentioned, which consider nominative as 'no case'.

There is also a view which sees nominative as a syntactically non-homogeneous case both in Finnish (e.g. Nelson 1995) and in Estonian (e.g. Ackerman & Moore 2001, Hiietam 2003). Under this view, syncretism is posited in the case system so that morphological case is correlated with the grammatical functions it expresses: the nominative which marks subject function is regarded as *the* nominative case (or the

³¹ Vainikka (1993) also considers elative, which is usually regarded as 'semantic' case in Finnish, as one of the core cases.

³² I am grateful to Dr. Diane Nelson for explaining to me the status of Jahnsson's Rule in Finnish grammar.

‘true’ nominative in Hiietam (2003)) and its occurrence on the object function is taken as an instance of accusative marking which is homophonous with the nominative case. For instance, Nelson (1995), using an entirely structure-based approach to case, i.e. the Government and Binding Theory (Chomsky 1981) within the Principles and Parameters framework, assumes syncretism between the nominative which realises subject and the case which is a surface realisation of accusative objects in syntactic constructions which lack the external argument. The nominative case is a ‘zero’ case in her model, an unmarked lexical form, and a distinction is drawn between nominative and ‘zero-accusative’. Likewise, Hiietam (2003), who analyses Estonian data from a typological perspective, argues for a non-homogeneous approach to the nominative. According to her account, subjects in Estonian are marked by the ‘true’ nominative, whereas the direct object in transitive telic clauses is viewed as marked by the accusative, which happens to be identical to the nominative on plural objects and the genitive on singular objects (see Chapter 3 for her justification for such an analysis). Those singular arguments which occur in imperatives and impersonals are shown to have ‘subject’ properties, and are therefore assumed to receive “subject” marking, i.e. the nominative case, rather than accusative as in Nelson (1995). Also, Hiietam analyses arguments in existential constructions as subjects and hence marked by the ‘true’ nominative.

It appears then that if nominative is regarded as a case, it tends to be either correlated with the subject function or else taken as an elsewhere case. On the one hand, treating nominative as an elsewhere case has advantages over the structural nominative which is correlated with the subject, since, as shown in the preceding sections, the nominative form is used across different syntactic functions. On the other hand, the nominative form alternates with the partitive case on the intransitive subject, on the argument in existentials and in predicate possessives, as in (28), but by definition ‘elsewhere’ cases cannot be associated with any semantics. It remains unclear then how the relevant interpretations with which the nominative is associated are derived, or accounted for, as in an example from Estonian in (28).

- (28) a. Anul on targad üliõpilased.
 A.ALLAT.SG be.3.PRES. smart.NOM.PL student.NOM.PL
 ‘Anu has smart students’ or ‘Anu’s students are smart’

- b. Anul on tarku üliõpilasi.
 A.ALLAT.SG be.3.PRES. smart.PRTV.PL student.PRTV.PL
 ‘Anu has (some) smart students.’

It seems therefore that nominative cannot be simply an unmarked case in Estonian (or in Finnic), because its use seems to be associated with certain interpretations, e.g. ‘boundedness’ (Kiparsky 2001), or ‘limitedness’ and ‘definiteness’ (EKG II 1993, Hiietam 2003). This issue is examined in more detail in Chapter 6, but it is worth emphasising here that those approaches which postulate syncretism on the basis of the different syntactic functions of nominative in Estonian are challenged by the fact that the nominative seems to have the same interpretation across different syntactic functions, including both the ‘true’ nominative and the proposed accusative.

4.3 The issue of partitive case

At the beginning of this chapter, in Section 4.1, Tauli’s (1968) study of the distribution and productivity of the object cases in Estonian was reported. Tauli’s quantitative study showed that ‘partitive’ objects in transitive clauses considerably outnumbered ‘total’ objects (marked by the genitive and the nominative), so that of the entire number of direct objects, which was 2252, only one third (644) comprised ‘total’ objects, and the rest were ‘partial’ objects, marked by the partitive case. Based on these results, Tauli concluded that in Estonian the direct object normally occurs in the partitive. He also specifies the conditions for the occurrence of the ‘total’ object, as in (1) above, repeated in (29):

- (29) (i) the sentence expresses resultativity (result or goal)
 (ii) the object NP refers to the whole of the denoted entity (Tauli 1968:216)

As was pointed out in Section 4.1 above, only *semantic* criteria can be provided for predicting the occurrence of ‘total’ or ‘partial’ objects in affirmative declarative sentences, and hence also whether the partitive or genitive/nominative (or ‘accusative’) case should be used. There is no phrase structural difference between

those objects in this syntactic environment.³³ In other words, the partitive case may occur *either* when: (i) the sentence expresses no resultativity (or goal) *or* (ii) the object NP does not refer to the entirety of the denoted entity, or both. These semantic criteria provide an insight into why the partitive case tends to occur more often on the direct object in affirmative transitive clauses than do the genitive and nominative (or ‘accusative’ as in Hiietam 2003).

The alternation between the partitive and genitive/nominative case on the direct object has been “translated” into syntactic generalisations in various ways. For instance, Vainikka (1993) provides an account within the Government and Binding theory (Chomsky 1981) and argues that because it is possible to semantically predict the distribution of accusative in Finnish, partitive (as an abstract case) is the ‘structural default case of the object position’ (1993:129). In other words, Vainikka argues that Accusative in Finnish occurs only in one type of construction where the verb has a specific semantic feature [+COMPLETED]; whenever this feature is not present, the partitive Case is assigned as a default. Thus, the partitive Case in Vainikka’s (1993) model is not semantically specified in any way. In addition, from observation of the distribution of partitive across categories she proposes that the Finnish partitive is the structural default Case which generally occurs in the complement position, so that complements of verbs, prepositions, comparative suffix, and quantifiers receive Partitive as a default. It remains unclear, however, how partitive would be accounted for when it occurs in the subject position in intransitive sentences, such as in (25b) and (26b) above and (30b) below, when partitive is assumed to be a structural case and therefore assigned at S-structure.³⁴ Also, as Nelson (1995:137) points out, Vainikka’s (1993) treatment of Partitive fails to account for the occurrence of partitive on arguments of impersonal constructions which occur in subject position.

Vainikka’s (1993) observation about the Finnish partitive as a structural default complement case is also employed in Kiparsky’s (2001) Optimality Theoretic approach. For instance, Kiparsky defines partitive as the unmarked complement case,

³³ Some verbal particles, such as *ära* lit. ‘away, off’ and *valmis* ‘ready, completed’, in combination with some verbs, prefer the genitive/nominative to the partitive. Here we refer to contexts where no such particles are used. In negated clauses, however, the partitive case is selected as a rule.

³⁴ Note, however, that Vainikka & Maling (1996:197) analyse the Finnish partitive as assigned at D-structure, although it is otherwise considered a structural Case.

which occurs on the non-highest role, [-HR]. It is assigned to various grammatical relations (i.e. abstract cases) by optimal matching. As in Vainikka's (1993) account, the partitive in Kiparsky's model is also semantically unmarked. Yet, in Kiparsky's model, partitive may be assigned by three different factors, the first two of which are clearly semantic: (i) the semantic properties of a predicate, i.e. telicity; (ii) the semantic properties of the case-marked NP, i.e. quantification; and (iii) negation. This yields three types of partitive in Finnish: the VP-partitive ('aspectual'), the NP-partitive ('quantificational'), and the partitive of negation, all of which may co-occur in one sentence, resulting in multiple ambiguities. The distinction between NP-partitive ('quantification') and VP-partitive ('aspect') is encoded by a mismatch of feature specifications, i.e. syntactically, and it relies on a syntactic distinction between grammatical relations, represented by abstract case. For instance, existential constructions which have an abstract case of an intransitive subject, being specified for the highest role, [+HR], exclude the VP-related partitive that is associated with objects, [-HR]. However, partitive on intransitive subjects can give rise to an aspectual reading in Estonian, as in (30), depending on the lexical and/or aspectual properties of a verb. In general, though, aspectual readings in this type of context tend to be secondary.

- (30) a. Külalised saabusid.
 guest.NOM.PL arrive.PAST3.PL
 'The guests arrived.'
- b. Külalisi saabus.
 guest.PRTV.PL arrive.PAST3.SG
 'Some guests arrived. / Guests were arriving.'

Hiietam (2003), in contrast, accounts for the partitive in entirely semantic terms. Using the Transitivity Hypothesis (Hopper and Thomson 1980), she argues that partitive correlates with atelic clauses and objects with unbounded reference, whereas accusative (i.e. genitive and nominative) is restricted to telic verbs and limited/definite objects. More specifically, she analyses the Estonian partitive as a 'marker of reduced transitivity' (2003:250), which may 'override' boundedness and definiteness of the object referent in any sentence. While accusative in her theory is restricted to the object position in highly transitive affirmative sentences, partitive as a reduced transitivity marker has a wider distribution: it is also taken to mark subjects

which occur in constructions that have low transitivity, as, e.g. in (25b), (26b), and (30b) above. It is also taken to occur on single arguments in imperatives, where it alternates with the nominative case.

What emerges on the basis of different accounts above is primarily that partitive is taken to have a wider distribution than the accusative has in Finnish or than the genitive and nominative have in Estonian. This partially explains why it is also interpreted as a structural default complement case, as, for example, in Vainikka (1993) and Kiparsky (2001). Yet, the analysis of partitive as a structural default complement case is not empirically grounded in Estonian. Firstly, partitive is not restricted to marking complements only. In addition to intransitive subjects, it also occurs on adverbials, as shown in (31) and (32) (data from Metslang 2005:31; 54).

(31) Käisime terveid õhtuid maasikal
 go.past.3pl whole.prtv.pl evening.prtv.pl strawberry.allat.sg
 ‘We spent whole evenings picking (wild) strawberries’

(32) Juku suusatas viimast hooaega.
 J.nom. ski.past.3sg last.prtv.sg season.prtv.sg
 ‘Juku skied for the last season/ Juku was skiing for the last season.’

It appears then that partitive cannot be analysed as a structural case, since it also occurs on adjuncts, and seems to express ‘quantitative indeterminacy’ (Kiparsky 2001) in (31). Secondly, Kiparsky’s (1998, 2001) classification of the partitive case into different types, i.e. ‘aspectual’ and ‘quantificational’, suggests that morphological partitive is related to meanings which depend on linguistic context: it seems to be sensitive to the semantics of a noun (‘quantificational’), and whether it occurs on the complement of a verb or not (‘aspectual’). Hence, it is empirically inadequate to analyse the partitive case in Estonian (or Finnish) as a default case. Problems with assigning the Finnish partitive case structurally show up in debates such as whether it is an inherent or structural (grammatical) case, e.g. Kiparsky (1998), Vainikka & Maling (1996), Nelson (1995), Belletti (1988), among others, and often results in discarding the distinction between structural and inherent case, as in Nelson (1995), where the partitive is related to predicate semantics by associating its assignment with the assignment of non-aspectual theta-role.

These problems with respect to partitive are inherent to those theories and approaches which take a structuralist view of case. In this sense Hiietam's (2003) analysis of the Estonian partitive seems to be an exception. She describes partitive as a morphological case which marks an entirely semantic concept (as opposed to the syntactic concept of complement), that of reduced transitivity, across the core grammatical relations, i.e. subject and object. However, her analysis does not include the partitive case which occurs with quantifiers and prepositions, and its occurrence on adverbials. Therefore it seems that partitive as a transitivity marker is confined to the core relations in her theory. Yet one generalization which clearly emerges from the different treatments of partitive above is that it is not only an object marker.

4.4 Conclusion

The three cases discussed above, genitive, nominative, and partitive seem to be polyfunctional in the sense that their precise syntactic function can be determined only in context. Therefore, justifications for postulating accusative in Estonian do not seem to be valid, unless some good morphological reasons are adduced. However, as discussed in this and the previous chapter, Estonian offers neither empirical nor morphological justification for positing the accusative. It has also been shown in this chapter that the postulation of *syntactic* accusative does not gain anything for Estonian and does not contribute much to the grammar of Estonian, but rather complicates the understanding of distribution of cases unnecessarily. Thus, although it is possible to identify a syntactic accusative, this does not mean that a language actually needs this case in its grammar. The position taken here is therefore that the functions which are performed by the genitive, nominative, and partitive in Estonian are better characterised in terms of semantics. Explaining and justifying this claim is the topic of the next chapter.

5 Semantics of Estonian grammatical cases

In the previous chapter, case in Finnic was mainly discussed from the perspective of argument realisation. The argument realisation perspective assumes two kinds of case: grammatical case, which systematically occurs on syntactic arguments (nominative on subject, accusative on object), and semantic case (genitive, instrumental, the various locative cases, etc.), which is seen as lexically assigned or occurring with nominal adjuncts. Whereas grammatical case is taken to encode only syntactic information, semantic case is assumed to mark transparent semantic information in a manner similar to adpositions. Thus, grammatical cases are distinguished from one another on the basis of the syntactic function(s) they realise, while semantic cases are differentiated on the basis of the semantic roles they encode. This non-homogeneous approach to case has implications for case assignment: structural cases are described as assigned configurationally (e.g. in the generative tradition, Chomsky 1981 onwards), or as governed by a verb or determined by properties of a predicate phrase (e.g. Kiparsky 1998, 2001), while semantic cases are seen as having a more independent status, encoding some semantic relation that an optional lexical item bears with respect to some other expression.

It was shown in the previous chapter that Estonian data seem rather problematic in the light of the current syntactic approaches to case. First, it was demonstrated that alternations between structural cases signal semantic information. It appears then that case as a purely syntactic concept does not work for Estonian, because structural case has to be related to some semantic function in order to predict its occurrence in Estonian. Furthermore, both verbal and nominal semantics should be taken into account, especially when accounting for aspectual readings, which means that the interaction between nominal and verbal properties needs to be considered too. This, however, goes against the concept of ‘structural case’, since the distribution of case can no longer be predicted on a purely structural basis.

For these reasons, a rather different approach will be proposed instead. It will be argued in this chapter that case belongs to morphology, and that grammatical cases in

Estonian are actually semantic (although the semantics which they contribute is rather underspecified, so that the semantic contrasts expressed depend on the linguistic context). In short, then, this is an alternative view to grammatical case in Estonian which relies on pragmatics rather than truth-conditional semantics.

5.1 Aspectual interpretations are inferential

As discussed in Chapter 4, the semantics which Finnish and Estonian structural cases are usually associated with are aspect and/or boundedness, and quantification or definiteness of the NP. This section provides an overview of how Finnic structural cases have been related to semantics, particularly to event semantics. We begin therefore with a brief overview of the verbal properties and event structures which turn out to be relevant in explaining Finnic data.

5.1.1 Verbal properties and event structure

Estonian verbs are classified into different groups according to the morphological case which normally occurs with their objects. For instance, grammars such as EKG II (1993) and EKK (2007) have the following categories:

- (a) ‘partitive’ verbs (e.g. *juhtima* ‘to drive’, *jooksma* ‘to run’, *armastama* ‘to love’, *uskuma* ‘to believe’, etc.);
- (b) ‘aspectual’ verbs (e.g. *kirjutama* ‘to write’, *sööma* ‘to eat’, *ehitama* ‘to build’, etc.); and
- (c) ‘perfective’ verbs such as *andestama* ‘to forgive’ and *ammendama* ‘to exhaust’.³⁵

‘Partitive’ verbs are described as assigning partitive case to their direct object as a rule; ‘aspectual’ verbs allow a choice of case so that either partitive or genitive/nominative may occur on the direct object; and ‘perfective’ verbs assign only

³⁵ The Estonian counterparts for these terms are *partitiivverbid*, *aspektiverbid*, and *perfektiivsed verbid*, respectively.

genitive/nominative case. Although this classification is based on the verb's ability to occur with different morphological cases in Estonian, it provides a window into the semantic properties of these verbs. It roughly corresponds to lexical aspectual classification proposed by Vendler (1957, 1967), whereby 'partitive' verbs relate to activities and states, 'aspectual' verbs to accomplishments, and 'perfective' verbs to achievements, as shown in (1).

- (1) a. 'partitive' verbs ~ activities, states
 b. 'aspectual' verbs ~ accomplishments
 c. 'perfective' verbs ~ achievements

Since there is an overlap between the EKG and EKK's classification of Estonian verbs and the lexical aspectual classification in the Vendler's sense, an overview of the criteria of the latter classification and the properties of the verb types will be given. Note however that this overview does not follow Vendler's account, but that of Rothstein (2004), who takes the position that verbs denote sets of events, and that dividing verbs into different classes enables us to predict an event type. That is, Rothstein takes Vendler's classification to reflect the properties of the events which verbs denote, such that state, activity, achievement, and accomplishment may be construed as properties of verbs.

The classification of verbs is based on two crucial properties of event types, namely whether an eventuality encompasses an inherent stopping point or not (i.e. (a)telicity) and whether the eventuality can be characterised as progressing (i.e. dynamicity, or including stages). These two properties form the basis for the classification given in (2) below (as represented in Rothstein (2004:12)). In (2), those verb classes which can naturally occur in telic VPs are distinguished from those which cannot, and those verbs that can be naturally used in progressive form are distinguished from those which are not felicitous with these uses.

- (2) States [-telic; -stages]
 Activities [-telic; +stages]
 Achievements [+telic; -stages]
 Accomplishments [+telic; +stages]

The outline in (2) shows that stative eventualities (e.g. *believe, love*) are [-telic, -stages], which means that they can be described as cumulative, i.e. the sum of two events still counts as the same event (see Krifka 1989, 1992). In contrast, the sum of two events (e.g., *write two letters*) does not count as the same event, since it would be an event of *write four letters*. States are also characterised as non-dynamic, i.e. when a state holds, no change takes place; hence one cannot distinguish stages of development. In other words, stative eventualities are homogeneous (see Krifka op. cit., Rothstein 2004). One subpart of the class of Estonian ‘partitive’ verbs can be described along these lines.

It is also shown in (2) that activities share with states the property of being atelic. This means that activities, too, can be described as cumulative, if the direct object is kept constant (see Rothstein 2004:17ff). For instance, the sum of two separate *push a cart* events can still refer the same pushing event if the cart is the same. This gives activities, like states, the quality of being open-ended and unbounded. The only difference between activities and states is that in activities it is possible to distinguish stages (this is usually demonstrated by the fact that they are felicitous in the progressive), so that in the end an activity can be perceived as a series of minimal events, though these events cannot be subdivided ad infinitum. In sum, activities are construed as dynamic, and, in terms of a series of minimal events they are also seen as homogeneous. These properties apply to another subset of Estonian ‘partitive’ verbs.

Accomplishments are characterised as distinct from both stative and active eventualities as far as telicity is concerned. This makes them non-cumulative, i.e. they have an inherent endpoint which determines their culmination or stopping point. This is why the sum of two eventualities with this property cannot have the same denotation. For instance, if an accomplishment event such as *Mary writes a letter* is described then naturally it cannot proceed endlessly as one homogeneous string of instants of writing a letter or minimal events of writing a letter, because the event will be over as soon as the letter is finished. If Mary starts writing another letter it counts as another event, rather than a sub-event of a bigger singular event of the same type. This property renders accomplishments as non-homogeneous, since part of an event *write the letter* cannot be characterised as an event of *write the letter*, as in part of the event the letter would yet not be finished. In other words, accomplishments denote

events of change, and the event is finished when the change of state has taken place. In the relevant literature, non-homogeneous events are often referred to as quantized (e.g. Krifka 1989, 1992). Accomplishments share a property with activities, in that both have stages. This is again demonstrated by the fact that, as with activities, accomplishments occur naturally in the progressive. Thus an accomplishment can be described as an activity with the only difference that it is non-cumulative, i.e. an accomplishment is an activity which moves towards a culmination point. It is the ‘aspectual’ verbs in Estonian whose properties correspond to those of accomplishments.

Achievements resemble accomplishments in that they have in common the property of telicity or non-cumulativity. They are usually described as instantaneous events which are over as soon as they have started – as ‘culmination points’ which culminate in the instant they have begun (Moens & Steedman 1988), or ‘near instantaneous changes of state’ (Dowty 1979). It follows then that achievements are too short to have stages, i.e. be analysed into temporal parts, as shown in (2) above. Yet, as pointed out in the literature, achievements can occur in the progressive. How this phenomenon is accounted for varies, but one explanation is that achievements are ‘coerced’ into the progressive, as Rothstein (2004) suggests. This description allows her to maintain a difference between achievements and accomplishments in this respect.

This brief introduction to the properties of verbs reveals the extent to which verbs and direct objects are related and whether or not they allow any interaction. For instance, accomplishments allow the properties of their argument (i.e. direct object) to determine the aspectual structure of the event they denote, while activities, achievements, and states do not. According to Krifka (1992, 1998), the relation between accomplishment verbs and their arguments is gradual, so that the denotation of the argument is involved “bit by bit” (i.e. incrementally) through the physical extent of the denoted entity in the event denoted by the verb (i.e. homomorphism from an object to an event, as it is termed in Krifka (1992)). As an illustration, the extent (length) of the event of *writing a letter* is determined by the extent (or length) of the letter, which is seen as gradually or incrementally growing until the whole letter has come into existence. As soon as this has happened, the event stops. So the idea is that

it is the extent of the denotation of the theme argument which determines the extent of the event or its temporal endpoint. This type of relationship is referred to as ‘incremental theme’ by Dowty (1991), and ‘measure’ (which ‘measures out the event’) by Tenny (1994:11). Since the relation between the denoted verb and the denotation of the argument is taken as ‘gradual’, it follows that the properties of the argument are able to determine the endpoint of the event or leave it unbounded. Thus, what determines the telicity of accomplishments is the property of the relation between the argument and predicate (i.e. gradual or incremental), and the properties of the denotation of the argument (i.e. quantized or bounded). For instance, if an accomplishment verb such as *write* or *eat* occurs with a materially bounded NP as a theme argument, the event will be temporally bounded or telic. However, if the entity denoted by theme argument is referred to by a bare plural or mass noun, the telicity cannot be achieved, since the way these nouns refer is not able to provide boundaries to the denoted entity. Verkuyl (1993), for instance, refers to this phenomenon as the ‘PLUS principle’: the telicity of the VP is achieved if the verb has a feature [+ ADD TO] (roughly, it is dynamic) and if the argument has a feature [+ SQA] (i.e. it is a determined plural or singular NP, Specified Quantity of Argument). If one of these criteria is missing, the VP denotes an atelic event.

Achievements, as mentioned above, are naturally ‘atomic’ (Rothstein 2004) and thus cannot be perceived as extended or gradual events of change like accomplishments. For this reason, no interaction can be postulated between the properties of an achievement verb and its argument. It is also true of activities and states that the properties of the direct object cannot affect the telicity of the whole VP. That is, since states and activities are ‘homogeneous’ (Krifka 1992), there is no opportunity for the argument to interact with these types of verbs, and thus the properties of the argument (i.e. whether the entity is referred to by a count or a mass term) do not affect the aspectual interpretation of the sentence. This means that the argument of the verb cannot be directly affected by activities and states, unlike with accomplishments, a phenomenon which is often described in terms of ‘low’ vs. ‘high’ transitivity in the typological literature (cf. Hopper and Thompson’s (1980) Transitivity Hypothesis). Yet, activities can be coerced into accomplishments, if some complement other than the object NP or a path argument is added. For instance, in Estonian an adverbial expressing result can be added to an activity verb such as *kuulama* ‘to listen’, which is

a ‘partitive’ verb, i.e. it usually occurs with partitive case, as shown in (3a). If a ‘path argument’ is added, as in (3b), genitive/nominative case is also acceptable.

- (3) a. Mari kuulas uudist/ uudiseid; / *uudise/ *uudised.
M.NOM. listen.PRET.3SG news.PART.SG/PL / *GEN.SG/ *NOM.PL
‘Mary was listening/listened to the news.’
- b. Mari kuulas uudise/ uudised ära/ lõpuni.
M.NOM. listen.PRET.3SG news.GEN.SG/ NOM.PL away/ until-the-end
‘Mary listened to the news until the end.’

The properties of verbs discussed above show that a much finer level of opposition is implied by the verb types than the VP level telicity (cf. Verkuyl 1993, Kiparsky 1998). As Rothstein (2004:33) emphasises, ‘an activity does not have a telos determined by its relation with its arguments, whereas an accomplishment may have a telic point determined by the verb’s relation with its theme’. That is, while telicity is a property of VPs, it is up to particular verb classes and their properties whether they allow telicity to be determined or not. It is a characteristic of accomplishments specifically that the combination of an accomplishment verb and the properties of the direct object determine the telicity of the whole VP. An activity verb, in contrast, is not dependent on the properties of its direct object at all and thus the whole VP is always atelic, although this can be changed by adding adjunct phrases. Yet it is worth emphasising that it is not appropriate to ascribe telicity as a property to verbs themselves, as it is clearly a VP-level phenomenon (for a relevant detailed discussion, see Verkuyl 1993).

The possible interactions at the VP level between the properties of a verb and the properties of its object have been described in a range of syntactic theories within Minimalism (e.g. Ramchand 1997, Ritter & Rosen 2001, Kratzer 2002, Svenonius 2002, etc.). These writers all consider the direct object position to be related to event interpretation, and take this position to stand for several aspectually related concepts such as telicity, delimitedness, or boundedness which determine either argument selection or telicity in objects. These accounts tend to postulate a functional projection which dominates VP and is aspectual in nature, e.g. Asp, the head of which is taken to control whether the event has a telic (bounded) or atelic (unbounded) interpretation. Asp is also taken to be responsible for case selection in languages where case

alternation is believed to depend on aspect. In sum, these accounts interpret event structure in terms of syntax and thus represent it as an equivalent of phrase structure, and so allow a connection to be drawn between case and event structure.

5.1.2 Case and aspectual interpretations

As discussed in sections 4.1 and 5.1 above, it is either telicity or boundedness (or aspect in general) which is seen as influencing the case marking of objects in a range of accounts of Finnic. It is worth noting that Kiparsky's (1998) paper has led the way in this regard, and other syntactic accounts of Finnish case (e.g. Kratzer 2002, Ritter and Rosen 2001 among others) mostly rely on the data provided in Kiparsky (1998). Thus the focus in this section will be on Kiparsky's work first and then subsequently an overview of some other detailed accounts will be given.

Kiparsky (1998) follows Krifka's (1992) insight into the relation between verbs and their arguments and identifies boundedness as the semantic property which relates the direct object to the event in Finnish. One of the main reasons for choosing the notion of 'boundedness' seems to be the assumption that partitive has two semantic functions in Finnish: one aspectual and one NP-related (Kiparsky 1998:267). As an illustration, the NP-related function of partitive is given in (4) (example from Kiparsky 1998:268).

- (4) a. saa-n #karhu-a / #kah-ta karhu-a / karhu-j-a (Finnish)
 get-1Sg bear-**Part** / two-**Part** bear-Part / bear-Pl-**Part**
 'I'll get the (a) bear / (the) two bears / bears'
- b. saa-n karhu-n / kaksi karhu-a / karhu-t
 get-1Sg bear-**Acc** / two-**Acc** bear-Part / bear-Pl-**Acc**
 'I'll get the (a) bear / two bears / the bears'

Paraphrasing Kiparsky (1998:267), we can say that the verb *saada* 'to get' in (4) above is 'intrinsically bounded', a type of verb which can have the object in the partitive only when it is 'quantitatively indeterminate' (e.g. the object is an indefinite bare plural or mass noun), otherwise the object has to be in the accusative. In effect, then, an NP-related partitive is associated with 'quantitatively indeterminate

denotation’ or the unboundedness of the nominal, and therefore is ‘not assigned by the verb’.

The aspectual function of the partitive is shown in (5) (example from Kiparsky 1998:267), where the verb meaning ‘to shoot’ is shown to be one of the verbs which ‘assign case to their objects in two different ways, with a different aspectual interpretation’ (ibid.).

- (5) a. Ammu-i-n karhu-a / kah-ta karhu-a / karhu-j-a (Finnish)
shoot-Pst-2Sg bear-**Part** / two-**Part** bear-**Part** / bear-Pl-**Part**
‘I shot at the (a) bear / at (the) two bears / at (the) bears’
- b. Ammu-i-n karhu-n / kaksi karhu-a / karhu-t
shoot-Pst-1Sg bear-**Acc** / two-**Acc** bear-Part / bear-Pl-**Acc**
‘I shot the (a) bear / two bears / the bears’

As seen in (5a) above, when the verb has the object in the partitive, the interpretation of the predicate is aspectually irresultative, translated into English as ‘to shoot at’, whereas in (5b) the object is marked by accusative and the induced interpretation of the predicate is aspectually resultative, ‘to shoot dead’ (Kiparsky 1998:267). Thus, the partitive is taken to mark irresultativity or an unbounded event in (5a), i.e. an aspectual function. In accordance with traditional grammars, Kiparsky classifies Finnish verbs into different classes on the basis of their case assigning abilities. Some verbs, such as those denoting activities, are described as intrinsically unbounded, and since partitive is associated with unboundedness, they assign partitive case to all their objects as a rule, regardless of the object’s semantic properties (hence the name aspectual partitive). Some other verbs, such as those denoting achievements, are described as intrinsically bounded and thus assign accusative to their objects. With accomplishment verbs, boundedness is left open.

Identifying the semantic contrasts that are expressed by partitive and accusative as boundedness (rather than telicity or resultativity) seems to provide Kiparsky with a more plausible means of ‘unifying’ the two semantic functions of partitive at the VP level, along the lines of Verkuyl (1972, 1989). That is, Kiparsky (1998:285) observes that a ‘VP predicate is unbounded if it has an unbounded head, or an unbounded argument’. The head (i.e. verb) or argument is unbounded if (and only if) it is

divisive, cumulative and non-diverse (Kiparsky 1998:284). Assuming that the interpretation of boundedness of the VP comes across independently of case marking in Finnish, i.e. is not inherent to grammatical case per se, Kiparsky makes the following descriptive generalization about partitive: '[t]he object of an unbounded VP is obligatorily partitive' (1998:286). This means that for Kiparsky the case for direct objects is determined at the level of the VP: direct objects can only have accusative case if *both* the object and the event it participates in are 'bounded', while partitive case is used if one of these conditions is not met, and the whole VP is rendered as 'unbounded'.

The idea that case is a property of the VP rather than a nominal is also followed by Ritter and Rosen (2001) in their syntactic account of Finnish case alternation. Relying on Kiparsky's (1998) paper, Ritter and Rosen explain the object case alternation in terms of quantization (see section 4.1 for more detail): both the verb and the object DP must have a feature for quantization, [Quant], which is checked in the functional projection of agreement, Agr-OP. The quantized object argument is taken to determine the quantized event. The functional projection of agreement which is associated with delimitation or boundedness at the VP level is responsible for Accusative assignment, among other functions. The feature of quantification is lexically specified on verbs in Ritter and Rosen's theory, making it similar to Kiparsky's account where verbs are divided into intrinsically bounded (achievements) and unbounded (activities). The feature of quantification on the object argument is taken to be determined by linguistic context in the same way as in Kiparsky's account: the referential properties of the object noun are seen as being determined independently of case marking. This in effect renders the role of case in Ritter and Rosen's theory completely redundant as a syntactic concept: Accusative is assigned by an agreement relation (i.e. functor) and Partitive is treated as a default case; the occurrence of the cases is controlled by a semantic condition such as quantization.

Kratzer's (2002) paper also discusses object case alternation in Finnish and, similar to the accounts mentioned above, views the object case assignment as being determined by the semantics of the entire VP. Specifically, Kratzer assumes that it is the telicity of the VP which determines case selection, such that telic events are associated with accusative case and atelic events with partitive case. Following Chomsky (1995,

2000), she postulates that case can be treated in terms of features: verbal inflectional features are the interpretable counterparts of uninterpretable case features, and both types of features have to enter into an agreement relation. A verbal inflectional feature [acc] is linked to telicity and is interpretable, while on the object there occurs a case feature [acc], which is uninterpretable. Again, verbs are divided into two types, telic (achievements) and atelic (activities, i.e. processes; and states). Included among the atelic verbs are also the ‘eventive’ stems of accomplishments, which can actually have both telic or atelic uses, depending on the referential properties of the direct object and also on the contextually provided information. What is relevant here is the fact that while Kratzer relates accusative case to the telicity of the verb and partitive case to atelicity, she rejects the NP-related function of partitive as suggested by Kiparsky (1998) and proposes an ‘unpronounced determiner’ within the DP instead. This unpronounced D has a case, but whether this case is accusative or partitive depends on context, as it is not visible (Kratzer 2002:21-23). This extra syntactic item, D, is proposed in order to account for instances when the argument is formally a mass term or an indefinite bare plural, as in (6) (cited as an example by Kratzer 2002:23, originally from Kiparsky 1998:272). Thus, the D has accusative case for reading (a) in (6), and the event denoted by the verb is understood as telic. However, since the object argument is formally an indefinite plural, it is realised by partitive case. For the readings in (b) and (c), the D would have partitive case, yielding the event denoted by the verb as atelic (Kratzer 2002:23).

(6) Hän kirjoitt-i kirje-i-tä. (Finnish)
 He/she write-past-3sg letter-pl-Part

- (a) ‘He wrote letters’³⁶ (... and left)
- (b) ‘He was writing letters’ (... when I came)
- (c) ‘He was writing the letters’ (... when I came)

Kratzer’s account can be summarised therefore as positing a verbal inflectional feature [telic] which turns atelic predicates into telic ones, depending on the lexical meaning of the verbs and contextual information; the feature [telic] can impose a culmination on the event and hence render it as telic. Although her account successfully describes the semantic properties of VPs, it fails to predict the

³⁶ The original reading given by Kiparsky also includes ‘some’ in parenthesis modifying the noun ‘letters’ in order to indicate the interpretation usually given by native speakers, i.e. ‘some letters’.

distribution of partitive case accordingly: telic events may have their arguments in the partitive case, which is particularly confusing with ambiguous sentences such as (6) above.

This overview can be summarised as follows. The accounts described above attempt to suggest a connection between a semantic property of VPs and case morphology on direct objects. Yet, somehow the concept of case itself gets lost in these accounts. For instance, case is either taken as a syntactic feature which is without any interpretation (i.e. uninterpretable) or just as a property of the VP, determined by the semantics of the verb and its argument. These accounts make morphological case (as well as abstract case) something redundant, whose distribution needs to be associated with some semantic condition such as boundedness, quantization or telicity. It is left unspecified, however, how indefinite bare plurals or mass terms acquire definite or specific readings before being associated with accusative case. Consider, for example, Kiparsky's (1998:270) comment about Finnish:

Formally indefinite bare plural or mass nouns do not always get assigned partitive case with verbs like 'get' and 'seek'. They do so only if they have a *quantitatively indeterminate* denotation.

Kiparsky then provides examples, whose Estonian counterparts are given in (7) below, to illustrate how 'even indefinite bare plurals and mass nouns get accusative case if they denote a conventionally delimited set (of known or unknown cardinality)' (1998:270). In (7) below, an Estonian counterpart to Finnish accusative is nominative.

- (7) a. Anul on suurepärased üliõpilased.
A.adess. have.3sg brilliant.**nom.pl** student.**nom.pl**
'Anu has brilliant students'
- b. Anul on suurepäraseid üliõpilasi.
A.adess. have.3sg brilliant.**part.pl** student.**part.pl**
'Anu has [some] brilliant students'
- c. Akil on suured silmad / vuntsid.
Aki.adess. have.3sg big.**nom.pl** eye.**nom.pl** / moustache.**nom.pl**
'Aki has big eyes / a moustache'

- d. Akil on suuri silmi / vuntse
 A.adess. have.3sg big.**part.pl** eye.**part.pl** / moustache.**part.pl**
 ‘Aki has [some] big eyes / moustaches [in his possession]’
- e. Beebil on pikad juuksed.
 baby.adess. have.3sg long.**nom.pl** hair.**nom.sg**
 ‘The baby’s hair is long’
- f. Beebil on pikki juukseid.
 baby.adess. have.3sg long.**part.pl** hair.**part.sg**
 ‘The baby has [some] long strands of hair’ (on its head, in its hand, etc.)

Similarly to Finnish, (7a) has the reading that all of Anu’s students are brilliant, while (7b) leaves the referent ‘indeterminate’ (Kiparsky 1998:271). Example (7c) has the interpretation of inalienable possession; ‘moustache’ is a *plurale tantum* word in both Finnish and Estonian. In contrast, (7d) does not render an interpretation of inalienable possession but an ‘indeterminate number’ of possessed items, pragmatically then, for example, toy samples or false body parts. Likewise, (7e) refers to the ‘totality of baby’s own hair’, while (7f) renders the meaning of random strands of hair either on the baby’s head or in his/her hand (Kiparsky 1998:271).

As demonstrated in (7) above, the same indefinite bare plural noun may have different interpretations, either ‘quantitatively indeterminate’ or ‘quantitatively determinate’ depending on the morphological case it has. It is worth emphasising that the contexts in which these distinct denotations of the same noun are triggered are lexically and syntactically identical: the only difference is in the morphological case marking on the nominal. Therefore, if in the lexically and syntactically identical context the change in interpretation correlates with the change in case forms, it is reasonable to assume that it is the case form itself which conveys the semantics. That is, the morphological case itself is inherently semantic and contributes meaning on its own, which is in accord with the lexical meaning of the case-marked noun and the meaning of the whole sentence.

This view of morphological case in Estonian (or Finnish) has several advantages over those which take case to be determined purely by structure or the governing verb. For instance, it saves the analyst from the impossible task of seeking to associate a syntactic case with a relevant semantic condition that will hold in all possible cases in

a language and is also sufficiently predictive. As shown in the previous chapter (in particular, section 4.1), when such semantic conditions must be sought, the concept of structural case then basically loses its purpose.

A second advantage comes from the point mentioned above, that if ‘quantitative determinacy’ or ‘boundedness’ is signalled by something other than case marking, the question obviously is what it is that triggers the different readings of the same noun in identical contexts. The question of how different readings are triggered is particularly important because, for example, Ritter and Rosen’s (2002) quantization account seems to rely on the quantization of the object argument. Similarly, Kratzer (2002) assumes that the referent of the direct object provides ‘bounds for scales’ which measures out the event. In other words, these accounts of event semantics accept that it is the referent of the direct object which influences the telicity or boundedness of the whole predicate; and in doing so, they rely primarily on the formal count-mass or singular-plural distinction (though also with reference to context). That is, when the direct object is a bare plural or mass noun, accomplishment verbs behave like activity predicates, whereas with a singular count noun they head a telic VP. This basic distinction in direct objects, on which also quantization account is based, does not work in the light of Estonian data, as shown in (8) and (9) below.

- (8) a. Mari ehitas suvila aastaga. (telic)
 M.nom. build.past.3sg cottage.gen.sg year.comit.sg
 ‘Mary built a/the cottage in a year.’
- b. Mari ehitas suvilad aastaga. (telic)
 M.nom. build.past.3sg cottage.nom.pl year.comit.sg
 ‘Mary built the cottages in a year.’
- (9) a. Mari ehitas suvilat terve aasta. (atelic)
 M.nom. build.past.3sg cottage.part.sg whole.gen.sg year.nom.sg
 ‘Mary was building a/the cottage for a whole year.’
- b. Mari ehitas suvilaid terve aasta. (atelic)
 M.nom. build.past.3sg cottage.part.pl whole.gen.sg year.nom.sg
 (i) ‘Mary built cottages for the whole year.’
 (ii) ‘Mary was building cottages for the whole year.’

In (8) above, the reading of a telic or bounded event denoted by the VP comes across even when there is a plural noun in the direct object function. The interpretation of

The examples from (7) to (11) above can thus be taken to show that it is the case form itself which signals whether the denoted entity is referred to as “countable” or “non-countable”. This, however, has at least one significant implication for how the relationship between case and aspectual interpretations is best construed. Instead of taking telicity or boundedness (or aspect in general) to be responsible for case selection, this kind of data constrains us to conclude that it is morphological case itself which gives rise to aspectual interpretations. This does not necessarily mean that whenever a particular case is used, it gives rise to a particular interpretation. Aspectual interpretations are inferential and tend to come across with accomplishment verbs, as briefly explained in section 5.1.1 above, i.e. mostly verbs which denote creation, consumption or destruction. For instance, in (12a) below, the genitive case imposes the reading of ‘boundedness’ on the referent of the object noun. This case-marked term, having a ‘bounded’ denotation in terms of Kiparsky (1998), then sets a boundary for the event denoted by accomplishment verbs such as ‘to pour’, and thus determines the telicity or boundedness of the pouring event denoted by the entire VP.

- (12) a. Ta kallas vee klaasi.
s/he.nom. pour.past3sg water.gen. glass.illat.sg
‘S/he poured the water into a glass.’
- b. Ta kallas vett klaasi.
s/he.nom. pour.past3sg water.part. glass.illat.sg
(i) ‘S/he was pouring water into the glass.’
(ii) ‘S/he poured [some of the] water into the glass.’

In contrast, partitive case on a noun imposes an ‘unbounded’ denotation of the referent. Therefore, the temporal boundary of the event in (12b) is left unidentified and it is understood as atelic or unbounded. However, those verbs which denote activities (or processes) and states, as in (13) below, do not allow any interaction between the semantic properties of the object argument and the verb, as described in section 5.1.1 above.

- (13) Kalle armastab Maie.
Kalle.nom. love.pres.3sg Maie.part.sg
‘Kalle loves Maie.’

The fact that verbs of the type in (13) tend to occur with objects which are marked by the partitive case (i.e. they are those referred to as ‘partitive’ verbs by Estonian grammars) is easily explained if partitive is taken to have inherent meaning (such as what we can refer to as ‘unboundedness’, following Kiparsky (1998) for current purposes). That is, I would like to argue that the partitive case with these verbs looks like a grammaticalization of the information that the referent of the case-marked noun cannot provide boundaries for the event denoted by these verbs. The reason is that these verbs have the quality of being open-ended and unbounded like states, and therefore cannot affect the referents of their objects directly; hence the inability of those referents to provide ‘bounds’ for the event. Yet, activities can be coerced into accomplishments, if some complement other than the object NP or a path argument is added, and thus may occur with different case marking on its direct object, as shown in (3) above.

Achievement verbs, on the other hand, can freely occur with both the genitive/nominative and partitive case (as do accomplishment verbs). Yet, as described in section 5.1.1 above, achievement verbs do not allow any interaction with the referent of the object argument, because of their property of denoting instantaneous events. This also explains why both the genitive and nominative case can occur on both singular and plural count nouns, respectively, while partitive is ungrammatical on singular count nouns with this type of verb, as shown in (14).

- (14) a. Ta kaotas sõrmuse / sõrmused / *sõrmust.
 s/he.nom. lose.past3sg ring.gen.sg / ring.nom.pl / *ring.part.sg
 ‘S/he lost a ring / the rings / *[some] ring.’
- b. Ta leidis pööningult vanu sõrmuseid.
 s/he.nom. find.past3sg attic.elat.sg old.part.pl ring.part.pl
 ‘S/he found [some] old rings in the attic.’

That is, in (14a), genitive and nominative, having an inherent meaning (termed ‘boundedness’ for the time being) are in accord with the telicity or ‘boundedness’ denoted by the verb itself: instantaneous events have no proper subevents, which means that the ‘ring’ in (14a) can be lost only once during a single event and only the whole of it can be lost, not subparts of the ring. Since genitive on a count noun signals that the referent as a whole is referred to, it is felicitous in this context. Likewise,

nominative has the reading of ‘boundedness’ of the referent on the plural noun, and hence is also acceptable in this context. However, the occurrence of partitive case is ungrammatical on a singular count noun, as shown in (14a), since partitive imposes an ‘unboundedness’ reading on the noun, and is thus in contradiction with the ordinary event structure, i.e. when somebody loses a ring, it is normally the whole ring that is lost and not a (sub)part of it. Plural and mass terms marked by the partitive, on the other hand, are felicitous with the event structure that these verbs denote, as they allow the reading ‘a part of’ from some (unidentified) set or can simply be interpreted as ‘unbounded’.

It is morphological case itself, then, which has inherent semantics and which contributes to the interpretation of the case-marked noun (and the overall meaning of the sentence). That is, case *per se* signals whether the denotation of the case-marked noun is ‘bounded’ or ‘unbounded’; and it is the interaction between the semantic properties of verbs and of case-marked terms which induces aspectual interpretations. However, it is widely assumed that aspectual interpretations are inferential rather than truth-conditional (Kiparsky (1998, 2001) and after him also Kratzer (2002) and Ritter and Rosen (2001), among others). The truth-conditional semantics associated with syntactic cases in Finnic presupposes that case marking, and hence the object case alternation, stands for the grammaticalization of telicity; this is indeed stated by, e.g., Ackermann and Moore (1999, 2001), Kratzer (2002), and Ritter and Rosen (2001). Yet Estonian data does not seem to support this view. Some other accounts (e.g. Vainikka 1993, Nelson 1995) treat aspect either directly or indirectly as the property of a verb, although there is no such verbal category of aspect in Finnic. Rather, aspect seems to manifest itself at different levels and layers of the language, as is also stated by Metslang (2001) and argued by Tamm (2006) with respect to Estonian. Also, Tauli’s (1968) study (reported in section 4.1 above) suggests that aspect in Estonian is expressed lexically by pseudo-adverbials (or verbal particles), rather than grammatically. Tauli reports that the resultative reading almost always occurs together with an adverb or pseudo-adverbs expressing completion, such as *ära* ‘away, off’, as in (10a) above or in (15) below. In (15a), the sentence is understood as denoting an ongoing event, while in (15b) it refers to a telic event, due to the addition of the pseudo-adverbial *ära* conveying completion.

- (15) a. Kala kees.
 fish.nom.sg boil.past.3sg
 ‘The fish was boiling.’
- b. Kala kees ära.
 fish.nom.sg boil.past.3sg off
 ‘The fish is boiled.’

Altogether, then, aspectual contrasts in Estonian are not expressed directly by case-marking, but rather inferentially, in combination with the lexical meaning of verbs, case-marked nouns and the other elements in a clause.

It follows from what has been argued so far that there is actually no need to propose two separate semantic functions for the partitive along the lines of Kiparsky (1998). Since aspectual interpretations are inferential, and since morphological cases express aspect only indirectly, it is therefore redundant to distinguish a separate ‘aspectual’ function for the partitive in Finnish (or Estonian). This is explicitly illustrated by sentences which include partitive-marked plural nouns and, as Kiparsky (1998:268) concedes, thus yield ‘three-way ambiguity’: (i) aspectual partitivity, (ii) NP-related partitivity, and (iii) both aspectual and NP-related partitivity. This is exemplified in (16), which is an Estonian counterpart of the Finnish example in (6) above. Basically, in sentences such as (16), one cannot propose ‘aspectual partitivity’ without ‘NP-related partitivity’, rather, it is an NP-related partitivity which gives rise to aspectual partitivity, as also shown in examples (9b), (10b), and (12b) above. One might argue, for example, that aspectual partitivity can be induced in (16) below without an NP-related partitivity, so that the referent of the object noun is understood as definite, but then the definiteness needs to be established by previous discourse while the aspectual reading would need to be established by means of a subordinating conjunction such as *sel ajal kui* ‘while’, for instance. However, all that this demonstrates is that partitive on its own does not mark aspect directly; aspect is inferred from context.

- (16) Ta kirjutas kirju.
 s/he.nom. write.past.3sg letter.part.pl
 (i) ‘S/he was writing letters’
 (ii) ‘S/he wrote letters’

In sum, the accounts described above (e.g. Kiparsky 1998, Kratzer 2002, Ritter and Rosen 2001) which take aspectual properties of the VP to determine the morphological case on the direct object in Finnish lack explanatory value. They do not contribute to a better understanding of (i) what morphological case is about and (ii) how is it related to event structure. Specifically, with verbs denoting accomplishments it is not clear what the differential case marking stands for, and what the role of case is with respect to boundedness, telicity or quantization. A precisely the opposite view of the relationship between case and aspectual interpretations has therefore been proposed in this section: a view which takes morphological case seriously in its own right and assumes that it is the case marker itself which gives rise to aspectual interpretations. Yet, as already described above, it is not only aspectual interpretations which grammatical cases in Estonian induce, but also a range of nominal and other sentence-related interpretations. Thus the next section focuses on how the meanings which cases signal crucially depend on context.

5.2 Case meaning and context dependency

The previous section established that morphological case itself has semantics and aspectual readings in Estonian are inferential. This section argues that all case meanings are inferential, being dependent on the linguistic expression they mark and the context in which they occur. The stance taken here then contrasts with the traditional or structuralist approach to case which maintains that context cannot have an effect on grammatical or syntactic case. For instance, the structural approach to case tends to treat the partitive as a default case (i.e. meaningless or uninterpretable) (e.g. Kratzer 2002, Ritter & Rosen 2001, *inter alia*), while the distribution of accusative is treated as related to aspect (which is seen as a property of either the verb or the predicate) and the accusative itself is regarded as uninterpretable. This means that the accusative in Finnish, or the genitive/nominative in Estonian, is predicted to occur on the object only when the clause denotes a telic or a bounded event; or when it has an aspectual theta-role, as suggested in Nelson (1995); or when it has the result theta-role, as in Kiparsky (2001). In other words, VPs whose direct object is assigned accusative should always denote a resultative or completed event. Yet there is data

(such as presented in (17)-(19) below), which challenges the view that the accusative (or genitive/nominative) occurs only when the event denoted is telic or bounded. The examples below are from Vaiss (2004) who points them out as exceptions to the general tendency of object cases to mark perfectivity or boundedness. In all these examples, the situation described is bounded or telic, yet the case on the direct object in each example is partitive instead of genitive (or accusative).

- (17) Küsisin ülikonna hinda.
ask.past.1sg suit.gen.sg price.part.sg
'I asked the price of the suit.'³⁷
- (18) Olen seda näitust juba ükskord külastanud.
be.pres.1sg this.part. exhibition.part.sg already once visit.ppl
'I have already visited this exhibition one time.'
- (19) Noormees kordas 100m jooksus
young-man.nom.sg repeat.past.3sg 100m race.iness.sg
Eesti rekordit.
Estonian.gen.sg record.part.sg
'The young man repeated the Estonian record in the 100m race.'

Additionally, attempts to relate the accusative case (or genitive/nominative) to transitivity (Hopper and Thompson 1980) are not very promising either, as demonstrated in (20).

- (20) Mary hit her brother yesterday (Hiietam 2003: 227-228).
Mary lõi oma venda eile.
M.nom. hit.past.3sg own brother.part.sg yesterday
'Mary hit her brother yesterday.'

Example (20) is a counterexample to Hiietam's (2003) claim that 'accusative' in Estonian marks transitivity: it includes what would be regarded as a 'highly' transitive verb and a 'highly' individualised definite object, thus denoting a highly telic event. Nevertheless the object NP is marked by partitive (instead of genitive as would be expected as the case which is associated with marking telicity or boundedness of the predicate).

³⁷ Examples (17)-(19) are from Vaiss (2004), translations and glosses are provided by me.

Not all occurrences of the accusative (or genitive/nominative) can be straightforwardly subsumed under the transitivity, telicity, quantization, or VP-boundedness account, then. In fact, the very multiplicity of the various accounts itself suggests that there is no straightforward semantics involved. Rather, one is drawn towards the conclusion that grammatical cases in Estonian yield multiple meanings. As will be discussed further they may induce such readings as totality, partiality, specificity, resultativity, temporality, implicit negation (or distancing), or signal time reference – in addition to telicity and boundedness. A particular interpretation is determined both by the linguistic context and also by the non-linguistic context. It is important to note that sometimes the case alternation between genitive/nominative and partitive is optional, showing *no* apparent meaning contrast at all. In the following subsection it will be demonstrated how various interpretations of case crucially depend on inference in context.

5.2.1 Case meaning is inferential

The view that case has inherent meaning is supported by the fact that partitive generates a range of nominal related interpretations, such as the generic reading in (11) above, and unbounded interpretations of count nouns, as in (21) below (which is an Estonian counterpart to Kiparsky’s (1998:291) example). The generic function of the partitive in (11) seems to be enhanced by the adjunct denoting location, ‘to everywhere’, and in (21) the unboundedness of the mass term is induced in interaction with the meaning of the adverbial ‘under the bed’. As Lyons (1999:190) points out, locative expressions seem to be crucial in contributing to the generic interpretation.

- (21) Seda käsikirja oli voodi all-gi.
 this.part. manuscript.part.sg be.past.3sg bed.gen.sg under-even
 ‘(Parts of) that manuscript were even under the bed.’

Examples of the maximality effect were given above in (7), where the nominative was interpreted as referring to the maximal number of a particular group in (7a); the maximality reading of body parts gave rise to an interpretation of inalienable possession in (7c) and (7e). Partitive, in contrast, signalled an indeterminate number

in a particular group in (7b), and because of the indeterminate quantity reading, the interpretation of inalienable possession was impossible for purely pragmatic reasons in (7d) and (7f). Whole vs. partial quantity was illustrated in (10) above. A collectivity reading (or the reading of maximal participants) comes across in (22a) below, while (22b), which has a partitive-marked theme argument, yields a distributive reading of the denoted referent (or part of a set reading).

- (22) a. Noored kogunevad tantsima.³⁸
 youngster.nom.pl gather.pres.3pl dance.infit.
 ‘The youngsters will gather / are gathering to dance.’
- b. Noori koguneb tantsima.
 youngster.part.pl gather.pres.3sg dance.infit.
 ‘Youngsters are gathering to dance.’ (Nemvalts 1996:85)

An interpretation of a maximal set of a referent (or collectivity of plural terms) may be induced when plural nouns occur as an argument in the nominative. In the attributive function, however, the semantic contrast conveyed by the alternation between the genitive and partitive singular gives rise to entirely different interpretations, as demonstrated in (23). In (23a), the genitive-marked attribute together with the head noun is construed as a possessive construction, while in (23b) the same sequence of words, but marked with partitive case instead, is understood as a noun phrase including a modifier (see also section 6.2.2. below for further discussion of these examples).

- (23) a. Punase värvi pott vedeles põrandal.
 red.gen.sg colour.gen.sg container.nom.sg lie.past.3sg floor.adess.sg
 ‘The container of the red paint was lying on the floor.’
- b. Punast värvi pott vedeles põrandal.
 red.part.sg colour.part.sg container.nom.sg lie.past.3sg floor.adess.sg
 ‘A red hued container/pot was lying on the floor.’

These alternating object cases have often been described as expressing definiteness in addition to aspect; genitive/nominative is associated with definiteness and partitive with indefiniteness (e.g. Hiietam 2003, also Rajandi & Metslang 1979, *inter alia*). Note, however, that grammatical case per se does not contribute to the interpretation

³⁸ Examples are from Nemvalts (1996), glosses and translations are mine.

of definiteness in Estonian, as will be discussed in section 6.2.2 below. The genitive case does not mark definiteness, as shown in (24a), where the term in the genitive is most likely to be understood as specific. In (24b), however, the definiteness reading of the object in the genitive does come across, but this is thanks to a prosodic effect in the clause (again, this will be discussed in more detail in section 6.2.2). Furthermore, in (24c) the partitive marked noun may be interpreted as specific, thus demonstrating that a simple dichotomy between definiteness and indefiniteness is not applicable to the alternating cases (see also Chesterman (1991) with respect to Finnish).

- (24) a. Elle kirjutas raamatu.
 E.nom. write.past.3sg book.gen.sg
 ‘Elle wrote a book.’
- b. Elle kirjutas raamatu valmis.
 E.nom. write.past.3sg book.gen.sg ready/done
 ‘Elle finished writing the book.’
- c. Elle kirjutas raamatut.
 E.nom. write.past.3sg book.part.sg
 ‘Elle was writing a book.’

In existential sentences, such as in (25) below, the case alternation between nominative and partitive is said to indicate ‘existential presupposition’ (Nemvalts 1996:43) rather than a contrast in definiteness.

- (25) a. Eesriide taga on inimesi.
 curtain.gen.sg behind be.pres.3pl humanbeing.part.pl
 ‘There are people behind the curtain.’
- b. Eesriide taga on inimesed.
 curtain.gen.sg behind be.pres.3pl humanbeing.nom.pl
 ‘Behind the curtain, there are people.’ (Nemvalts 1996:43)

Nemvalts specifies that the choice of case in this type of construction ‘seems to depend on the pragmatics of the situation and the context of sentence’ (1996:43). That is, the use of the nominative with a plural noun in (25b) indicates an ‘underlying existential presupposition’ so that the sentence means ‘those behind the curtain are people’ (ibid.). Partitive case is seen as expressing ‘no existential presupposition’ which would imply the referent of the argument. In other words, what the case alternation appears to signal in (25) is the discourse status of the referents, i.e.

whether or not they have been mentioned in the current discourse, or are directly perceivable from the extra-linguistic situation (Nemvalts 1996:43; about Finnish, see Kaiser 2006).

In transitive clauses, the case alternation on the object gives rise to aspectual readings in interaction with accomplishment verbs. For instance, the genitive-marked object of a creation verb (e.g. ‘to write’, ‘to paint’, ‘to build’, etc.) induces an interpretation of result, i.e. an event as a result of which some specific entity comes into being, such as a ‘book’ in (24a) above. With consumption verbs (e.g. ‘to eat’, ‘to drink’, ‘to read’, etc.), however, genitive on the direct object triggers the reading of completed action, as in (10a) above. Unlike with creation verbs, here the outcome is that a pre-existing entity has been consumed rather than created. In contrast, partitive is understood as signalling progressive reading with accomplishments (both creation and consumption verbs), but irresultativity with achievements, e.g. ‘to shoot’, as in (5) above. In essence, aspectual readings occur only with verbs that denote accomplishments, as well as with coerced activities (such as in (3) above); and are a ‘consequence of pragmatic effects’ (Jackendoff 1996:349). This also explains why the case alternation between nominative and partitive in the existential construction is usually not associated with aspect, but with NP-related semantics instead (as in Kiparsky’s (1998, 2001, 2005) papers where the NP-related partitive and aspectual partitive have different distributions). That is, existential sentences tend to involve verbs which denote states (e.g. *olema* ‘to be’, *asetsema* ‘to be situated’, *lebama* ‘to lie’, etc.), as in (25) above, and are thus inherently non-dynamic. Non-dynamic verbs, as explained in section 5.1.1 above, cannot trigger aspectual readings, as also concluded by Nemvalts (1996:95) with respect to Estonian existential sentences. Yet, when an intrinsically dynamic verb is used in the existential construction, an aspectual reading is also possible, as in (22) above.

As implied above, and also indicated in (22a), genitive/nominative may be taken to indicate future tense. This happens with telic or bounded readings when the verb is in the present tense, as in (26a). The future meaning is entirely inferential, i.e. the denoted event, which is understood as completed, can be completed only in the future if the time reference given is present. The sentence in (26b), however, is normally construed as progressive.

- (26) a. Siim ehitab maja ümber aia.
 S.nom. build.pres.3sg house.gen.sg around fence.gen.sg
 ‘Siim is going to build / will build a fence around [his] house.’
- b. Siim ehitab maja ümber aeda.
 S.nom.sg build.pres.3sg house.gen.sg around fence.part.sg
 ‘Siim is building a fence around [his] house.’

With verbs denoting achievements, the case alternation between genitive/nominative and partitive may trigger an inferential effect of temporality, relative to context. Note that while partitive case is normally ungrammatical on a singular count noun as the object of an achievement verb (see, e.g., (14a) above), it is grammatical when temporality is implied, as in (27a) below. Thus (27a) is likely to be understood in such a way that the car was borrowed for a short period of time, while in (27b) the borrowing event is understood to be a long term one (EKK 2007:474, Kiparsky 1998:282).

- (27) a. Maarika laenas autot.
 M.nom. borrow.past.3sg car.part.sg
 ‘Maarika borrowed a car.’ [temporarily]
- b. Maarika laenas auto.
 M.nom. borrow.past.3sg car.gen.sg
 ‘Maarika borrowed a car.’

It should be noted however that the semantic contrasts induced by the alternating cases on the object come across only in affirmative sentences. Under the scope of negation, the direct object has to be in the partitive. This means that no aspectual readings in terms of telicity, resultativity or boundedness are possible; the only reading which comes across in this respect is a situation of state. This is shown in (28) below, a negated version of (12) above, which denotes neither a completed nor an on-going event.

- (28) Ta ei kallanud vett klaasi.
 s/he.nom neg pour.ptc.pers. water.part.sg glass.illat.sg
 ‘S/he did not pour the water into a glass.’

That is to say, under the scope of negation, an NP does not normally express a ‘bounded’ entity. Hence, partitive case is a natural choice, since its inherent meaning is related to ‘unboundedness’ and thus it is more felicitous in negated contexts. Nevertheless, genitive/nominative is used in contrastive negation, expressed as *mitte x, vaid y* ‘not x, but y’ in Estonian, as in (29) (example from EKK 2007:472). Essentially, in order to make a contrast, whether under negation or not, one has to convey information about the boundedness or unboundedness of the contrasted entities. This also explains why aspectual readings are possible in contrastive negation as opposed to non-contrastive negation (for more detail, see Verkuyl 1993).

- (29) Ta ei ostnud mitte maasturi, vaid paadi.
 he.nom. neg. buy.ptc.pers. neg off.road.vehicle.gen.sg but boat.gen.sg
 ‘He did not buy an off-road vehicle but a boat.’

Since it is the partitive case which typically occurs under negation, this is associated with negation in Finnic. Both in Finnish and Estonian grammars partitive is described as obligatory under negation. It is not surprising then that in contexts where the alternation between partitive and nominative seems optional, Kiparsky (1998:288) makes partitive the equivalent of a ‘negative polarity item’ which occurs in an ‘implicitly negated context’. As an illustration, see (30), which is an Estonian counterpart to the example provided in Kiparsky (1998:288).

- (30) a. Kas sul pliiats on?
 Q 2sg.adess. pencil.nom.sg be.pres.
 ‘Do you have a pencil?’
 b. Ka sul pliiatsit on?
 Q 2sg.adess. pencil.part.sg be.pres.
 ‘Do you [happen to] have a pencil?’

As Kiparsky (1998:288) explains, when a speaker is expecting a negative answer, or is trying to be polite, he or she might prefer (30b) to (30a). Note that the use of partitive in yes/no questions such as in (30) is likely to be problematic for syntax-based theories of case. Indeed, Kaiser (2002:196) calls the example in (30b)

‘unexpected data’,³⁹ because its declarative counterpart would be ungrammatical, as shown in (31). That is, since partitive is unacceptable on singular count nouns in predicate possessives in the same way as in existentials, only nominative is possible in (31).

- (31) Mul on pliiats / *pliiatsit.
 1sg.adess. be.pres. pencil.nom.sg / pencil.part.sg
 ‘I have a pencil.’

Examples (30) and (31) demonstrate then that case may be selected for purely pragmatic reasons. In (30), partitive on the object is taken to signal distancing and therefore it is preferred to the nominative in expressions of request in the form of yes/no questions.

In addition to instances of case alternation which are optional in the sense that the choice of case is primarily pragmatically motivated, there also are instances of case alternation in which not only is the choice between partitive and genitive/nominative optional but no significant meaning contrast is shown at all. Rajandi & Metslang (1979), for instance, comment that in examples such as (32) and (33) the choice of case on the direct object is random and unpredictable; no significant semantic difference is shown between the alternating cases in those examples (Rajandi & Metslang 1979:17). It appears then that the meaning contrast can turn out to be irrelevant in certain contexts, as in (32), where it is overridden by a context which establishes an easily identifiable referent of the object noun. Likewise, in (33) it is the denotation of the case-marked noun itself which renders the meaning contrast irrelevant.

- (32) Detektiiv Dickson leidis telefonitorult retsdivist
 detective.nom.sg D.nom. find.past.3sg receiver.ablat.sg recidivist.nom.sg

 Richardi sõrmejälgi / sõrmejäljed.
 R.gen.sg fingerprints.**part.pl** / fingerprints.**nom.sg**
 ‘Detective Dickson found recidivist Richards’ fingerprints on the telephone receiver.’ (Rajandi & Metslang 1979:17)

³⁹ Kaiser (2002, 2003), in attempting to find an underlying pattern for this type of case alternation in yes/no questions in Finnish, argues that partitive can function as a negative polarity item, as suggested by Kiparsky (1998).

- (33) Teet tellis seapraadi / seaprae.
 T.nom. order.past.3sg roast.pork.**part.sg** / roast pork.**gen.sg**
 ‘Teet ordered roast pork.’ (Rajandi & Metslang 1979:3, 17)

According to the Handbook of Estonian Grammar (EKK 2007), the choice of case is optional when the *da*-infinitive occurs with verbs expressing will, wish or intention (e.g. *kavatsema* ‘to plan, intend’; *soovima* ‘to wish’; *tahtma* ‘to want’, *tohtima* ‘to be allowed’, etc.). EKK explains that both partitive and genitive/nominative may be used in free variation with these verbs, as in (34), because the possible interpretations are perceived as ‘insignificant’ (EKK 2007:475).

- (34) Soovin osta seda raamatut / selle raamatu.
 wish.pres.1sg buy.infit. this.**part.** book.**part.sg** / this.**gen.** book.**gen.sg**
 ‘I would like to buy this book.’

Thus there are also contexts in which the variation between partitive and genitive/nominative on the object noun is essentially free. In other words, on the assumption that the meaning of case depends on inference in context, some contexts do not support identifying the meaning of case in the sense that they fail to provide sufficient information, and therefore the alternation appears optional. This conclusion is supported by the results of a study that I carried out among native speakers of Estonian and which is presented in the following section.

5.2.2 Native speakers’ judgements of case marking

In March and April of 2006, I conducted a small-scale study based on acceptability/judgement tasks among native speakers of Estonian. The study was essentially qualitative and consisted of two separate experiments, which were carried out consecutively separated by a one-month interval. The aim of the study was to see whether or not context has an effect on the acceptability of grammatical case. Specifically, the study focussed on case alternations in context, in order to identify the conditions under which alternations in case may be affected by context, if at all.

Participants

There were 5 participants in the first experiment and 10 participants in the second. The majority of the participants of the second experiment were different from the ones who took part in the first experiment. Altogether, the study involved 15 native speakers from different parts of Estonia. Speakers were excluded if they came from north-eastern towns, where Russian is the dominant language and the effect of language contact would have significantly biased the results. Participants included both linguists and “naïve” speakers of Estonian, but the naïve speakers outnumbered those with a background in linguistics or Estonian philology (i.e. there were 10 naïve speakers and 5 linguists). The age of the participants ranged from 20 to 70 years (mean 38 years, range was 50).

Tasks

In both experiments, participants were presented with a series of texts. The texts were compiled from on-line news and opinion columns from the Estonian Daily (*Eesti Päevaleht*) which were published during the period of March and April 2006. The criteria for selecting texts for the tests were as follows: they had to be full stories, or complete meaningful paragraphs; and they had to be free from typos and other unexpected ungrammaticalities. The first experiment consisted of thirteen different texts which met these criteria. For the second experiment slightly longer texts were used (approximately 400 words each), which also conformed to the same criteria used for selecting texts in the first experiment. The second experiment comprised three texts drawn from *Eesti Päevaleht* and three texts which were devised by me specially for this study. The devised texts consisted of two to three sentences providing a context, and one test sentence in which the case-marked nominal was presented in different case forms (see Appendix 1, section 2). For instance, when the sentence had a singular count noun as an object, it was presented in the partitive singular, in the genitive singular, and also in the genitive singular in the construction which included an adverbial expressing perfectivity (or telicity). These different forms had to be judged within the given context by the native speakers.

For the texts taken from the Estonian Daily, in each paragraph the case-marked direct object was selected and replaced by the alternative case, i.e., the genitive/nominative case was replaced by the partitive case and vice versa. Attention was also paid to

verbal agreement: if an object noun occurred in the nominative plural and was changed into the partitive plural, the verb form was accordingly changed into the singular (bearing in mind that an NP in the partitive case does not agree with the verb). Thus participants were presented with texts in which the original case forms were deleted and replaced instead with altered forms. An example of the text is given in Appendix 1.

Procedure

In both experiments, the participants were asked to read the given texts and identify any errors, as well as to highlight phrases or sentences which they thought were not acceptable. This was intended to show whether the participants noticed or paid any consideration to the nominals which occurred in the “wrong” case. The participants were also encouraged to comment on any corrections or choices they made. The three texts which I devised myself explicitly asked participants to comment on their judgements about the different case forms in the contexts provided. For each text, there were only two options given: ‘the most natural-sounding’ and ‘completely odd’. The primary purpose of these devised contexts was to obtain native speakers’ comments about their preferences for each morphological case in the contexts provided.

Results

In broad terms, the results show that context does have an effect on grammatical case. That is, it turned out that while the participants in general identified instances which had been made ungrammatical, there were also a surprising number of contexts where the case of the direct object was not changed back into its original form by the participants, implying that the case seemed to be optional. For instance, there were contexts which included the *da*-infinitive, as in (34) above; an example from the second test is given in (34’) below. The original version of this sentence in (34’) had the direct object in the partitive case, but all 10 participants in the second experiment accepted it in the genitive singular; hence both object cases are given in (34’) (see Appendix 2, Experiment 2 (Context 2, sentence 24)). Note that the examples in this section are presented as extracts from the full story; the relevant portions are glossed and underlined both in Estonian and in the translation.

- (34') Ja kes jaksakski kogu seda-PRTV parve-PRTV.SG /selle-GEN parve-GEN.SG kinni püüda-INF ja läbi vaadata-INF!
And who would manage to catch all this flock and check [it] through!

However, the instances of optionality were not restricted to contexts which included the *da*-infinitive. For example, (35) below is an extract in which the object case was the genitive singular in the original version, but the modified version in the partitive case was accepted by all 5 participants (see Appendix 2, Experiment 1 (context 10, sentence 23)).

- (35) Londoni loodusajaloo muuseumis on rahvale välja pandud üks kõigi aegade suuremaid ja terviklikumana säilinud hiidkalmaare. 8,62 meetri pikkune elukas püüti traali abil kinni Falklandi saarte lähistelt. Muuseumi töötajad tegid-PAST.3PL kalmaari säilitamiseks tohutut-PART.SG tööd-PART.SG ja nüüd on ta üheksameetrises klaasakvaariumis välja pandud.

At the Natural History Museum in London, one of the biggest and best-preserved giant squids has been put on display. The giant squid, which is 8.62m long, was caught off the coast of the Falkland Islands. Museum scientists did a huge amount of work in order to preserve it and it is now on display in a 9-meter long acrylic tank.

The results also showed a tendency for optionality in the object cases with plural nouns. An example is given in (35'), where originally the object occurred in the nominative plural, but all 10 participants considered the partitive case acceptable in the same context (i.e. they did not change the case back into the original, nominative, form) (see Appendix 2, Experiment 2 (context 1, sentence 2)).

- (35') Neljas riigikogu esimees Varek tänas parlamenti usalduse eest ning lausus-PAST.3SG tänusõnu-PART.PL ka eelmisele esimehele, akadeemik Ene Ergmale.

Varek, the fourth speaker of the Riigikogu (i.e. state assembly), thanked the parliament for their trust and also gave thanks (lit. uttered the words of thanks) to the former speaker, the academic Ene Ergma.

What the results seem to suggest overall is that a distinction can be drawn between grammaticalised uses of the object cases (such as the occurrence of the partitive case on the object NP with certain verbs) and instances where the choice of case appears to be semantically motivated. When the grammaticalised uses of case were changed into a different case form in the test, they were recognised by most of the informants, i.e. by 5 participants out of 5, as, for example, in sentence 13 of context 5 in Experiment 1. However, there were also instances (as in (36)), in which the changed case form

rendered the whole predicate apparently ungrammatical, at least according to the traditional grammars of Estonian; yet they were left unchanged by at least some of the participants (i.e. by 3 out of 10) (see sentence 4, context 1 in Experiment 2). Note that the verb in (36) is a ‘partitive’ verb which requires the object NP in the partitive case.

- (36) ... et vahel on saadikud läinud omavahel hambaid-PRTV.PL/*hambad-NOM.PL teritades üle piiri.
lit.: ... that sometimes Members of Parliament have gone too far in sharpening their teeth at each other

In texts where the choice of the object case was determined by semantics and, in principle, both object cases were possible (depending on whether the sentence was taken to refer to ‘bounded’ or ‘unbounded’ entities or events) the results varied extensively. For instance, the predicate in (36’) below may be associated with either a ‘bounded’ or ‘unbounded’ interpretation, and the context provided leaves it open which one it is, although pragmatically it would be telic or bounded, expressed by the the genitive singular on the object, as in the original version.

- (36’) Lind on kui snaiper, kes varitseb puu otsas oma õnnetut ohvrit ning tulistab talle siis õlale valge-GEN.SG liraka-GEN.SG / valget-PRTV.SG lirakat-PRTV.SG.

A bird is like a sniper, who lies in wait on the top of a tree for its unlucky victim and then shoots a white splodge onto his/her shoulder.

In (36’), half of the participants (i.e. 5 out of 10) accepted the object case in the changed form, i.e. partitive. It is worth noting that one of the participants reread the whole text and on the second reading s/he changed the object case back into the original case form, i.e. genitive (see Appendix 2, Experiment 2 (context 3, sentence 32)).

However, in the contexts where the associated interpretations (e.g. ‘boundedness’ or ‘unboundedness’) were explicitly expressed (either lexically or by context), as in (36’’) below, all the participants identified the unacceptable case form, i.e. the partitive case, and corrected it back into the original case form, i.e. the genitive singular.

(36'') Eile hommikul kella poole üheksa paiku märkas parvlaeva Regula meeskond Kuivastu sadamasse sissesõidul jääsupis ühel jäätükil kitse. Laev sõitis kitsest umbes 10–15 meetri kauguselt mööda, mehed otsustasid *loomakest-PRTV.SG kaldale toimetada.

Yesterday morning, around half past eight, the crew of the ferry called Regula that was entering Kuivastu bay noticed a baby deer on a piece of ice in the sea. The ferry passed the deer at a distance of 10-15m; the men decided to help the animal back to the shore.

Altogether, the results of the study indicate that context has an impact on grammatical or structural case in Estonian. This is rather an unexpected result, if case is viewed from the structuralist point of view. Specifically, it would be difficult (if not impossible) to account for the object marking in those instances, where the alternation between the genitive/nominative and the partitive case appears random. Also, the results strongly suggest that it is not well justified to analyse structural cases as assigned by the verb (or configurationally). Specifically, as emphasised throughout this chapter, there are contexts in which the alternation between the partitive and genitive/nominative does not show any meaning contrast at all, while in some other contexts the same alternation yields readings of ir/resultativity, quantitative in/determinacy, presupposition, and temporality, among others. The multiple interpretations of a single case form, which vary from context to context, and occasionally the unavailability of any (significant) meaning, seem to point to the hypothesis that the meaning which case conveys is underspecified. Thus, instead of relating cases to truth-conditional meaning, it may be more appropriate to rely on pragmatic inferencing in context. The context-dependence of the interpretations, which was illustrated in the previous section and by the study presented in this section, clearly indicates that the meanings which both partitive and genitive contribute are highly underspecified. This in turn points to the need to analyse case in Estonian from a different perspective. This alternative perspective is discussed in section 5.3.

5.3 The role of grammatical case in Estonian

In the previous sections, it has been argued that:

- grammatical case per se encodes meaning;
- the meaning which a case marker signals is not absolute but pragmatic, being crucially dependent on context;
- the semantics which a case marker encodes is underspecified.

Therefore, as suggested above, there is a need for an alternative approach to case in Estonian – one which will allow us to take context dependency and/or inferential processes into account. Since the most well-grounded inferential pragmatic approach currently available is Relevance Theory (RT) (see Sperber and Wilson 1986; Wilson and Sperber 1993, 2002, 2004), I will here view case from a Relevance Theoretic perspective. RT recognises the influence of context on the interpretation of a linguistic expression, and thus promises to be more effective and explanatory in accounting for grammatical case in Estonian. Note, however, that RT does not provide any analysis of case and neither does it suggest how case should be analysed. It simply provides a framework for the interpretation of utterances or linguistic expressions.

Basically, the process of comprehension of a linguistic form in RT involves not only decoding, but also the formation and confirmation of hypotheses about the significance and relevance of the decoded information both in linguistic and non-linguistic contexts (i.e. pragmatic inferencing). In other words, the interpretation of an utterance is taken to be uniquely determined by the encoded meaning and pragmatic (or contextual) considerations. One particularly crucial point of RT is that it recognizes the underspecification of the meaning which a linguistic form encodes. Thus the hearer has to construct the proposition which constitutes the intended interpretation by combining the encoded meaning with the (background) context. Another crucial idea in RT is that this cognitive processing or inferencing is led by a ‘presumption of optimal relevance’. This presumption is uniquely determined by cognitive effort and contextual (or ‘cognitive’) effects, or in other words, it is taken as a premise that the most accessible information, i.e. the ease of processing, is likely to yield most significant effects. These effects (or ‘contextual/cognitive’ effects’) are of three types: an existing assumption can be strengthened, or it can be abandoned

(because of contradiction), or new assumptions may be created on the basis of the interaction between the newly given (or incoming) information and the existing information (the context). This is the gist of RT, but since it is not the technical details that are of interest here but rather the way in which encoded meaning is perceived, the focus in the following discussion will be on the perception of encoded meaning and implications of this for construing case.

In general terms, encoded meaning in RT is seen as conveying two basic kinds of (underspecified) information: conceptual information, which is related to the lexical meaning of words, i.e. information about representations; and procedural information, which is related to grammatical form, i.e. information about how to manipulate those representations (see, e.g. Blakemore 1987). As such, encoded meaning is essentially seen as constraints on inference: interpretation of a linguistic expression is taken to be an inferential process which is constrained by encoded material. This means that instead of viewing a linguistic form as carrying meaning that the hearer must decode, it is actually taken as a signal or a means of guidance to the hearer as to how to construct a certain interpretation. Thus, while lexical contributions to meaning would generally need enrichment by pragmatic inference in context, any meaning which is induced by the grammar is taken to provide procedural information or processing instructions which guide the procedures of inference elimination.

It is RT's concept of 'procedural information' which seems to open up a more effective and explanatory approach to case in Estonian, in addition to meeting the criteria of fulfilling the independently motivated reasons for a different analysis of case pointed out above. The position taken here then is that case in Estonian encodes procedural information which not only provides information about how to interpret the case-marked term but also provides for how to construe it in a sentence. This means that a morphological case encodes underspecified semantics as well as instructions how to interpret the case-marked term in the immediate context (whether a phrase or a whole sentence). According to this view (but contrary to the structuralist approach to case), case may in some contexts simultaneously contribute different types of information to the interpretation of a case-marked item, both in terms of semantics and argument relations. More importantly, taking morphological case to encode procedural and/or underspecified meaning enables us to explain case

alternations which express semantic contrasts in terms of *pragmatic* contrasts. As was discussed in the previous chapter, theories which see case from the perspective of a verb (in the sense that case is seen as assigned by a verb or a functional verbal category) must also account for semantically motivated case alternations in terms of (syntactic) differences in case *assignment*; this was shown to yield empirically wrong results. In summary, then, the relevance-theoretic perspective to case allows us to regard semantic contrasts conveyed by a morphological form as significant: if one uses a different case form, they mean something different, otherwise it would not be relevant and it would be too costly from the point of view of processing (i.e. presumption of optimal relevance). The RT perspective also allows us to account for instances where the semantic contrasts signalled by the case alternation are overridden by context, i.e. the choice of case is optional.

It is worth noting though that this view of case as encoding some information does not come out of nowhere, as it does have some resemblance to Nordlinger's (1998) treatment of case. Nordlinger sees case as 'constructive' in the sense that case is not assigned configurationally but is itself a case marker which contains 'information that directly constructs grammatical relations' (1998:61). For instance, the Wambaya ergative suffix *-ni* is taken to carry the information that (i) it belongs to the function of subject and (ii) it has the case feature ERGATIVE (Nordlinger 1998:63). In general, however, Nordlinger's approach to case does not differ much from the canonical one, since case is still taken as a (mere) marker of syntactic function, despite the fact that it is the case morpheme that constructs the subject or object function. The idea of case as providing constraints on the interpretation as well as processing instructions was first suggested in the Dynamic Syntax (DS) framework (Cann *et al.* 2005). Specifically, DS has taken over the concept of 'procedural information' from Relevance Theory, and construes case, in addition to any other grammatical information, in terms of procedural meaning (for a more detailed view of case in DS, see Cann (2007)). The view of case suggested here reflects the basic concept of case in DS, although no (formal) analysis along the lines of DS is attempted here.

In what follows, a different analysis of partitive is provided on the basis of Estonian in response to Kiparsky's (1998, 2001) analysis of Finnish partitive as described above.

Although it employs essentially the same semantic notion of ‘unboundedness’, the outcome is entirely different, as demonstrated in the following section.

5.3.1 Semantics of the partitive

As described in section 5.1.2 above, Kiparsky’s (1998, 2001) treatment of Finnish grammatical cases sees partitive as a grammatical case which has no meaning. Accordingly, partitive is used when certain semantic conditions hold in a sentence. This means that partitive is mapped to semantics which are fully-formed and truth-conditional, and that it is associated with semantics which are absolute. In order to predict the distribution of partitive versus ‘accusative’ on the object, Kiparsky (1998, 2001) has to postulate three different ways for the assignment of the same case, i.e. partitive:

- quantitatively indeterminate denotation (NP-related partitive)
- intrinsically unbounded verb (aspectual partitive)
- negation

However, one problem for this account, as was pointed out above, is that all the three putative assigners of partitive can occur in the same sentence, which results in ambiguity. In addition, it was shown on the basis of Estonian data that it is not always partitive that is seen as expressing unboundedness, as in (17)-(20) above. Therefore, Kiparsky’s (1998) analysis of Finnish partitive results in over-analysis and does not capture all the data. From a more general perspective, it falls short in explaining the function of case in a language with such a rich morphological case system that expresses a wide array of semantic contrasts. Thus, while Kiparsky states that partitive occurs when a verbal or nominal predicate has an unbounded denotation, I argue that it is the partitive rather than the predicate which encodes an underspecified meaning of unboundedness, giving rise to inferential effects relative to context. This postulation seems reasonable in the light of the data discussed in section 5.2.1 above and also in terms of Occam’s razor. That is, taking a single surface form to carry underspecified meaning captures more puzzles and ‘unexpected’ occurrences of partitive than the postulation of multiple semantic functions (or case ‘assigners’) of a single case form, viz. NP-related, aspectual and negation, and which is still not able to

account for optionality. The approach to partitive taken here then appears to be more efficient as well as more explanatory, as demonstrated below.

So far the underspecified meaning of partitive has been referred to in terms of unboundedness, but a clarification is needed. On the basis of the data given in the previous section, and in accordance with the treatment of case suggested here, the meaning which partitive encodes is best identified as ‘unspecified quantity of x’. It can be informally defined as no (mention of) measure and cardinality information, where x is a variable standing for the referent of the case-marked noun. This definition of partitive thus reflects the context dependency of the interpretation of the case-marked noun in a way which is not achieved by the term unboundedness, which can be taken as an inherent property of a nominal. Indeed, this appears to be how Kiparsky sees unboundedness, at least on the basis of the definition given in (37), where Kiparsky (1998:284) defines unboundedness along the lines of Krifka and in a way which, in essence, amounts to a definition of non-quantisation.

(37) A predicate P is UNBOUNDED iff it is divisive and cumulative and not diverse
(Kiparsky 1998:284)

As (37) shows, Kiparsky defines unbounded nominal predicates as predicates which refer to real-world entities and have the property of being divisive and cumulative. In other words, (37) defines predicates as referring cumulatively and therefore as having the inherent property of being unbounded. The diversity condition ensures that predicates which do not refer cumulatively but to discrete entities are bounded. As Kiparsky (1998:285) specifies, ‘quantitatively indeterminate plurals’ (e.g. bombs) and mass nouns (e.g. food) are characterised as unbounded, while ‘quantitatively indeterminate count nouns’ and indefinite nouns which have a ‘cardinality predicate’ are bounded (e.g. few/two bombs, a little/the food).

In principle, the underspecified meaning of partitive as proposed here, i.e. ‘unspecified quantity of x’, can be characterised in terms of the same properties as Kiparsky uses in (37) above. Yet there is an important difference: it is argued here that the properties in (37) are not inherent to nominals but are ascribed in context to the referent of the partitive-marked nominal. Since partitive carries the information

which signals how to construe the referent of the term it marks, the partitive-marked term is interpreted as referring cumulatively and having the same properties as given in (37). The final interpretation of the partitive-marked nominal, however, depends on the countability of the case-marked term and the immediate linguistic context in which it occurs. For instance, when partitive occurs on a mass noun, the noun is understood as unbounded; in contrast, when a mass noun is marked by the genitive it is construed as bounded (more detail will be provided about genitive in section 6.2.2). When partitive, having the meaning of unspecified quantity, occurs on a singular count noun which is an argument of the accomplishment verb, it is likely to be interpreted as marked for imperfective aspect or an unbounded (atelic) event. Unboundedness, then, is taken here as an inferential notion, not an inherent property of nouns; it follows from unspecified quantity of *x*. To put it differently, the alternation between partitive and genitive on mass nouns and bare plurals is seen to structure the domain of discourse, rather than to correspond to certain truth-conditions. This will be illustrated further below and in section 6.2.2.

However, the meaning of partitive is not to be viewed as related to discourse in the sense of encoding indefiniteness or unspecificity. Indefiniteness or unspecificity require that their discourse referents should not be connected to their previously established referents in the discourse. This is not the case in Estonian, as illustrated in (38)⁴⁰: partitive on the noun ‘poetry’ is felicitous both when there is no previous context provided, as in (38a), and when there is a referential identity created by context between the nouns ‘poetry’ and ‘prose’ in (38c) and (38b). This example thus indicates that it is the *quantitative* indeterminacy that is relevant, and not indefiniteness or unspecificity.

- (38) a. Tõnu tõlkis luulet.
 T.nom. translate.past.3sg poetry.part.sg
 ‘Tõnu translated poetry.’

⁴⁰ The original example comes from Rajandi and Metslang (1979:26) in which it is used to demonstrate that an abstract or a mass noun may behave as a count noun when referential identity is guaranteed. This example is a slightly modified version of their original example.

- b. Poeet Paulson kirjutas nii luulet kui proosat.
 poet.nom.sg P.nom. write.past.3sg so poetry.part.sg as prose.part.sg
 ‘Poet Paulson wrote both poetry and prose.’
- c. Tema loomingut tõlgiti (pidevalt) jaapani
 he.gen. creation.part.sg translate.past.imp. constantly Japanese.gen.sg
 keelde, nii et Tõnu tõlkis luulet
 language.illat.sg so that T.nom. translate.past.3sg poetry.part.sg
 ja Priit tõlkis proosat.
 and P.nom. translate.past.3sg prose.part.sg
 ‘His works were (constantly) being translated into Japanese, so that Tõnu translated the poetry and Priit translated the prose.’

The idea that partitive encodes an underspecified meaning which is related to quantity rather than indefiniteness or unspecificity is supported by the fact that in general, partitive is infelicitous with singular count nouns. This means that partitive in Estonian has a different distribution in singular and plural, unlike, for example, in Turkish, in which the alternation between accusative and no case marking expresses specificity, and accusative has the same distribution both in singular and plural NPs; Finnish is similar to Estonian in this respect, as Kiparsky (1998:274) points out.

Also, the fact that partitive does not occur together with a numerical modifier ‘one’, although it has a grammaticalised use with all the other numerals from ‘two’ onwards, provides evidence that partitive is related to quantity rather than indefiniteness or unspecificity. That is, the numeral ‘one’, whether occurring with a count or a mass noun, creates an interpretation of a single countable unit, but partitive imposes the interpretation of an unspecified amount on this unit. For this reason, partitive is generally infelicitous with singular count nouns, but there are some contexts which support the interpretation signalled by partitive on these nouns. For instance, negation and implicit negation (distancing), as shown in (28) and (30) above, are compatible with partitive (or the reading of partitivity), as well as verbs that denote activities and accomplishments. Such verbs are described as having the property of being divisible into stages, thus enabling the progressive reading (see section 5.1.1 above), which is induced in interaction with a partitive-marked count noun. In comparison, verbs which normally occur in the existential construction, i.e. verbs denoting states, do not support a progressive reading and therefore partitive on singular count nouns is generally unacceptable in that context. The same applies to intransitive sentences which have a singular count noun as the subject: these verbs do not allow progressive

readings either. In other words, when partitive occurs on plural or mass nouns, the interpretation is constrained locally, since no significant information is added. However, with a singular count noun, the interpretation of the partitive requires the linguistic context to be considered for the interpretation to be effective. This is to say that partitive imposes readings in terms of quantity and not referential identity, as the incompatibility of partitive with singular count nouns demonstrates. This is also confirmed by the use of partitive on adjuncts: partitive on adverbials can only occur with negation or when construed in terms of unspecified quantity, as shown in (39) (examples from Metslang 2005:27).

- (39) a. See pakk ei kaalu kolme kilo.
 this.nom. parcel.nom.sg NEG weigh three.part.sg kilogram.part.sg
 ‘This parcel does not weigh three kilograms.’
- b. Kraana kaalub kümneid tonne.
 crane.nom.sg weigh.pres.3sg. ten.part.pl ton.part.pl
 ‘The crane weighs tens of tons.’

Thus it has been shown that the meaning which partitive encodes is not related to indefiniteness or unspecificity but quantity instead (cf. Hiietam 2003), and the way in which partitive case is viewed here effectively explains its distribution, which is dependent on number and hence also on the properties of the verb. In contrast, Kiparsky’s treatment of the partitive, which maps the partitive case to predicates that are inherently unbounded, leads to several problems. For instance, since quantitatively indeterminate count nouns and indefinite nouns which have a cardinality predicate (e.g. few/two bombs, a little/the food) are defined as bounded, wrong results are generated with respect to Estonian data, and apparently also Finnish. That is, these predicates tend to receive partitive marking in Estonian and are interpreted as unbounded, not bounded. This seems to be the case also in Finnish, since in order to account for the occurrence of NP-related partitive with otherwise bounded events (i.e. on the ‘R-objects’, see section 4.1), Kiparsky (2001:342-343) uses Finnish quantifier phrases such as ‘many bombs’ as an example while postulating a null quantifier that assigns partitive case phrase-internally in noun phrases which are arguments of inherently bounded verbs. The posited null quantifier which assigns partitive thus provides evidence that it is the partitive case that normally occurs with quantifiers, and that quantifier phrases are understood as unbounded. This shows that there is a

Secondly, Kiparsky's unboundedness account does not extend to singular count nouns that have the function of the direct object and are marked by the partitive case, as in (41). That is, partitive is mapped to unbounded VPs, and the unboundedness of a VP is determined compositionally along the lines of Verkuyl (1972, 1993), so that either an unbounded head or an unbounded object argument can determine the unboundedness of the whole VP. In an unbounded VP then, the singular count noun which is characterised as bounded and carries the partitive case is said to be marked for aspect (i.e. aspectual partitive), as in (41).

- (41) Mari armastab Juhanit / kokakoolat
 M.nom. love.pres.3sg. J.part.sg / Coca-Cola.part.
 'Mary loves John / Coca-Cola.'

Thus, partitive is said to mark the aspect of the verb when it occurs with verbs that are inherently unbounded and the argument of the verb is a singular count noun. However, when the argument is a plural or mass term, partitive may mark the aspect of the whole VP and/or quantitative indeterminacy of the noun phrase which bears this case. It appears then that partitive occasionally marks verbal properties and occasionally it marks nominal properties, and sometimes both properties can be expressed at the same time. The point here is that the generalisation which states that inherently unbounded verbs always assign partitive to their object argument does not explain any of the following issues:

- how case as a nominal category expresses verbal properties such as aspect
- why the same case can express both nominal and verbal properties in some contexts
- why the case that expresses the verbal properties in *some* contexts cannot express them in *all* the contexts where it occurs.

Instead of making a (merely) descriptive statement that inherently unbounded verbs always assign partitive to their object argument, irrespective of their semantic properties, the approach to case taken here not only provides an explanation for this phenomenon, but also treats case as belonging to the nominal and not to the verb. Accordingly, as mentioned above with respect to quantifier phrases, any distinction in cases which alternates in identical linguistic contexts is viewed as significant. This means that when the opposite situation holds (i.e., no case alternation takes place in a

construction), the meaning of the case which is identified with this construction becomes suppressed by the context, as it becomes insignificant (or irrelevant). As a result, the information encoded by the case ending in that particular context is constrained (or restricted) to the relevant information, e.g. what relation it bears to the predicate of the clause. Thus, when the partitive case occurs on the argument of the verb such as in (41) above, it is likely to be construed as signalling (only) that the argument is the object of the verb, rather than being taken to mark that the verb whose argument it is is inherently unbounded, i.e. marking aspect. The fact that partitive case need not carry any aspectual connotation (or unboundedness) was illustrated in examples (17)-(20) above, in which the object argument was marked by the partitive case and the predicate was understood as denoting a bounded event. Thus, when there is no case alternation, there is also no further meaning conveyed; whereas as soon as there is a possibility for a case alternation, the meaning of the unmarked case of the construction is brought out. This was shown in (3) above, repeated here as (42). Namely the verb ‘to listen’ is listed as a typical ‘partitive’ verb in Estonian, i.e. its object is normally marked by partitive case, but it can also be marked by genitive, if a path argument is added to the verb in the form of an adverbial or pseudo-adverbial (i.e. verbal particle).

- (42) a. Mari kuulas uudist.
M.NOM. listen.PAST.3SG news.PART.SG/PL
‘Mary was listening to the news.’
- b. Mari kuulas uudise ära/ lõpuni.
M.NOM. listen.PAST.3SG news.GEN.SG away/ until-the-end
‘Mary listened to the [piece of] news until the end.’

In (40a) then, partitive case is not only taken to convey that the noun phrase it marks is the object argument of the verb but also that the whole sentence has imperfective aspect. The latter interpretation is arrived at inferentially and as a result of the interaction between the partitive-marked term and the properties of the verb (which now denotes accomplishment thanks to the addition of the path argument). The meaning of partitive is thus attributed significance in (40), since it can be contrasted with the other case, i.e. genitive, as in (42b). In more general terms, it is argued here that although case is inferential, it can become predictable in some contexts over the course of time. Secondly, the view of case taken here allows us to account both for

instances where the case marker provides a significant contribution to the overall interpretation of the sentence and for instances when it does not, i.e. both case alternation and no case alternation.

Another problem with Kiparsky's unboundedness account is related to accomplishment verbs or 'aspectually ambiguous verbs'. Since in Kiparsky (1998) the unboundedness of the VP is determined compositionally, it is not entirely straightforward to identify how boundedness (and therefore also case assignment) is determined with aspectually ambiguous verbs. Intrinsically bounded predicates in Finnish (e.g. 'find', 'place', 'kill', 'loose', etc.) are described as taking objects marked by the morphological genitive in the singular and nominative the in plural (accusative with pronouns); and intrinsically unbounded verbs (e.g. 'seek', 'touch', 'look for', 'hate', 'love', etc.) are said to assign partitive to all of their objects regardless of their semantic properties, but there are also verbs which are aspectually 'ambivalent' (Kiparsky 2001:340) such that they can have both bounded and unbounded readings and may occur with either "accusative" or partitive marked objects, as in (8a) and (9a) above, repeated in (43) below. Kiparsky (1998:286) states that these verbs 'can be treated as unspecified for boundedness', and adds that 'once their boundedness is fixed they are treated in exactly the same way as the aspectually unambiguous verbs'. Yet he does not provide any further explanation of how the boundedness can be 'fixed', thus leaving open the question of what determines the bounded reading of the event denoted by the aspectually ambiguous verb, as in (43a), in such a way that it could be associated with genitive.

- (43) a. Mari ehitas suvila (aastaga). (telic)
M.nom. build.past.3sg cottage.gen.sg year.comit.sg
'Mary built a/the cottage (in a year).'
- a. Mari ehitas suvilat (terve aasta). (atelic)
M.nom. build.past.3sg cottage.part.sg whole.gen.sg year.nom.sg
'Mary was building a/the cottage (for a whole year).'

In the relevant literature (reviewed in section 5.1.1 above), the consensus is that it is the properties of the object argument that determine the boundedness or unboundedness reading of this type of verb (i.e. accomplishments) and therefore of the whole VP. It was demonstrated and discussed in section 5.1.2 that when case is

taken to belong to nominals, and not seen as assigned by the verb, the aspectual interpretations in terms of telicity or boundedness can easily be accounted for. Specifically, a case marker on the object argument encodes how to construe the entity which the case-marked term denotes: partitive signals that the term it marks is to be interpreted as unbounded or cumulative both with count and mass nouns; genitive, in contrast, signals a boundedness reading (see also section 6.2.2 below). The case-marked term thus determines the aspectual reading of the whole VP in interaction with the verbal properties, so that partitive-marked arguments give rise to an unbounded reading and genitive-marked arguments to a bounded reading, along the lines described in section 5.1.1 above. Yet, these readings are not only in terms of boundedness or telicity as such: the “final” interpretation may be about irresultative versus resultative readings, uncompleted versus completed events, or on-going events versus events that will take place in the future (examples were provided in section 5.2).

It is worth emphasising that aspectual readings which are induced by the alternating cases are inferential. Thus they occur in interaction with the semantics of verbs and case-marked nouns, as well as with pragmatic factors. Pragmatic factors often play a role in rendering case alternation optional. As was pointed out in section 5.2 above, the contrastive meanings as encoded by alternating cases may be overridden by context, and this context need not be linguistic one but may also be non-linguistic. Thus, in (32) and (33) above the case alternation comes across as irrelevant, since pragmatically, it does not make a difference whether an amount of fingerprints belonging to a specific person is perceived as unbounded or not, or whether roast steak is perceived as bounded or not. In other words, it is the context which either suppresses, overrides or brings out the meaning that the case marker encodes.

It can, further, be speculated that it is the semantics of partitive which has actually determined why it is primarily associated with the object function and not with the subject, for instance. As emphasised above, the information which partitive encodes simultaneously, i.e. the semantics ‘unspecified quantity of x’ and the information that the expression it marks is likely to be construed as an object, might have developed as a result of the meaning it encodes: unspecified quantity is less likely to be perceived as something already present in the domain of the discourse, and since the topic

position often overlaps with the subject, it could not have been associated with the latter. Note, however, that partitive case does occur in the topic position and subject function in Estonian in intransitive clauses, but only with plural and mass terms. It is then likely to be interpreted as having partitive reading, i.e. a subset of a previously introduced (or easily accessible) set of referents, if not used contrastively (see example (21) in section 6.1.2 below).

The meaning of partitive as provided here is also supported by the diachronic data. Koptjevskaja-Tamm (2001) and Koptjevskaja-Tamm and Wälchli (2001:664-665) hypothesise that partitive nominal constructions (e.g. a cup of that good tea) and pseudo-partitive nominal constructions (e.g. a cup of tea) may have given rise to the grammaticalization process involving the partitive case in Finnish as well as in Estonian. This possible development of partial object marking involved the dropping of nominal quantifiers and the ‘semantic extension from definite sets to kinds of entities’ (Koptjevskaja-Tamm & Wälchli 2001:664-665). Thus, there is a possibility that partitive and pseudo-partitive nominal constructions (which in fact encode meanings similar to the one proposed here) may have triggered the grammaticalization process of partitive in Finnic.

5.4 Conclusion

This chapter has argued for a substantially different approach to grammatical case in Estonian. The view of case taken here encompasses the properties of a real morphological case which any theory of case should be able to recognise, if it is willing to take case seriously. Namely:

- (grammatical) case is polyfunctional; and
- (grammatical) case has a semantic function (or meaning) which is exposed in some contexts, while in some other contexts this may not be so obvious.

In contrast to structuralist theories, it has been demonstrated here that grammatical case has semantics. Yet this semantics does not contribute to the truth conditions of linguistic expressions, but is seen to guide the inferential phase of comprehension

instead. The main reason for construing case as encoding procedural information was the observation that case markers, e.g. partitive, do not always carry connotations of unboundedness, and that the case alternation between partitive and genitive (as well as nominative form) is sometimes optional.

The analysis of case pursued in this chapter views case as belonging to the nominal, and not to the verb. This means that case is not taken to be assigned by the verb but instead signals information about how it relates to the immediate linguistic context, e.g. partitive signals that the nominal it marks is likely to be the object argument of the verb, as well as encoding the semantics of how to interpret the referent of the term it occurs with. There is therefore reason to believe that the proposed analysis of partitive in Estonian has more explanatory value than structuralist based approaches to partitive, including Kiparsky's (1998) account of the distribution of partitive in Finnish, not only because it can account for the effects which a context can impose on the interpretation of case meaning, but also because it appears to be more efficient, in the sense of being able to explain more data with fewer assumptions.

6 Genitive/nominative: case vs. no case

In the previous chapter, it was argued that grammatical cases in Estonian have meaning. This claim was illustrated by examples of case alternation in the object function. The specific focus was on the partitive case, and the (underspecified) semantics of partitive and its associated interpretational effects were provided. This chapter aims to complete the picture, by discussing the semantics of the genitive and nominative cases too. It will be maintained in this chapter, as it has been throughout this thesis, that the two cases which happen to mark the direct object in certain constructions do not constitute a single, third case, i.e. a syntactic or abstract accusative, but should rather be taken at face value. That is, the genitive which occurs on singular objects in transitive constructions is construed as genitive, and the nominative is construed as nominative (which is actually not a case). Although this might sound rather controversial to those who take grammatical cases to be structural, it is very much in line with what has been argued in the previous chapter, namely that grammatical cases should be seen as distinct on the basis of the semantics they encode, and any structural difference between them is a result of the semantic contrasts in their meaning. It is thus argued here that genitive should be construed as a real, morphological case which encodes meaning, while nominative is seen as no case, therefore not encoding any meaning at all. The interpretations which are typically associated with the nominative are here related to other phenomena instead, as described in section 6.1.2 below.

6.1 Nominative is no case

In modern Estonian, the nominative case is an endingless, unmarked form⁴². Since proto-Uralic it has been a morphologically unmarked case, and it also has an unmarked form in other Finno-Ugric languages (Hakulinen 1961:67, Rätsep 1977:33). In diachronic accounts of Finno-Ugric cases, nominative is referred to as an absolute

⁴² Sometimes it happens to be homonymous with genitive and partitive case forms in the singular.

form (e.g. Janhunen 1982). From a synchronic perspective, there is enough evidence to maintain that nominative in Estonian is not a case, i.e. in the same sense as is argued by Jakobson (1936/1990) and by Vainikka (1993) with respect to Finnish (see Chapter 4 for more detail).

Essentially, case as such is seen as a marker of dependency relations (see, e.g., Blake 1994). The nominative in Estonian, however, is the only form which regularly occurs in constructions that are independent, i.e. syntactically not related to the rest of the clause. Parenthesis (*kiillause*) is the most common example of independent constructions in Estonian,⁴³ and the only possible case form for a nominal in such independent clauses is nominative (EKK 2007:545, 573). For instance, in (1) below, the adjunct in boldface occurs in the nominative, although the preceding noun phrase is marked by the relative. It is the nominative form which distinguishes this adjunct from an ordinary post-modifier which would otherwise occur in the relative (example from EKK 2007:545).

- (1) Lähtudes tegevuse iseloomust, **kaasa arvatud selle**
 originating activity.ELAT.SG nature.ELAT.SG including this.GEN.SG
tehnoloogiline tase, ning lähipiirkonna teistest
 technological.NOM.SG level.NOM.SG and nearby-region.GEN.SG other.ELAT.PL
 tegevustest...
 activities.ELAT.PL.
 ‘According to the nature of the activity, including its technological level, and also according to some other activities of the nearby regions...’

Parentheses which occur at the beginning of the sentence have the function of topic, and are normally separated from the rest of the clause by a dash, as in (2) below (from EKK 2007:573). Note also that in (2), the parenthesis is in the nominative, whereas the presumptive pronoun, ‘this’, is marked by partitive. That is, the verb *hoidma* ‘to keep’ usually takes objects in the partitive, but the parentheses is in the nominative; thus the independence of the parenthesis from the rest of the sentence is effectively demonstrated.

⁴³ Some types of parenthesis in Estonian are similar to left-dislocation. Left-dislocation without lexical frames is not very common in Estonian (nor, according to Sulkala and Karjalainen (1992), in Finnish). In Estonian, lexical frames which are essentially frozen phrases with idiosyncratic case marking are preferred to a purely syntactic left-dislocation.

- (2) Mets, loomad, maa, vesi, õhk – seda
 forest.NOM.SG animal.NOM.PL earth.NOM. water.NOM. air.NOM. this.PRTV.
 kõike peab hoidma nagu oma hinge.
 all.PRTV.SG must.PRES.3SG keep.INF. like own soul.PRTV.SG
 ‘Forests, animals, earth, water, air – all this should be kept like your own soul.’

Other independent constructions which always occur in the nominative or caseless form in Estonian include absolute constructions, such as the phrase in italics in (3), and the vocative in boldface in (4).

- (3) Juku kõnnib lonkides mööda tänavat,
 J.NOM. walk.PRES.3SG loiter.GERUND along street.PRTV.SG
müts silmini peas.
 hat.NOM.SG eyes.TERMIN.PL head.INESS.SG
 ‘Juku is loitering along the street, his hat almost covering his eyes.’

- (4) Ka sina, **Brutus!**
 also 2SG.NOM. Brutus.NOM
 ‘You too, Brutus!’

Another crucial fact to consider is that the nominative form in Estonian has a wider distribution than is apparent at first glance. As described in the previous chapters (especially in 3 and 4), the nominative is not restricted to the subject function, nor plural ‘total’ objects only. It also occurs with (inherently plural) adverbials, as shown in (5), constituting an example of independent (or semantic) case marking in frameworks which distinguish semantic cases from structural ones. Also, the only possible form for preposed appositions is nominative, as in (6), another instance where there is no dependency relation. In addition, nominative is used with predicative constructions (subject complement), as in (7). Note that, unlike with possessive constructions discussed in the previous chapter, subject complements do not allow alternation with partitive.⁴⁴

- (5) Ta viibis Londonis **kolm** nädalat.
 s/he.NOM. stay.PAST.3SG L.INESS.SG three.NOM.SG week.PART.SG
 ‘S/he stayed in London for three weeks.’

⁴⁴ Examples from (5) to (7) were all given in Chapter 3, and are repeated here for convenience.

- (6) Kirjutage avaldus **doktor** Jürgensonile.
write.IMV.PL application.NOM.SG doctor.NOM.SG J.ALLAT.SG
'(Please) write an application to doctor Jürgenson.'
- (7) Ilm on **vihmane**.
weather.NOM.SG be.PRES.3SG rainy.NOM.SG
'The weather is rainy.'

As for the object function, it is worth emphasising that the nominative form is used not only with plural 'total' objects in transitive clauses, but also with *both* singular and plural objects in:

- (i) imperative clauses, as in (8);
- (ii) impersonal constructions, as in (9);
- (iii) *da*-infinitival clauses, as in (10);
- (iv) the existential construction, as in (11), where the single argument is shown to have both subject and object properties (see Chapter 3 for more detail).⁴⁵

- (8) Osta mulle **üks kook** / **need koogid!**
buy.IMV.SG I.ALLAT. one.NOM.SG cake.NOM.SG / these.NOM. cakes.NOM.PL
'Buy me a cake / these cakes!'
- (9) (**See**) **raamat** nimetati auhinna vääriksiks
this.NOM book.NOM.SG nominate.IMP.PAST.PRESENT.GEN.SG worthy.TRANSL.SG
'(This)/[the] book was nominated for a prize'
- (10) Minu ülesandeks on *lahendada see küsimus*
my.GEN. task.TRANSL.SG be.PRES.3 solve.INF. this.NOM question.NOM.SG
'My task is to solve this question'
- (11) Laual oli/olid **raamat/raamatud**
table.ALLAT.SG be.PAST.3SG/PL book.NOM.SG/NOM.PL
'On the table there was a book / were books'

The distribution of the nominative thus points to the conclusion that it indeed behaves like a "default" or no case form. This idea is supported by the fact that, as soon as one inserts a parenthesis or uses any other construction which occurs outside the clause boundaries (i.e. is not an argument or an adjunct of the clause) the nominative form is

⁴⁵ Examples from (8) to (11) were all given in Chapter 4, and are repeated here for convenience.

used by default. Also, the idea of nominative as no case is actually implicitly present in those accounts which analyse it as an ‘elsewhere’ case, e.g. Kiparsky’s (2001) account of Finnish in terms of Optimality Theory, as well as Asudeh’s (2003) licensing theory for Finnish. In both of these, nominative is seen as an underspecified case which is not related to any of the abstract cases.

A further consideration which suggests that nominative is not a true case is the kind of explanations about the occurrence of nominative in the object function in imperative and impersonal clauses which tend to be made from the perspective of the functional-typological approach. According to this approach, one of the main functions of case marking is discrimination, i.e. differentiating between the (core) arguments. If one of the arguments, the subject, is not present, as is normally the case with imperative and impersonal clauses in Estonian (as well as in Finnish), there is also no need to case mark the other argument, i.e., the (direct) object argument (see also section 4.2.1 above). What this actually implies is that no case marking takes place, as there is no need to differentiate one argument from the other. This is effectively illustrated in Vainikka’s (1993) theory of Finnish cases which postulates that if there is no nominative subject, there is no case realisation (i.e. genitive) on the object either, and this pertains to objects in imperative and impersonal clauses.

Some speculations about the diachronic picture also tend to point in the same direction, i.e., those which suggest that Estonian nominative has always been an unmarked, caseless form. For instance, Rätsep (1977:33) states that nominative was mainly the case for the subject, predicative, object and attribute, i.e. it was used in the same functions as the genitive and the putative accusative.⁴⁶ Rätsep hypothesises that the nominative form in the object function was used for referring to inanimate entities, while the genitive and accusative were used for referring to animate beings. He brings forward Sami as an example to support this claim, since in Sami an animate possessor is still marked by genitive and an inanimate one by nominative. On the basis of these assumptions, nominative appears to have been the unmarked, or default form.

⁴⁶ Rätsep (1977) largely follows Hakulinen (1961), and both assume that the accusative case once existed.

On the basis of these various strands of argument, then, I conclude that nominative is not a true case. However, it is necessary to point out that this claim is easier to maintain with respect to the singular form, compared to the nominative plural, which appears to be less straightforward, as it could be taken as a nominative marker. In the following subsection the inflectional form of the nominative will be discussed, and I will argue that the /t/-ending in the nominative plural is just a plural marker, as is also suggested in the relevant literature (e.g. Hakulinen 1961, Janhunen 1982, Rätsep 1977).

6.1.1 Nominative plural

I have argued so far that in the singular the nominative is an endingless form. Nominative plural, however, is formed with an affix, *-d*. Although the plural can be marked in at least two ways in modern Estonian, i.e., either using the *t*-(*d*-) plural or the *i*-plural⁴⁷, the nominative plural on the other hand is always marked by *-d* (EKK 2007:256). Yet, as already mentioned, the /t/-plural in Modern Estonian appears to behave more as a plural marker than as just a nominative marker, whatever its historical status or origin (for a diachronic overview, see section 3.2.2.1 above). Even the *Handbook of the Estonian Language* (EKK 2007) implicitly states that the marker of nominative plural is a plural marker: the /t/-plural occurs in *all* the cases, apart from partitive; its allophone *d* occurs always and only in nominative (2007:256).

The idea that /t/ is a plural marker rather than a case marker in modern Estonian is supported by the fact that it is used in all the declensions (apart from the partitive). The plural paradigm of cases is in fact distinguished from the singular paradigm on the basis of the /t/-plural (or *-de/-te*) (see Table 1 in Chapter 2). In the paradigm formation in the plural, it is in fact the plural form of genitive which is taken as the basis, i.e. *järve-de* ‘of the lakes’, to which all the locative cases and other cases (such as Translative, Terminative, Essive, Abessive and Comitative) are added, e.g. the plural of Allative is *järve-de-le* ‘onto the lakes’ (for a detailed discussion of paradigm

⁴⁷ Historically, there used to be *k*-plural and *se*-(*si*-) plural as well, as Rätsep (1977:9ff) writes.

formation in Estonian, see Blevins (2005)). Thus, the /t/-plural is not a particular feature of the nominative only, but persists throughout the case paradigm in the plural.

Further evidence in favour of analysing the /t/-plural as a plural marker rather than a case marker comes from the verb conjugation. Specifically, *d* occurs as a plural marker in the third person plural verb forms both in the present tense, as in (12), where it is part of the suffix *-vad*, and in the past tense, as in (13), and also in conditionals, as in (14) (EKK 2007:272, Rätsep 1977:17, Hakulinen 1961:64 with respect to Finnish). It is more plausible to assume that it is the same marker which occurs in the nominal paradigm than to postulate syncretism between the *d* that occurs in the nominative and the one which occurs in 3rd person verb forms, especially since if syncretism is postulated, an explanation is needed for the marker that distinguishes the singular case paradigm from the plural one.

- | | | | |
|------|---|-----|--|
| (12) | (Nad) jookse-vad
they.NOM run-PRES.3PL
'They are running/run' | vs. | (Ta) jookse-b
s/he.NOM run-PRES.3SG
'S/he is running/runs' |
| (13) | (Nad) tegi-d
they.NOM do.PAST-3PL
'They did' | vs. | (Ta) tegi
s/he.NOM do.PAST.3SG
'S/he did' |
| (14) | (Nad) sõida-ksi-d
they.NOM ride-COND.-3PL
'They would ride' | vs. | (Ta) sõida-ks
s/he.NOM ride-COND.
'S/he would ride' |

In nominals, the use of plural forms might seem rather unpredictable at first glance. For instance, no plural is used when body parts and related clothing items are referred to, as in expressions such as *kingad on jalas* lit. 'shoes are in foot', or *võtan kindad käest* lit. '[I] take gloves from hand' (Rätsep 1977:28). Dual body parts tend to be in the singular, as in expressions such as *silma torkama* lit. 'to poke into [an] eye', meaning 'to attract attention', or *ma ei vaata selle peale hea silmaga* lit. 'I do not look at it with [a] good eye', meaning 'I don't approve of this' (Rätsep 1977:28). In addition, as mentioned in section 5.3 above, nouns following numerals are not in the plural (like in Indo-European languages in general; but the singular form with numerals is not unusual cross-linguistically outside of Indo-European), rather they occur in the singular and in the partitive case; an exception is the numeral 'one' with

which nouns occur in nominative. These instances of singular (as opposed to the use of plural) are usually explained by the assumption that in the early stages of proto-Uralic the case paradigm was only in singular, especially because examples like these can be found in many Finno-Ugric and even Samoyedic languages (see also section 3.2.2.1 above).

In light of this, it is interesting to go back to Hiietam's (2003) argument for the accusative case, as presented in sections 3.3.1 and 3.3.2 above. Hiietam's line of reasoning, which was discussed in section 3.3.1 above and repeated here in (15), runs as follows:

- (15) The genitive which is used for marking objects in the singular is not a true genitive but a form which happens to be homophonous with the morphological genitive. If it were a true genitive, it would retain its case marking in the plural (Hiietam 2004).

Basically, Hiietam's claim is that one and the same direct object function has a different case marking in plural, as in (16) below. The claim made in this chapter, by contrast, is that there is *no* case marking in the plural and the object is *only* marked for plural. This idea appears to be supported by the behaviour of numeral modifiers in the object function, such as *kaks hiirt* 'two mice' in (18) below, which occur in an unmarked form, i.e. carrying no inflection. Hiietam uses this fact to support her argument for the accusative case, arguing that when a numeral modifies an object argument, it does not receive the genitive marking as in the case of the 'true' genitive, as in (17), but nominative instead, as in (18). However, what I would like to draw attention to is that numerals are inherently plural; hence there is no need for the plural marker to express plural on the numeral, as in (18), and I would suggest that this is the reason why it occurs in an unmarked form. (The genitive in (17) has an attributive function and is therefore irrelevant to the present argument).

- (16) Kass sõi hiire/hiired (ära).
 cat.NOM.SG eat.PAST.3SG mouse.GEN.SG/NOM.PL (up)
 'The cat ate the mouse/the mice (up).'

- (17) Kass kraapis kahe tooli jalad ära.
 cat.NOM.SG scratch.PAST.3SG two.GEN.SG chair.GEN.SG leg.NOM.SG off.
 'The cat has scratched the legs of two chairs.'

- (18) Kass sõi kaks /*kahe hiirt eile.
 cat.NOM.SG eat.PAST.3SG two.NOM.SG/*GEN.SG mouse.PRTV.SG yesterday
 ‘The cat ate two mice yesterday.’

It should also be considered that mass nouns seem to be problematic if the inflection in the nominative plural is taken as a case marker. Namely, if genitive/nominative is perceived as a ‘non-autonomous’ case (in Blake’s (2001) terms), i.e. accusative, there is no inherent explanation why plural cannot be expressed by the proposed accusative. That is, if it is possible to use the proposed accusative with a mass noun, which would be interpreted as definite or ‘total’, i.e. countable, how would one explain that the accusative form is not applicable to the plural of these countable entities? If on the other hand we take the inflection of the nominative plural as just a plural marker, we are able to account for this much more naturally, by stating that mass nouns generally are not marked for plural, unless a unit or variety interpretation is imposed. The proponents of the accusative hypothesis, however, have to constrain its distribution in plural.

Furthermore, as Rajandi and Metslang (1979:15) explain, numerals in Estonian are marked for plural only occasionally, and the plural marking has some other purpose: namely for counting sets or pairs. There is therefore no need to express this lexically, as the plural marker itself gives rise to this interpretation. From the point of view of pragmatics this is reasonable, since it is redundant to encode plural twice. If the numeral is marked for plural, it is likely to be interpreted differently, e.g., in this case, plural of a set or pair. Thus, while *kõrvarõngad* is understood as ‘a pair of earrings’, *kolmed kõrvarõngad* is taken to refer to three pairs of earrings; likewise, while *valehambad* means ‘false teeth’, *viied valehambad* is understood as referring to five sets of false teeth. If the numerals in these expressions were in the singular (and the noun should be in partitive then), they would be most likely interpreted as random singular items, or random items from a single set.

In general, with respect to the use of nominative plural, it is interesting to note that, as Rätsep (1977:29) points out, plural marking in Estonian is often used for referring to items which consist of two or more symmetrical parts, which constitute a single item, as in *püksid* ‘trousers’, *sukad* ‘tights’, *ohjad* ‘reins’, *käärid* ‘scissors’, *prillid* ‘glasses’,

etc. This also explains why numerals in the plural tend to be interpreted as a pair or set.

6.1.2 Nominative and its interpretations

As discussed above, nominative in Estonian appears to be a caseless form. Obviously, this also entails that nominative cannot encode any semantics, unlike both the partitive (see section 5.3. above) and the genitive (see section 6.2 below). However, it was shown in chapter 4 that nominative forms do induce certain interpretations which are not restricted to the direct object function only (i.e. the alleged accusative), but can also occur in other constructions, where nominative is used. It will be argued in this section that although nominative as a caseless form does not encode any meaning directly, its default reading has to do with definiteness relative to linguistic, as well as non-linguistic, context.

It is worth noting that Hiietam (2003:246), who argues for the accusative case in Estonian (i.e. syncretism between the nominative which occurs in the subject function and the nominative which marks the ‘definite’ object in plural) nevertheless concludes that ‘[i]n subject position in transitive, intransitive and existential sentences, nominative case is perceived as indicating definiteness’ (for more detail, see chapter 3). Thus, albeit somewhat indirectly, Hiietam seems to associate the nominative with definiteness, both in the subject and object function: nominative in the subject function indicates definiteness, while ‘definite’ objects are marked by the nominative in the plural (i.e. by the putative accusative). Rajandi and Metslang (1979) also observe that the nominative tends to mark definite entities. Thus there appears to be a consensus among Estonian linguists that the nominative form and the interpretation of definiteness are related.

The position taken here is, however, that while the nominative form per se does not indicate anything, yet it has a default reading of definiteness. This immediately raises the question of where this reading comes from. It was pointed out in section 6.1 above that the nominative form is used with constructions which constitute the topic of the

sentence, as in (2) above. Example (2) is an instance where the topic is singled out syntactically, while in general topics in Estonian have a strong tendency to be also subjects. That is, the unmarked situation in Estonian is that the topic and the subject are identical (see, e.g., Lyons (1999) for a similar cross-linguistic generalisation). This means that both the topic and subject occur in the same, unmarked form (i.e. nominative) in Estonian. The topic, as is well known, is generally definite: it is the part of the proposition which is being talked about, and is therefore already familiar from the previous discourse or is part of some general knowledge which is relevant to the discourse. Thus topic is something which the hearer can access or identify easily and effortlessly. There are, of course, subject noun phrases which introduce completely new entities into the discourse, but generally they are provided with an extensive descriptive content in the form of a relative clause, and nevertheless count as the topic (Lyons 1999:229). Additionally, topics may have a contrastive function which does not necessarily involve definiteness, and also some indefinite nouns can occur as topics, but these nouns are usually generics and hence easily identifiable and accessible (Lyons 1999:232-236). The general tendency is then that topics are definite. Hence it is reasonable to assume that it is the topic-subject identity in Estonian which gives nominative the default reading of definiteness.

As an illustration, the nominative in the subject function is understood as definite in examples (3), (5) and (16)-(18) above. In (5), this is demonstrated by the choice of the pronoun that counts as one of the most accessible forms of topic according to the accessibility scale by Givón (1983). Example (3) would normally be uttered in a context where the person called Juku is familiar from the previous discourse. Likewise, sentences such as (16)-(18) are usually not said about any cat, but the one which is identifiable both by the speaker and the hearer.

The definite reading of nominative is also present in passives and impersonals.⁴⁸ Again, this is primarily because the grammatical subject of the passive clause coincides with the topic of the sentence, as in (19) below. In impersonals, when the object argument occurs in the sentence-initial position and thus overlaps with the

⁴⁸ When a reference is made to the passive construction in Estonian, it is the stative/resultative passive which is intended. The impersonal construction is used with events.

topic of the sentence, as in (9) above, or (20a) below,⁴⁹ it is also interpreted as definite. Even if the demonstrative is dropped in (9) above, the noun is most likely to be seen as definite. Indeed, otherwise the whole sentence would not make sense. However, if the object argument in the impersonal construction occurs in sentence-final position, (i.e. it is presented in focus, as in (20b)), the definiteness of the nominative form is overridden by the expectation of new information. For this reason, it cannot be understood as definite, but at most as specific instead. Note, however, that partitive case tends to be preferred in this position with mass and plural nouns precisely because of the new information that is associated with indefiniteness. However, in (20b) the partitive is not grammatical with a count noun; a different verb is required, one which allows the activity reading to be imposed on the whole sentence (see section 5.3 above for more discussion of the partitive).

(19) Ülesanded olid meie poolt lahendatud.
 task.NOM.PL be.PAST.3SG 1P.GEN. by solve.PTC
 ‘[The] tasks were solved by us.’

(20) a. Laev paisati kaldale.
 ship.NOM.SG cast.IMP.PAST shore.ALLAT.SG
 ‘[The] ship was cast ashore.’

b. Kaldale paisati laev.
 shore.ALLAT.SG cast.IMP.PAST. ship.NOM.SG
 ‘To [the] shore, a ship was cast.’

Example (20b) above is similar to the existential construction. In existential sentences, the noun phrase which follows the (presentational) verb is usually understood as indefinite (see, e.g. Milsark 1977, 1979). This means that the same noun phrase, which can occur either sentence-initially (intransitive clause) as in (21a), or sentence finally (an existential sentence) as in (21b), is likely to be interpreted differently according to the position in which it occurs in a sentence. This was illustrated in example (20) above, and is also shown in (21) below.⁵⁰

⁴⁹ Examples (19) and (20) are from EKK (2007:454, 456).

⁵⁰ Example (21b) is from Nemvalts (1996:83); the glosses and translations are mine.

- (21) a. Taadid nokitsesid võrgu kallal.
 old-man.NOM.PL tinker.PAST.3PL net.GEN.SG on
 ‘[The] old men tinkered with the nets.’
- b. Võrgu kallal nokitsesid taadid.
 net.GEN.SG on tinker.PAST.3PL old-man.NOM.PL
 ‘With the nets, there were old men tinkering.’
- c. Taate nokitses võrgu kallal.
 old-man.PRTV.PL tinker.PAST.3SG net.GEN.SG on
 ‘[Part of the] old men tinkered with the nets.’

Specifically, the subject noun phrase in (21a) is construed as definite, because of the topic-subject identity: the referent of the noun must have been introduced into the discourse already. The fact that the noun phrase is seen to have a definite interpretation explains why the reference is to *all* the old men in a given set, and not only to a subpart of them, as in (21c), due to the maximality effect of definites. It is precisely this topical definiteness which imposes the ‘total’ reading on the subject noun (and explains why nominative subjects in the grammar of Modern Estonian are referred to as ‘total’, e.g. EKK 2007: 241, as opposed to the ‘partial’ subject marked by partitive). In (21c), for instance, the partitive-marked subject is unlikely to be interpreted as definite, but is rather taken to have partitive reading, meaning *osa taate* ‘part of the old men’. That is, the partitive case, having the meaning ‘unspecified quantity of x’, tends to impose partitive reading on a noun in an overtly topical domain, so that the referent of the noun is taken to be a subset of a previously known set.

As pointed out above, the nominative is not always interpreted as definite; the default reading of definiteness may be overridden in the postverbal position, as in (21b). It was specified above that one of the factors at work here is the focus position (or a position of new information), which is associated with indefiniteness. It appears then that the combination of definiteness and indefiniteness tends to yield a specificity reading in sentences such as (21b) above. Another example of the specificity reading is given in (22b), which Nemvalts (1996:43) describes as having an ‘existential presupposition’. Note that presupposition and specificity are very similar notions, if not identical; i.e. they both assume that the hearer is aware of a particular entity.

- (22) a. Eesriide taga on inimesi.
 curtain.GEN.SG behind be.PRES.3PL humanbeing.PRTV.PL
 ‘There are people behind the curtain.’
- b. Eesriide taga on inimesed.
 curtain.GEN.SG behind be.PRES.3PL humanbeing.NOM.PL
 ‘Behind the curtain, there are people.’ (Nemvalts 1996:43)

Also, the interpretation of the nominative in the existential construction may be influenced by the fact that it is the partitive case which normally occurs in this type of sentences. Specifically, if the nominative form is used in the context where primarily the partitive occurs, as in (22a), it is taken to indicate different information from what the partitive signals (in this case, the specificity of the referent). However, if the existential construction is presented as having the meaning of “list reading”, a noun phrase in nominative is likely to be construed as definite. For instance, the sentence in (11) above may be construed as list reading, where this “list” comprises one item (see also Lyons 1999:239). It should be noted, however, that although the nominative is rather common in the existential construction, it occurs only together with an indefinite determiner which modifies a noun in the nominative form – what Nemvalts (1996:54-61) calls an ‘indefinator’. Examples of such indefinite determiners include *keegi* ‘somebody’, *mingi(sugune)* ‘a certain some’, *üks* ‘a, one’, *mõni* ‘some, a certain’, *miski* ‘some(thing), any(thing)’. This indeed indicates that the default reading of the nominative needs to be neutralised or overridden. This was in fact pointed out in case of (23) by the native speakers of Estonian who were consulted in the study reported in section 5.2.2 in Chapter 5.

- (23) a. Oli ilus sügispäev ning Jüri ja Mari otsustasid metsa seenele minna. Kumbki võttis kaasa suure korvi. Olles metsa jõudnud, hakkasid nad omaette jalutades hoolega jalge ette vaatama.
 ‘It was a nice autumn day and John and Mary decided to go to pick mushrooms. Each took a large basket along. When they had reached the forest, they started to look around for mushrooms.’
- b. * Jüri leidis seened, kuid Mari mitte.
 J. NOM. find.PAST.3SG mushroom.NOM.PL but M.NOM. NEG
 ‘John found [the] mushrooms, but Mary did not.’

c. Jüri leidis (ühe) seened.
 J.NOM. find.PAST.3SG one.GEN.SG mushroom.GEN.SG
 ‘John found [a] / (one) mushroom’

The native speakers of Estonian disapproved of the nominative in the context given in (23a) and preferred the partitive case instead. They explained that the sentence in (23b) was unacceptable since nominative on the object noun seemed to imply some previously known mushrooms and the context itself did not provide a means of identifying these. Some of the comments given in Estonian by the native speakers were as follows: *tunduks, nagu oleks mingid konkreetseid seened* (it seems as if mushroom.**nom.pl** refers to some known or certain mushrooms); *“seened” kõlab nagu “määratud artikliga”* (mushroom.**nom.pl** sounds like it has a “definite article”); *nagu oleks mingid kindlad seened metsa peidetud* (as if some certain mushrooms were hidden in the forest); *jutt ei käi konkreetsest seenehunnikust* (there is no mention of a specific pile of mushrooms); *‘seened’ viitaks nagu kindlatele seentele ja arvule, mis aga antud kontekstis nonsense* (mushroom.**nom.pl** seems to refer to certain mushrooms and amount/number which is however nonsense in this context); *‘seened’ viitab justkui seentele, mis olid sinna ära peidetud ja tuli nüüd üles otsida (a la lihavõttemunad Inglismaal)* (mushroom.**nom.pl** seems to refer to mushrooms which were hidden in the forest and had to be found (like Easter eggs in England)). It may be noted again in passing that the genitive singular is fine in this context, as shown in (23c), which is problematic, if it is assumed that the genitive singular and nominative plural are realisations of accusative.

Altogether, the interpretation of nominative (or of no case form) appears to be dependent on the sentence-level information structure as well as on the discourse structure in general, among other factors, such as competition with the partitive case that explicitly encodes unspecified quantity.

Another factor which also contributes to the interpretation of nominative and is related to the sentence-level information structure is prosody. For instance, Rajandi & Metslang (1979:33ff) and Metslang (2001) describe how the mutual positioning between the direct object and adverbial, on the one hand, and the stress pattern between them, on the other, can determine the definiteness of the object argument. This is illustrated in (24) below (example from Rajandi & Metslang 1979), in which

the alternation between stressed and unstressed position, i.e. focus and non-focus, represents the organisation of new and given information respectively. Thus, the direct object in (24a) is perceived as indefinite due to the fact that it is presented in focus, while the object argument in (24b) is interpreted as definite, since it occurs in an unstressed position immediately preceding the focussed element.

- (24) a. Oskar kinkis Olgale SÖRMUSE. (indefinite object)
 O.NOM. present.PAST.3SG O-ALLAT.SG ring.GEN.SG
 ‘Oskar gave Olga [a] ring.’
- b. Olga kinkis sõrmuse SANDILE. (definite object)
 O.NOM. present.PAST.3SG ring.GEN.SG beggar-ALLAT.SG
 ‘Olga gave [the] ring to a beggar.’

According to Rajandi and Metslang (1979:35ff), this method of expressing the definiteness of the object is fairly widespread in Estonian and when there is no adverbial present, a ‘pseudo-adverbial’ would be used exactly for this purpose, i.e. an adverbial with radically underspecified semantic content, such as *ära* ‘off, away’; *üles* ‘up’; *maha* ‘down, off’, (see also EKK 2007:447-448). This explains why both the genitive and the nominative form on the direct object has the same interpretation in sentences such as (16) above, repeated here as (25).

- (25) Kass sõi hiire/hiired ära.
 cat.NOM.SG eat.PAST.3SG mouse.GEN.SG/NOM.PL up
 ‘The cat ate the mouse/the mice (up).’

Note that since the direct object in this function is presented as definite, the plural form is interpreted as referring inclusively, i.e. to the totality of the entities which satisfy the description in the context. The same applies to mass nouns (which can occur only in the genitive, i.e. in the singular). For instance, in (26) below, the mass noun, being definite, can only be interpreted as referring to the totality of the mass (see also Lyons 1999).

- (26) Poiss sõi supi ära.
 boy.NOM.SG eat.PAST.3SG soup.GEN.SG up
 ‘The boy ate the soup (up).’

It is from this that the impression arises that the same semantic notion, i.e. ‘total’, is expressed by two different forms, genitive and nominative. It is worth emphasising that the reading of totality is inferential, and occurs due to the definiteness of the direct object, which is in turn marked by prosodic means. Thus the definiteness of the object does not depend on whether it is has the case marking or not, but rather whether it is presented in focus or not. This is effectively demonstrated in (24a) above, which has a singular count noun, ‘ring’, as an object that is marked by the genitive case in focus, and is therefore interpreted as indefinite, whereas in (24b) the same object is construed as unique. Also, even with partitive case, which encodes the meaning of unspecified quantity, the specificity reading is imposed in this pre-adverbial context, as shown in (27) below. In the latter, the object in singular is understood as specific, and the object in plural is most likely applied partitive reading. That is, a subset of the definite set is referred to, as was also the case in example (21c) above.

- (27) Ta pakkis kingitust / kingitusi paberisse.
 s/he.NOM.SG wrap.PAST.3SG present.PRTV.SG / PRTV.PL paper.ILLAT.SG
 ‘S/he was wrapping a/the gift in paper.’
 ‘She was wrapping the gifts in paper.’

The same factors which influence the interpretation of the nominative form in transitive clauses also apply to imperatives. That is, prosody (or the use of adverbials and ‘pseudo-adverbials’) determines whether the nominative object has definite or indefinite reading and thus also whether the reference would be taken as referring to all entities that satisfy the description in context or to the totality of mass. Thus the definiteness of the object makes one construe the referent inclusively, i.e. in its totality. With singular count nouns, the denotation of the object noun would be unique. In other words, it is the linguistic context in terms of sentence-level information structure which signals how to interpret the nominative form. This observation bears out the view of nominative as an unmarked form.

6.2 Genitive

It was shown in the previous section that the apparent unit genitive/nominative is only apparent: nominative is not a case, and the inflection which this form has in the plural is just a plural marker. It will be argued in this section that the genitive in the pair genitive/nominative, which occurs only in the object function, is just genitive, not a realisation of the accusative. Thus genitive is construed here as a real, morphological case which encodes meaning. Morphologically, genitive is a zero-case in Estonian, i.e. it has lost its inflectional ending. The earlier *-n* ending had already disappeared by the beginning of the seventeenth century and can only be detected in some compounds, e.g. *maantee* lit. earth.gen.sg path, ‘road’, where it is attached to the first part of the compound, and in some place names such as *Soontaga* ‘swamp.gen.sg behind’, and *Soonpää* ‘swamp.gen.sg on, upon’ (Rätsep 1977:34-35). The genitive plural form has the same plural marker as the nominative form, i.e. the */t/-*plural, as in *maa-de* ‘country-gen.pl’, *valge-te* ‘white-gen.pl’, *nen/de* ‘their’. Historically, it used to have the *-n* ending as well, which was attached to the */t/-*plural by the connecting vowel *e* (Rätsep 1977:37).

Recent analyses of the genitive case in Finnic are rather controversial and, to a great extent, determined by the framework which is used. For instance, Hiietam (2003) (who takes a typological stance on the genitive case in Estonian, and thus sees case as being assigned directly to syntactic functions) splits the genitive form into two: genitive as a possessive marker (or the ‘real genitive’, see section 3.3.1 above) and genitive as a form of accusative together with the nominative plural form. *The Handbook of Modern Estonian* (2007), however, providing a descriptive approach, presents the genitive as *one* morphological case which marks two distinct functions: nominal attributes (i.e. attributive-genitive) and the ‘total’ object (i.e. object-genitive). Although no syncretism between attributive and object genitive is posited, an informal distinction between these two main functions is made on the basis of the assumption that a former accusative has collapsed with the genitive (EKK 2007:242).

With respect to Finnish, the whole issue appears to be more complicated. Specifically, in Finnish the genitive also occurs on subjects in non-finite clauses, as in (28), and together with some adjectives, e.g. ‘easy’, as in (29) (both examples are from

Kiparsky 2001:334). Estonian, in comparison, does not have subjects marked by genitive. For instance, the subject in (29) would be marked by the allative case, and an Estonian counterpart to (28) would be marked by partitive instead. Yet, agentive attributes (or modifiers) are marked by genitive in passives, as in (30) (example from EKG I 1995:53), where the agent *koer* ‘dog’ is marked by the genitive case, and has the function of a modifier.

- (28) Tä-ssä luul-laan **sinu-n** ampu-nee-n karhun.
 Here suppose-Pass you-Gen shoot-PfP-Gen bear-Gen
 ‘Here you are believed to have shot a bear.’ (Kiparsky 2001:334) (Finnish)
- (29) **Sinu-n** on helppo ampu-a tama karhu.
 you-gen be(3Sg) easy shoot-1Inf this(Nom) bear(Nom)
 ‘It is easy for you to shoot this bear.’ (Kiparsky 2001:334) (Finnish)
- (30) **Koera** näritud kondid vedelesid esikupõrandal.
 dog.GEN.SG chew.PAST.PTC bone.NOM.PL lie.pAST.3PL hall-floor.ADESS.SG
 ‘The bones chewed by the dog were lying on the floor of the hallway.’

Formal analyses of Finnish grammatical case show two main trends. If case assignment is taken as a direct mapping to syntactic functions, genitive is seen as syncretic with the accusative (e.g. Maling 1993). If, however, genitive is treated as one morphological case, a multi-level analysis of case is assumed, i.e. a distinction between morphological case and abstract Case (e.g. Vainikka 1993, Nelson, 1995, Kiparsky 2001). In what follows, I will give a brief overview of these analyses of genitive in Finnish.

Maling (1993) provides her account in terms of the Case-Tier Hypothesis, and sees grammatical cases as being assigned along a hierarchy of grammatical functions. The general principle is that the highest available grammatical function, i.e. a function which has not yet been assigned any case, receives the nominative case, which is followed by the assignment of accusative to the next highest grammatical function (1993:50). The hierarchy of grammatical functions itself is basically a reflection of the nominative-accusative case pattern, and hence the whole account appears somewhat circular. The direct mapping of morphological cases to grammatical functions is representative of a single-level approach to case. This also entails that for Finnish Maling has to postulate syncretism between the genitive which occurs on the

subject (as in (28) and (29) above) and the genitive which occurs on the object. In her analysis, then, the object-genitive is construed as accusative: the grammatical function of object is 'morphologically marked as either nominative or accusative depending on the environment' (1993:52). The genitive which occurs on the subject is either assigned lexically by a matrix verb or structurally, i.e. configurationally to a specifier position. Her model does not say anything about the genitive which marks possession.

Vainikka (1993), in contrast, treats genitive as one morphological case. This move is possible due to the fact that she postulates a distinction between morphosyntactic case and abstract Case within Government and Binding. This yields less syncretism but still does not take morphological form seriously, i.e. genitive is treated as a spell-out phenomenon. Abstract Genitive is analysed as the structural default case of the specifier position, thus encompassing all the functions which genitive realises, including possessives, modifiers of adjectives, complements of postpositions, the subject and direct object. The Genitive on the subject and the Genitive on the object in Finnish are treated as having a complementary distribution, as Maling (1993:62) points out. That is, the genitive realises the object only when the main verb agrees with the nominative subject: genitive is assigned to the subject in Spec-VP, but the subject is then raised to the Spec-IP and it strands its genitive which percolates down to the object. If there is no agreement, the subject stays in Spec-VP and keeps its genitive, which is received by default; the object then remains caseless, i.e. has nominative form. On the one hand, this is an insightful generalisation about the distribution of the genitive in Finnish, but on the other hand, it reduces the status of case to a mere feature associated with a specific syntactic position in a clause. Nor does it say anything about the genitive which occurs with adverbials.

Nelson (1995), using the P&P/GB framework and thus also implementing a multi-level view of case, takes morphological genitive to realise abstract accusative. The same genitive is also analysed as realising the subject in necessity and raising constructions where it is seen as lexically assigned, i.e. it is not treated as a structural case but as an oblique instead. Since Nelson (1995) analyses measure adverbials as objects, they get assigned structural case, i.e., accusative, which is realised by the morphological genitive.

Kiparsky (2001) combines the insights of the previous formal analyses of genitive in Finnish in an OT approach. He also employs a multi-level approach to case, i.e. making a distinction between morphological case and abstract case. This enables him to treat the morphological genitive as genitive across all the functions it realises. Following Vainikka (1993), Kiparsky treats genitive as the specifier case which has an abstract case feature [+HR], which indicates the structural position of the argument, i.e. it belongs to the external argument (or the higher semantic role). The genitive is assigned structurally to subjects in non-finite clauses, as in (28) above, where Kiparsky regards the subject as being properly licensed, i.e. it ‘bears morphological structural case’ (Kiparsky 2001:333). Since the subject is ‘properly licensed’, the object, *karhun* ‘bear’ in (28) receives genitive marking as with nominative subjects. In (29) above, however, the genitive is construed as lexically assigned (or a ‘quirky’ subject), as a result of which the object, *tama karhu* ‘this bear’, occurs in the nominative (Kiparsky 2001:334). Adverbials are accounted for by being assigned structural case, realised by genitive (see section 4.1 above for the discussion of relational features of structural cases and the related problems). Yet, it is left unspecified how genitive is assigned in the attributive or possessive function.

In sum, none of the formal analyses described above attributes any semantics to the genitive. The genitive case is viewed as purely structural, and its distribution is accounted for only in terms of syntax. While some of the syntactic generalisations made in the analyses above are elegant and indeed insightful, they still tend to have only a descriptive value. Also, syntactically based distributions often end up being circular to a certain extent, which lessens the plausibility of the whole account. For instance, in Maling’s theory, as pointed out above, it is not so clear what properties determine the tier of grammatical functions, whether partly the case system or some independent properties, for example. Likewise, in Kiparsky’s (2001) account, subjects are regarded as ‘properly licensed’ when they bear morphological structural case (e.g. genitive), while the features of structural cases are actually determined configurationally in his theory.

6.2.1 Morphological genitive as an oblique case in Estonian

The accounts described above demonstrate that the genitive in Finnic has a much wider range of functions than just marking possession (cf. Hiietam 2003). This was also illustrated on the basis of Estonian data in Chapter 3. It can be argued then, as is actually done by Vainikka (1993), that there is no “proper” genitive either in Estonian or Finnish, but it is an attributive marker instead.⁵¹ The same stance seems to be taken in *The Handbook of Estonian Grammar* (2007), which defines genitive in Estonian as primarily the case of nominal attributes and of the attributes of nominalisations (2007:242). For instance, genitive in Estonian occurs on possessives, preposed appositions, attributes of nominalisations (as in (30) above), modifiers of adjectives, modifiers (or complements) of postpositions, the direct object, measure adverbials which are inherently singular, and as an attribute of verbal nouns in passive clauses, as in (31) below (example from EKK (2007:456)), which denotes agent (see section 3.3.2 above for examples of different uses of genitive). It is worth emphasising that genitive does not mark subjects in Estonian (unlike in Finnish), being clearly a non-subject or an oblique case.

- (31) Maja oli **Mardi** ehitatud.
house.NOM.SG be.PAST.3SG M.GEN.SG build.PAST.PTC
'The house was built by Mart.'

Historical accounts of the genitive in Finnic also refer to the genitive as an attributive marker. Rätsep (1977:54), for instance, writes that one of the oldest functions of the genitive was to mark the function of an attribute. He also adds that the nominative form seems to have occurred in the same function too, primarily with inanimate entities, while genitive appears to have been used with attributes referring to animate beings. Rätsep (1977:54) speculates that the use of genitive with postpositions developed from the genitive's function of marking attributes: originally, postpositions were nominal case forms and genitive-marked forms were their attributes. When nominal case forms came to be used as adpositions, the syntactic function of genitive forms also changed (Rätsep 1977:54). In addition, as Rätsep (1977:54) notes, genitive

⁵¹ A parallel may be drawn with Ezafe in Modern Persian (Farsi), as pointed out by Dr. Ronnie Cann (p.c.)

has acquired more and more functions over the course of time. In most instances, this has been at the expense of the nominative form.

The clearest evidence in favour of the view that it is the same morphological genitive in Estonian which occurs over a wide range of functions (especially in the functions of attribute, complement of postpositions and the direct object) is the fact that in all these functions the case-marked noun can be replaced by the same question *mille?/kelle?* ‘of what?/whose?’. That is, nouns which are marked by the genitive case in these functions correspond uniformly to this question (its two different forms encode the distinction between animate and inanimate beings, *mille?* ‘of what?’ and *kelle?* ‘whose?’). For instance, (32) below (examples from EKK 2007:242) is an example of canonical possessive, where the distinction in animacy is encoded between (32a) and (32b). In (33), in comparison, the genitive occurs on the object and it is also referred to by the same question word as the attributive function in (32), i.e. by *mille?* ‘of what?’ (the full version of the appropriate question is *Mille ta ära sõi?* lit. ‘Of what he up ate?’) Also, the complements of postpositions correspond to the same question *mille?/kelle?* ‘of what/whose?’, as shown in (34).

- (32) a. maja aknad *Mille aknad?* ‘Windows of what?’
house.GEN.SG. window.NOM.PL
‘windows of the house’
- b. ussi hammustus *Kelle hammustus?* ‘Whose bite?’
snake.GEN.SG bite.NOM.SG
‘snake bite, the bite of a snake’
- (33) Poiss sõi supi ära. *Mille (ta ära sõi)?*
boy.NOM.SG eat.PAST.3SG soup.GEN.SG up lit. ‘Of what he up ate?’
‘The boy ate the soup (up).’
- (34) metsa taga *Mille taga?*
forest.GEN.SG behind lit. ‘Behind of what?’
‘behind the forest’

Adverbials can only be replaced with questions that are explicitly related to the semantics expressed by the case-marked term. Since genitive tends to occur mostly on measure adverbials, questions are generally about extent. Thus an adverbial expressing temporal extent is replaced by *kui kaua?* ‘(for) how long?’, as in (35), and

expressions of spatial extent and quantity are replaced by *Kui palju?* ‘How much?’, as in (36).

- (35) Ootasin (terve) **nädala**, enne kui ...
 wait.PAST.1SG whole year.GEN.SG before when
 ‘(I) waited a (whole) year before ...’
- (36) Vanaisa jalutab igal õhtul
 grandfather.NOM.SG walk.PRES.3SG every.ALLAT. evening.ALLAT.SG
mõne kilomeetri.
 some.GEN. kilometre.GEN.SG
 ‘Grandfather walks a kilometre every evening’

On the basis of these examples it might seem that it is only the genitive singular which has such a variety of functions. However the genitive plural is in fact also used in functions other than as an attribute or in possessive constructions. Thus it occurs with postpositions, as shown in (37) below: genitive plural is used with postpositions expressing location (37a), cause (37b), and relation (37c). All of these genitive-marked complements can be replaced by the question *mille?* ‘of what?’ Postpositions which express amount tend to take complements in the plural and, as mentioned above, can only be replaced by a question about extent, i.e. *kui kaua?* ‘(for) how long?’, as in (38a); or *kui palju?* ‘how much?’, as in (38b).

- (37) a. karjääride lähedal *mille (lähedal)?*
 quarry.GEN.PL nearby lit. ‘nearby of what’
 ‘next to the quarries’
- b. teiste heaks *kelle (heaks)?*
 other.GEN.PL benefit lit. ‘whose benefit’
 ‘for others, for the benefit of others’
- c. ideede suhtes *mille (suhtes)?*
 idea.GEN.PL in-relation lit. ‘of what relation’
 ‘in relation to the ideas’
- (38) a. aastate kaupa *kui kaua?*
 year.GEN.PL by lit. ‘how long’
 ‘year by year’

b. *virnade viisi kui palju?*
 stack.GEN.PL of how much?
 ‘a good deal of’

While the genitive plural in the object function is excluded (possible reasons for this are discussed in the following section), both singular and plural forms can still be used for expressing the object, but in Estonian this is done by means of postpositions. For instance, postpositions such as *kallal* ‘at something’ and *pihta* ‘towards something’, which have an underspecified semantic content, are rather widespread in indicating what the activity denoted by the verb is directed at. In (39) and (40) below, the examples are from a corpus of Estonian which includes both spoken and written data.⁵² Note that the verbs which occur with those postpositions can be used both transitively and intransitively, i.e. often it is possible to omit the postposition and use partitive case on the object.

(39) *Ma ei kraabi oma hingehaavade kallal.*
 I.NOM. NEG scrape.PTC own soul-wound.GEN.PL at
 ‘I do not scrape the wounds of my heart.’

(40) *...et juhul kui Palestiina politsei veel iisraellaste pihta tulistab, ...*
 that if P.GEN.SG police.NOM.SG Israeli.GEN.PL at shoot.PRES.3SG
 ‘...should the Palestinian police shoot the Israelis once again...’

The genitive case, then, including both its singular and plural forms, appears to be polyfunctional, something which is a characteristic of a real, morphological case. There seems to be no obvious reason for postulating syncretism just on the basis of the functions it occurs with. In addition, historical speculations along the lines of genitive-accusative syncretism provide a rather interesting perspective on the whole issue. Consider examples in (41) below from Mordvin (the Volga-Finnic branch of the Finno-Ugric language family) (examples from Kiparsky 1998:302).

(41) a. *ved'e-ńt kand-i-ja* (Mordvin)
 water-Acc-Def bring-Pst-1SgSubj3Obj
 ‘I brought the water’

⁵² The corpus is available at: <http://www.eki.ee/corpus/>

- b. ved'e-ńt' kand-i-ń
 water-Acc-Def bring-Pst-1SgSubj
 'I brought the water', 'I (always) brought the water'

In (41) above, according to the description provided by Kiparsky,⁵³ objects are inflected both for definiteness and for the case which is glossed as accusative, although the accusative and genitive are morphologically identical in Mordvin (Kiparsky 1998:301). According to Itkonen (1972), those objects which are definite may optionally agree with the verb, as in (41a), while agreement is obligatory with objects marked for possession. Those objects which are marked neither for possession nor definiteness just occur in the 'accusative' and do not agree with the verb (Kiparsky 1998:301-302). Wickman (1955) and Joki (1957)⁵⁴, on the other hand, conclude that there is enough evidence to suggest that genitive is actually the object case in Mordvin. Wickman (1955:41) explains that:

...if we regard the infinitive or participle as a noun, we must regard the "object" as a genitive attribute, but if we regard the infinitive or participle as a verbal form, we may say that the latter has an object, but anyhow it is clear that the ń-form in the above examples is originally a genitive and not an accusative.⁵⁵

Künnap (2006), who accepts Wickman's analysis, speculates that 'the genitive with the suffix -n is actually one of the earliest Finnic object cases' (2006:18), and that the genitive with the possessive meaning could have begun to mark the object via reanalysis in some constructions. He illustrates this on the basis of Finnic as given in (42) below (Künnap 2006:18).

- (42) **hän lehmän* (attribute) *tappava* (present participle)
 'he, slaughtering the cow', ('he, the slaughterer of the cow')
- *hän lehmän* (direct object) *tappaa* (present tense 3.sg)
 'he slaughters the cow'

The idea of reanalysis as suggested by Künnap in (42) gains support when the Mordvin data in (41) above is compared with the Estonian example in (43) below.

⁵³ Kiparsky cites Itkonen (1972:166-167).

⁵⁴ As cited in Künnap (2006:18-19).

⁵⁵ In Künnap (2006:19).

Estonian data show that the only distinction between (43a) and (43b), or the attributive and object function respectively, is in terms of syntax; that is, whether the genitive-marked nominal occurs as the argument of the verb or not. The inflection of the noun, the definiteness effect and even the thematic role in (43) remains the same.

- (43) a. vee kandja / veekandja
 water.GEN.SG carrier.NOM.SG / water-carrier.NOM.SG
 ‘the one who carries the water’ / ‘water-carrier’
- b. vee kandsi-n mina (ära)
 water.GEN.SG carry.PAST-1SG 1SG.NOM. off
 ‘It was me who carried the water.’

It appears then that the idea of genitive as a case which also occurs on the object is excluded neither on diachronic grounds nor by the current data. Altogether, the stance taken here is that genitive, including both its singular and plural forms, fulfils the criteria of a real morphological case: it has a variety of functions and it encodes meaning which is exposed at least in some functions, although in some others this meaning might not be wholly obvious, i.e. it is underspecified. The analysis of genitive pursued here thus contrasts with the approaches presented above, and is in line with the treatment of partitive in the previous chapter. In essence, I here apply to the genitive a unified analysis whereby no distinction is made between structural (or grammatical) case and semantic case, on the one hand, and between morphological case and abstract case, on the other. This view also entails that case is not seen as assigned either structurally or lexically; in fact, it is argued that it is not assigned at all, but rather belongs to the nominal and is used for signalling how the nominal relates to the rest of the sentence in a given linguistic context (see also section 5.3 above). The next section focuses on the semantics of the genitive.

6.2.2 Semantics of the genitive

In the previous section it was argued that there is no reason to postulate syncretic forms of the genitive in Estonian, and it was therefore analysed as one morphological case which has multiple functions and encodes meaning. It was demonstrated in the

- b. Akna klaas läks katki.
 window.GEN.SG glass.NOM.SG become.PAST.3SG broken
 'The glass of a/the window broke.'

The specifier genitive in Finnic may also induce a definiteness effect (Christen 2001:513-514). That is, the specifier genitives in Finnic normally have the status of topic, i.e. they are either contextually or culturally given. Indeed, otherwise they would not be felicitous, as is also pointed out by Christen (2001:502). The relevance of the discourse status of these attributes is illustrated in (45) below and is also evident in (43) and (44) above. In (45a), a 'picture noun' has a genitive-marked pre-modifier which is understood as definite, while the alternative construction in (45b) has a post-modifier in the elative case and is most likely to be interpreted as specific but not definite (Christen 2001:502).

- (45) a. katedraal-i foto
 cathedral-GEN.SG photo.NOM.SG
 'the photograph of the cathedral'
- b. foto katedraali-st
 photo.NOM.SG cathedral-ELAT.SG
 'a/the photograph of a cathedral'

Thus, genitive-marked attributes typically present presupposed or specific information (see also Heine 1997). Depending on context, they may also be taken as definite. Yet, genitive is not the only case which can encode attributes in a noun phrase. Among other cases, partitive can also be used in the attributive function, primarily with words expressing some parameter such as *liiki* 'of kind', *laadi* 'ilk', *sorti* 'of sort', *värvi* 'hued', *kasvu* 'of height', etc., as in (46) (EKG II 1993:120). As (46) demonstrates, attributes in the partitive tend to be related to gradable quality (or unspecified measure) rather than being related to specificity like the genitive.

- (46) keskmist kasvu mees
 average.PRTV.SG height.PRTV.SG man
 'a man of average height'

In order to demonstrate that genitive indeed encodes meaning in the attributive function, let us consider example (47). In (47), the semantic contrast conveyed by the

alternation between genitive and partitive induces entirely different interpretations for a seemingly identical construction:

- (47) a. Punase värvi pott (vedeles põrandal).
 red.GEN.SG colour.GEN.SG container.NOM.SG lie.PAST.3SG floor.ADESS.SG
 ‘A container of red paint was lying on the floor.’
- b. Punast värvi⁵⁶ pott (vedeles põrandal).
 red.PRTV.SG colour.PRTV.SG container.NOM.SG lie.PAST.3SG floor.ADESS.SG
 ‘A red (hued) container/pot was lying on the floor.’

In (47a), the genitive-marked attribute is likely to be understood as having a specific reference, hence a specific quantity of an otherwise unbounded term; that is, the boundedness of the genitive-marked attributes follows from specific quantity. Together with the following noun it is taken as a canonical possessive construction, since genitive also signals that the term it marks is a dependent of some other item in the phrase. In contrast, the partitive on the attribute in (47b) induces an interpretation of ‘of red hue’, due to the meaning it encodes, i.e. unspecified quantity which renders the reading of unboundedness (see also section 5.3.1 above). Thus the whole phrase in (47b) is understood as ‘a red-hued container’, and the word meaning ‘container, pot’ does not have to be necessarily a paint container but may refer to any pot instead.

The contrast between specified and unspecified quantity in the attributive function is more evident with mass terms than with count nouns. Also, the meaning of genitive is brought out in object functions where genitive and partitive contrast with each other in meaning but not in function. The semantic contrast between genitive and partitive in terms of un/specified quantity may be related to an interesting correlation observed by Koptjevskaja-Tamm (2001) with respect to alternating objects and partitive/pseudo-partitive nominal constructions in a language. Specifically, she states there seems to be a ‘complicated relationship’ between the existence of a case alternation on objects expressing semantic concepts such as ‘whole’ and ‘partial’, and the existence of partitive nominal constructions,⁵⁷ where the ‘substance’ is marked by

⁵⁶ The genitive and partitive case forms of the word *värv* ‘colour, paint’ in Estonian are homographs. The partitive form is pronounced overlong, thus there is a distinction between these forms in pronunciation.

⁵⁷ Koptjevskaja-Tamm (2001) makes a distinction between partitive nominal constructions such as *a cup of that good tea* and pseudo-partitive nominal constructions such as *a cup of tea*. The observed

a case that is the same as what occurs on the ‘partial’ object. Her observation is based on the fact that those languages which once had a distinction encoded by case marking between the ‘whole’ and ‘partial’ object also had partitive nominal constructions where the substance nominal was marked by the same case as the ‘partial’ object, e.g. the genitive which once encoded partiality in Germanic languages such as Swedish, Danish and German. When these languages lost one of the distinctions, they also lost the other (Koptjevskaja-Tamm 2001:564). (For the possible processes by which the partitive was grammaticalized in Finnic according to Koptjevskaja–Tamm (2001), see section 5.3.1 above.) The point worth emphasising here, though, is that if there is a morphological case in a language which encodes partiality (or unspecified quantity), then there will also be a case which encodes the opposite, i.e. whole. As shown in (48), in Estonian this case appears to be the genitive; in (48b) the genitive attribute is specifying (and not generic), as indicated by the stress marks; a demonstrative *this* could also be used in that phrase. Thus, in (48a) the partitive-marked ‘substance’ is understood as ‘indefinite quantity’ (or partial amount), while the genitive-marked modifier in (48b) is likely to be interpreted as ‘definite quantity’ (or the whole amount).

- (48) a. pott värvi (pseudo-partitive nominal construction)
 pot.NOM.SG paint.PRTV.SG
 ‘a pot of paint’
- b. 'värvi 'pott (possessive construction)
 paint.GEN.SG pot.NOM.SG
 ‘the paint pot’ / ‘a pot of the paint’

It appears then that it is mostly because of the partitive case in Estonian that genitive signals the information it does, i.e. specified quantity. There seems to be a good reason for this, as genitive encodes specificity anyway, and it is the only case which alternates with partitive in identical functions. Thus, in the attributive function, the semantics of genitive may be generally less exposed, though still brought out with mass terms such as ‘paint’ in (47) and (48) above. In the direct object function, the meaning which the genitive encodes may be even further reinforced by the partitive, relative to context. In some contexts, e.g. (49), the distinction in meaning between

correlation is said to apply to the latter, although partitive constructions may develop into pseudo-partitive ones (2001:534ff).

genitive and partitive is more significant than in some other contexts, e.g. (50), where the choice of case is pragmatically less relevant.

(49) a. Ta kallas vee klaasi.
 s/he.NOM. pour.PAST3SG water.GEN. glass.ILLAT.SG
 ‘S/he poured the water into a glass.’

b. Ta kallas vett klaasi.
 s/he.NOM. pour.PAST3SG water.PRTV. glass.ILLAT.SG
 (i) ‘S/he poured some of the water into the glass.’
 (ii) ‘S/he was pouring the water into the glass.’

(50) Teet tellis seapraadi / seaprae.
 T.NOM. order.PAST.3SG roast.pork.PRTV.SG / roast pork.GEN.SG
 ‘Teet ordered roast pork.’ (Rajandi & Metslang 1979:3)

The same meaning distinction between genitive and partitive also applies to adverbials, though partitive occurs less frequently in this function; its use is mainly restricted to negated sentences, as well as indefinite quantity (Metslang 2005). Hence genitive is more common on adverbials than partitive, having almost a default status. This also explains why genitive case on adverbials is most likely taken to signal adverbial function only, rather than being interpreted in terms of the encoded semantics. Secondly, the case-marked nominals in the adverbial function already express quantity lexically, as in (51), which refers to temporal extent (example from Metslang 2005:31).

(51) Ta ootas igas kohas tunni ja ja
 s/he.NOM.SG wait.PAST.3SG each.INESS. place.INESS.SG hour.GEN.SG and
 veel kauemgi.
 more longer-DIM.
 ‘S/he waited an hour in each place and even longer.’

Altogether, the meaning of genitive can be informally defined as ‘specified quantity of x’, as mentioned above. In contrast to the partitive case, which essentially signals no (mention of) measure or cardinality information, the genitive encodes that the term which it marks refers to a particular entity or to an amount which is inferable from context. From this it naturally follows that genitive-marked nominals are interpreted as bounded, since boundedness follows from specified quantity.

The meaning of genitive then, the specified quantity of something, tends to yield an interpretation of specificity with singular count nouns, as in (52). The reason for this is that the referent of a count noun, e.g. ‘yacht’ in (52), is referred to in its entirety and, being a discrete entity, the only relevant information conveyed by genitive is taken to be specificity.

- (52) Ta ostis omale jahi.
 s/he.NOM.SG buy.PAST.3SG own.ALLAT.SG yacht.GEN.SG
 ‘S/he bought her/himself a yacht.’

With mass nouns, such as in (53) below, the genitive is taken to signal a particular amount; if this amount is not inferable from the current discourse, a culturally given amount is likely to be the most relevant one. For instance, in (53) this may be a pint and a glass, respectively.

- (53) ... Ja pakuti juua. Robi tellis õlle ja
 and offer.PAST.IMP. drink.INF. R.NOM.SG order.PAST.3SG beer.GEN.SG and
 ma võtsin veini. ...⁵⁸
 I.NOM.SG take.PAST.3SG wine.GEN.SG
 ‘And drinks were offered. Robi took a beer and I took a wine.’

It has been suggested in the literature that genitive is related to definiteness (e.g. Hiietam (2003) considers the genitive in the object function to be accusative; see also Rajandi and Metslang (1979), among others). This suggests that the occurrence of genitive depends on its discourse status, and Rajandi and Metslang (1979:26), for instance, demonstrate this by showing how definiteness determines whether genitive can occur on a mass noun such as ‘poetry’ in (54) or not. They state that without a previous mention, which would provide a referential identity, genitive is unacceptable on a mass noun, as in (54a); hence partitive case is preferred, as shown in (54b). If, however, the referent of the mass noun has already been introduced into the discourse, genitive on a mass noun is absolutely fine, as in (54c).

- (54) a. #/* Tõnu tõlkis luule.
 T.NOM. translate.PAST.3SG poetry.GEN.SG
 ‘Tõnu translated (the) poetry.’

⁵⁸ The sentence is taken from <http://chickfactory.blogspot.com/>

- b. Poeet Paulson kirjutas nii luulet kui proosat.
 poet.NOM.SG P.NOM. write.PAST.3SG so poetry.PRTV.SG as prose.PRTV.SG
 ‘Poet Paulson wrote both poetry and prose.’
- c. Tema looming tõlgiti jaapani keelde,
 he.GEN creation.NOM. translate.PAST.IMP. Japanese.GEN language.ILLAT.SG
 nii et Tõnu tõlkis luule ja Priit
 so that T.NOM. translate.PAST.3SG poetry.GEN.SG and P.NOM.
 tõlkis proosa.
 translate.PAST.3SG prose.GEN.SG
 ‘His works were translated into Japanese, so that Tõnu translated the poetry
 and Priit translated the prose.’

The use of genitive on mass nouns in isolated sentences, or without context, is indeed unacceptable. Yet, it is not definiteness itself that appears to be relevant here but quantitative specificity instead. For instance, in (55) below the genitive case is felicitous on a mass noun which has not been previously mentioned. Rather, the mention of a poet and his works appears to be sufficient to provide a relevant context for interpreting the genitive-marked terms ‘poetry’ and ‘prose’ efficiently and successfully. Partitive would be unacceptable with the nouns ‘poetry’ and ‘prose’ in (55), not because of the background context, but because it would contrast with the telicity of the preceding clause, yielding an atelicity reading on the second clause. The contrast in telicity is an inferential effect due to specified vs. unspecified quantity or boundedness vs. unboundedness, respectively.

- (55) Poeet Paulsoni looming tõlgiti jaapani
 poet.NOM.SG P.GEN.SG creation.NOM.SG translate.PAST.IMP. Japanese.GEN.SG
 keelde, nii et Tõnu tõlkis luule ja Priit
 language.ILLAT. so that T.NOM. translate.PAST.3SG poetry.GEN.SG and P.NOM.
 tõlkis proosa.
 translate.PAST.3SG prose.GEN.SG
 ‘Poet Paulson’s works were translated into Japanese, so that Tõnu translated
 the poetry and Priit translated the prose.’

Since the meaning of genitive is related to specified quantity, and not just to specificity, the meaning provided above is the meaning of the genitive singular. It does not apply to the genitive in the plural. Similar to the partitive case, genitive has a different distribution depending on number and countability (see also section 5.3.1 above). In the plural, the genitive appears to be less frequent and its semantics is suppressed: primarily it signals that a genitive-marked noun is a dependent in a phrase, i.e. an attribute in noun phrases and a modifier (or complement) in

postpositional phrases. Because of its semantics, the genitive does not occur on the object in the plural, as that would essentially repeat the function of partitive, i.e. the semantic contrast retained in the singular would be lost. Specifically, specified quantity is incompatible with plural interpretation: specified quantity of x is a new unit of measure (or a countable entity); if it was used in the plural, it would not refer to specified quantity anymore, but to unspecified quantity instead. The latter, however, is encoded by partitive in Estonian. An appropriate example to illustrate this is on the basis of a genitive-marked adverbial, as in (51) above, since it lexically expresses a specific quantity. The plural of this adverbial would be expressed in the partitive, signalling unspecified extent of time, i.e. ‘S/he waited for hours in each place’.

6.3 Conclusion

In this chapter, I have shown that the apparent unit genitive/nominative is only apparent: nominative is not a true case, and the inflection which this form has in the plural is just a plural marker. Likewise, the impression that the same semantic notion, i.e. ‘total’ is expressed by two different forms, genitive and nominative, has been shown to result from the interaction with information structure in a sentence, rather than indicating two different cases denoting the same semantic concept.

This chapter has given an explanatory account of the distribution of nominative which contrasts with purely descriptive statements of nominative such as an ‘elsewhere case’ or ‘no case’. Also, a unified analysis has been applied to the genitive, whereby no distinction is made between structural (or grammatical) case and semantic case, on the one hand, or between morphological case and abstract case, on the other. Such an approach is able to account naturally and directly for the occurrence of the genitive, and specifically its unacceptability with mass nouns in isolated sentences or without context. Advocates of the accusative hypothesis have no explanation for such phenomena.

In conclusion, I have shown in this chapter that pragmatic contrasts between cases play a role in their interpretation and that a case with more explicit meaning reinforces the interpretation of the case with less specific meaning. Thus partitive reinforces the interpretation of genitive in the object function, but also the interpretation of the nominative form, which is not a true case, whenever they alternate in the same function. Yet, as I have shown in this chapter, the interpretation of nominative is not related to quantity, unlike with genitive and partitive: while the latter encode quantity-related semantics, the interpretations of nominative as referring to ‘total’ or individual entities are due to the maximality effect of definiteness in particular, or of information structure in general.

7 Summary and conclusions

In this thesis, I have argued that grammatical cases in Estonian are semantic: showing, in essence, that there is no substantial difference between grammatical and semantic case. Yet, the semantic content which the grammatical cases in Estonian are seen to encode is not absolute, i.e. truth-conditional, but underspecified, and needs enrichment via pragmatic inferences triggered by contextual effects. More generally, I have argued for an approach to case which can provide an effective unitary explanation of a complex system of semantic contrasts which are induced by the alternations in case marking on nouns and which do not change the grammatical functions themselves.

This approach to case was motivated by two major factors. Firstly, the goal was to provide a unified and illuminating account of case which would capture the case alternations across different syntactic functions, such as subjects, objects, and adverbials; as well as between the alternating cases themselves (genitive and nominative). Secondly, the approach to case advocated in this thesis was motivated by the pilot study which I carried out among native speakers of Estonian. The results of this study showed that (i) context may override case distinctions, as a result of which the alternation becomes optional; and (ii) context can override apparent case requirements even to the extent that sentences are accepted which would be considered unacceptable according to the prescriptive grammars. It was argued that these results suggest that case has some other role to play than what has been assumed so far by the conventional approach to case. Namely, grammatical cases do not *encode* (or mark) grammatical relations in Estonian, nor can be they mapped to some absolute meanings, but rather they only guide or constrain the interpretation of linguistic expressions.

More specifically, the pragmatic approach to case argued for in this thesis was motivated by the complex Estonian data, illustrated in detail in Chapter 2. There the semantically and syntactically conditioned alternations in case marking outlined below were of particular interest:

- alternations in case marking of objects (genitive/nominative vs. partitive)
- alternations between the cases that mark the object (genitive vs. nominative)
- alternations in case marking of subjects (nominative vs. partitive).

In Chapter 3, an obvious solution was explored for the alternation that is syntactically conditioned and occurs between genitive and nominative: postulating a separate case which would lessen the number of alternations between different cases so that only semantically conditioned alternations would have left to account for. This postulation of a separate case was examined along the lines of Hiietam's (2003, 2004) accusative hypothesis. I argued that, from the morphological perspective, the arguments provided by Hiietam were not borne out, nor is it possible to base any strong argument for a distinct accusative case on the available diachronic evidence. The syntactic criteria provided by Hiietam, i.e. agreement and number, although compelling at first glance, were actually undermined by the way in which personal pronouns behave in Estonian: the proposed accusative would not extend to personal pronouns. Secondly, agreement assumes that cases can be identified with the syntactic functions they mark, but in Estonian there are many borderline instances where one cannot determine the syntactic function of an argument (or else it is determined via agreement itself). Therefore, it was concluded that it is not reasonable to adopt the accusative hypothesis, with its concomitant postulation of syncretism between accusative and genitive in the singular and nominative in the plural. I argued instead that the only reason for accepting the accusative case in Estonian is syntactic: one can construe some syntactic evidence for the accusative, but this provides just a theoretical motive for postulating an abstract accusative.

The idea of syntactic accusative in terms of abstract case was examined in Chapter 4, where it was shown that, statistically, the syntactic accusative would occur in very limited contexts, whereas partitive is the case which seems to be primarily associated with the object function, thus indicating that a grammar of Estonian language does not need to recognise the syntactic function of accusative. More importantly, adopting syntactic accusative would in fact create redundancy instead of simplifying the description of the data. Specifically, the same cases which mark the core arguments in Estonian occur also on a subset of quantity adverbials, and any analysis which proposes an accusative case must be able to capture the identical case marking patterns both on objects and adverbials. The notion of syntactic accusative, however,

cannot be extended to adjuncts and, as a result, amounts to reifying the function of the direct object in the grammar instead of providing any more effective means of explaining the data. The redundancy of the syntactic accusative was further confirmed by the models which have been implemented for accounting for the Finnish data (which closely resemble Estonian) and which all assume the abstract accusative, thus providing an excellent point of comparison for the efficiency of the syntactic accusative in Estonian. In these models, as it turned out, the syntactic accusative has to be associated with some semantic notion in order to predict its distribution, which in turn calls in question the necessity of the syntactic accusative.

In addition, identifying the abstract accusative is not entirely unproblematic either. For instance, in Kiparsky's (2001) account, partitive is taken to express the grammatical relation that is treated as structural accusative in other theories (e.g. Government and Binding (GB), Chomsky 1981), while accusative expresses the dative function. What Kiparsky's theory thus demonstrates is that when syntactic accusative is distinguished, it will not be recoverable in the surface morphology. Another way to identify the syntactic accusative was represented by the models of the Minimalist framework, which assume syncretism among the morphological cases which realise Accusative: the abstract Accusative would be expressed by the nominative, which is syncretic with the nominative which occurs with subjects, as well as by the genitive which is syncretic with genitive that expresses adnominal functions. In these models the abstract Accusative is distinguished on the basis of semantic features such as [+/- Quantification] (e.g. Ritter and Rosen 2001) which have to be checked by the functional category of Aspect. This means that the Accusative and Partitive end up being treated as having different syntactic properties (as was explained in Chapter 4, section 4.1). Thus it was shown in Chapter 4 that the concept of syntactic accusative (or Accusative) is not motivated, if evaluated in the light of the Estonian data: its postulation inevitably leads to wrong assumptions about the data, e.g. that there is a difference in the properties of Accusative and Partitive, as well as that there is a verbal (functional) category of Aspect, which Estonian does not have (as was explained in Chapter 2). This provided further evidence that the postulation of accusative does not provide any advantages in the sense of being more explanatory and efficient in accounting for the data, but rather yields false assumptions and redundancy. This redundancy, it is worth emphasising, is caused by

the fact that one cannot account for the distribution of accusative without associating it with some semantic concept. Also, single arguments occurring in the nominative constitute a genuine puzzle if the syntactic accusative is included in a model, as was demonstrated in Chapter 4 (section 4.2). In existential sentences, for instance, it has to be decided which syntactic function is performed by the nominative argument whose syntactic position correlates with the object, but which appears in the form of a subject and triggers agreement. Whatever grammatical relation one chooses to apply to these arguments, the associated interpretations which is expressed by their case alternation are similar to the plural NPs in the object argument (i.e. accusative) and to the subject arguments of transitive and intransitive clauses. Overall, the data discussed in Chapter 4 indicated that the three grammatical cases in Estonian, i.e. genitive, nominative, and partitive, are polyfunctional, and that the precise syntactic function which they mark can only be determined in context; hence they are better characterised in terms of semantics.

Justifications for postulating accusative in Estonian do not seem valid in the light of this, unless there are good morphological reasons for it. However, as I demonstrated in Chapter 3, there is no strong morphological evidence for postulating accusative. It appears then that adopting the syntactic accusative in Estonian is only theoretically motivated, and required primarily by the assumption that it is the verb that assigns case to its object argument (or else by the conventional assumption that case is in general something which has to be assigned by something else). The conclusions drawn in Chapter 4 motivated me to take the morphological grammatical cases at face value in Estonian and seek another approach to case-marking.

In chapter 5, based on the substantial evidence provided, I argued that grammatical cases in Estonian are actually semantic, and that it is the case marker itself which gives rise to a range of interpretations, both nominal and verb related, relative to context. Contrary to the conventional or structuralist approach to case, which maintains that context cannot have an effect on grammatical or syntactic case, it was demonstrated that this claim is not borne out with respect to the Estonian data; hence I took the context-dependent view of case. This view provides a highly effective means of accounting for how interactions yield various patterns, namely by assuming that any linguistic expression encodes underspecified meaning which needs enrichment

via pragmatic inferencing in context. Accordingly, morphological case may simultaneously contribute different types of information to the interpretation of a case-marked expression, both in terms of semantics and argument relations. This means that case is not taken to be assigned by the verb but signals information about how it relates to the immediate linguistic context. It was shown in sections 5.3.1 and 6.2.2 that partitive encodes the meaning of ‘unspecified quantity of x’, and that genitive encodes the meaning of ‘specified quantity of x’. These informal definitions are taken to reflect the fact that genitive and partitive tend to be interpreted contrastively with respect to each other in identical constructions, and also allows for the possibility that the pragmatic contrast between partitive and genitive comes primarily from the more specific meaning of partitive. In essence, the distinction in meaning between genitive and partitive tends to be more significant in some contexts than others, i.e. in some instances the genitive is taken to contribute no more than that the nominal it marks is the dependent of x, or partitive is seen to contribute no more than that the nominal it marks is the object of x, relative to context. It is worth emphasising that the meaning of both cases also accounts for the fact that there is different distribution in singular and plural, i.e. why partitive singular is generally not felicitous with count nouns both with subject and object arguments, and why genitive is restricted to singular object arguments.

The assumption that it is the case marker itself which encodes some underspecified meaning allows us to account for a range of contextual phenomena more effectively and with fewer assumptions, i.e. without postulating bounded entities to which a certain morphological case has to be mapped eventually, or postulating a result or an aspectual theta-role for getting the right event type to associate the case with, or assuming that case is a property of the whole verb phrase – and thus missing the finer details. For instance, it was shown how the meaning of partitive, ‘unspecified quantity of x’, is interpreted locally, over the case-marked term, when it occurs on a mass or a plural noun. However, when it is used on a singular count noun, it cannot be interpreted locally (i.e. over the case-marked term), as it would be infelicitous and, in order to make it pragmatically relevant, an interpretation over both the nominal and verbal predicate is applied, i.e. the entire verb phrase. The applicability of this interpretation depends on the lexical aspect of the verb: when it denotes an accomplishment, the interpretation goes through, as the partitive-marked noun can

then be taken as not providing a limit to the event denoted, resulting in an atelic or unbounded interpretation, according to the general understanding of how event structure is determined, described briefly in Chapter 5, section 5.1.1. Meanwhile if the lexical aspect of the verb does not support the application of the interpretation to the entire verb phrase, partitive case is regarded as not appropriate on a singular count noun, and so it is possible to account for the fact that partitive case on a singular count noun is not used in intransitive clauses, existential constructions, or in transitive clauses which include verbs denoting achievements. As a result, one needs not postulate several semantic functions for one case, as partitive is taken to express, in order to account for its distribution, as in, e.g. Kiparsky (1998, 2001). In contrast to partitive, genitive, encoding the meaning of ‘specified quantity of x’, is always interpreted locally, and can give rise to aspectual readings locally, if the lexical properties of the verb (of which the genitive-marked noun is an object argument (lit. dependent)) denote an accomplishment, and thus produces a telic or bounded reading of the entire VP.

As has been argued, I do not take grammatical cases in Estonian to mark syntactic functions in the sense that certain cases have to be correlated with certain syntactic functions, grammatical relations, or syntactic positions. Instead, as was argued in Chapter 5, the case itself constrains the argument status of the nominal it marks, although this information can either be overridden or specified further by context. For instance, partitive tends to provide the information that the nominal it marks is likely to be the object argument of a verb, but when it occurs in intransitive sentences or in existential constructions on a single argument either sentence-initially or sentence-finally, the information about the object status of the argument is left unsupported by the very intransitivity of the verb itself. Yet, the fact that the object status is there is supported by the lack of agreement between the partitive-marked argument and the verb; hence the somewhat vague syntactic status of partitive-marked arguments in intransitive clauses. Also, the meaning of the verb plays a role here: some verbs (e.g. *arrive*, *die*, *fall*) are likely to produce a patient-like meaning for the argument (i.e. the predicate is analysed as unaccusative) and thus supports the interpretation of an object, while some other verbs (e.g. *run*, *talk*, *resign*) may impose an agentive interpretation for the argument, as result of which the object interpretation is unlikely and partitive on the argument is taken to express partitivity, i.e. as referring to a subset

of the entities construed as agents (cf. Dowty 1991). A minor point in this respect is that due to the intransitivity, partitive case can only be interpreted locally in these contexts, therefore only those nominal predicates which can be applied a local interpretation are felicitous with intransitive verbs, and the final interpretation of the partitive-marked term depends on discourse factors: if the partitive-marked nominal occurs in sentence-initial position it is likely to be interpreted as referring to an unspecified *subset* of a definite set (as explained in Chapter 6, section 6.1.2), this reading is, however, hardly ever produced in sentence-final position. As for genitive, the information which it encodes with respect to the syntactic function, i.e. ‘a dependent of x’, needs further specification by context. Thus, whether it is a dependent of a nominal or a verb is determined only by what item precedes or follows it: if a genitive marked nominal occurs sentence-initially and is followed by a nominal, it is applied an attribute function; however, if it is followed by a finite verb it is interpreted as an object argument of the verb. As explained in Chapter 2, section 2.1.1, the word order in Estonian is V2-biased, which provides some support to the assumption that the relation (or syntactic status) of a genitive-marked term needs to be disambiguated immediately, if the genitive-marked nominal occurs sentence-initially. In order to provide more substance to this assumption, it will be important to examine sentence patterns and case marking patterns more closely, and how exactly they tie up with Ehala’s (2006) hypothesis about the role of the V2-rule in Estonian (as briefly mentioned in section 2.1.1). Also, disambiguation as such would be interesting to study from the perspective of sentence processing. More generally, the point worth emphasising here is that case itself constrains the argument status of the nominal it marks, and this is well in accord with the highly flexible word order of Estonian. Thus one need not relate case to certain syntactic positions (as in the standard GB accounts), or correlate them with grammatical relations which is especially problematic with singular arguments of existential constructions (as discussed in section 4.2 of Chapter 4).

In Chapter 6, I showed that the apparent unit genitive/nominative is only apparent; hence there is no reason to argue for the accusative case in the first place. I demonstrated that nominative is not a true case, and the inflection which this form has in plural is just a plural marker. The impression that the same semantic notion, i.e. ‘total’ is expressed by two different forms, genitive and nominative, has been shown

to result from interaction with information structure in a sentence, rather than from two different cases denoting the same semantic concept. Specifically, it was shown that nominative as a caseless form does not encode any meaning directly, it is rather the topic-subject identity in Estonian which gives nominative the default reading of definiteness.

In summary, the approach to case argued for in this thesis allows us to show how pragmatic contrasts between cases play a role in their interpretation and how a case with more explicit meaning reinforces the interpretation of the case with less specific meaning, relative to context. This approach thus stands out as exploring case alternations from an entirely semantic point of view rather being syntactically oriented and mapping cases to ready semantics, derived from the construction, as is common in case-related literature. This approach opens up more possibilities for understanding and identifying which semantic factors are at work in alternating cases, what case actually contributes, and how context, sentence-level information structure and discourse in general interact with the information encoded by the case. Further work will therefore involve providing a detailed procedural description of grammatical cases in Estonian which would help to indicate the interactions more precisely and represent how case as a procedural knowledge combines with the process of interpretation.

Thus far, my approach to case allows us to account for why case as a nominal category can indicate verb-related concepts such aspect; why aspectual contrast are not always expressed and a variety of other nominal or sentence level meanings are produced instead; and why case alternation is entirely optional in some contexts. This would not be possible within frameworks which see case as a structural phenomenon and derive the meaning of case from the construction. In other words, my approach has the potential to explain, and predict, more data and more detail with fewer assumptions. Possible future research will therefore involve providing a formal analysis of case as procedural knowledge, and an obvious framework for this would be Dynamic Syntax (Cann et al. 2005). One direction for future research which should certainly be pursued is to extend the approach advocated here to other Finnic languages, and even to the more typologically distinct languages of the CB area. This would, I expect, help to clarify and identify more precisely what semantic factors and

interactions are at work in languages where the alternations in cases are described by the same semantic concepts, but at the more detailed level are either (i) not applicable to all of them individually or (ii) are too vague to be understood properly. Additionally, the different grammaticalization phenomena exhibited by these languages are likely to produce different generalisations with respect to case than has been assumed so far. No doubt, a better understanding of the semantic factors conditioning alternations in the case marking of the same argument will also have implications for more applied areas of linguistics.

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Appendix 1

1. One of the texts in Experiment 1 (source Eesti Päevaleht, March 2006). The text is in Estonian, the changed case forms of nouns are highlighted in yellow, and in this particular extract case forms are glossed for clarity and illustration. There were no glosses provided in the tests which were administered to participants.

Raamatud on täna Eestis kallid. Head lugemist on ka raske valida, sest erinevaid raamatuid ilmub palju. Nii jätamegi sageli väärtteosed-NOM.PL/väärtteoseid-PRTV.PL ostmata.

Eestlased on aga lugejarahvas. Seepärast loob Eesti Päevaleht oma lugejatele võimaluse-GEN.SG/võimalust-PRTV.SG osta hoolega valitud XX sajandi kirjandusklassikat hinnaga vaid 65 krooni raamat.

Alates 15. oktoobrist 2005 anname igal laupäeval välja ühe-GEN.SG/üht-PART.SG uue-GEN.SG/uut-PRTV.SG raamatu-GEN.SG/raamatut-PRTV.SG. Nii 30 laupäeva järjest, kusjuures iga raamat on müügil vaid nädala. Kõiki-PRTV.PL/kõik-NOM.PL raamatuid-PRTV.PL/raamatud-NOM.PL saab ka tellida.

Tegemist on tõelise klassikaga heas kvaliteetses köites. Ka meil oli raamatuid raske valida, sest sadade väga heade teoste seast tuli võtta vaid kolmkümmend. Kuid siin nad nüüd on. Meie soov oli koostada sari-NOM.SG/sarja-PRTV.SG nii, et valik oleks võimalikult lai – erinevad teemad, erinevad kümnendid, erinevast rahvusest autorid. Muidugi ka raamatud-NOM.PL/raamatuid-PRTV.PL Eesti klassikutelt. Kokku kolmkümmend menuraamatut kolmekümnelt kõrgelt hinnatud autorilt. Kõik see on tõesti ainult Eesti Päevalehe tellijatele ja ostjatele. Päevalehe lugejana on Sul hea võimalus see-NOM.SG/seda-PRTV.SG ainulaadne-NOM.SG/ainulaadset-PRTV.SG sari-NOM.SG/sarja-PRTV.SG oma kodus aukohale seada.

2. The texts which I devised myself. They were included in Experiment 2.

Context 1

Mees kõndis kodu poole. Nägi naabrimeest aia kallal askeldamas. Tervitas teda ning päris, et mis too teeb? Naabrimees vastas, et

1. Värvin aeda.
2. Värvin aeda roheliseks.
3. Värvin aia roheliseks.

Kõige paremini kõlab vastusevariant:

Kõige halvemini kõlab vastusevariant:

Kommentaar:

Context 2

Oli ilus sügispäev ning Jüri ja Mari otsustasid metsa seenele minna. Kumbki võttis kaasa suure korvi. Olles metsa jõudnud, hakkasid nad omaette jalutades hoolega jalge ette vahtima.

1. Jüri leidis seened, kuid Mari mitte.
2. Jüri leidis seeni, kuid Mari mitte.

Kõige paremini kõlab vastusevariant:

Kõige halvemini kõlab vastusevariant:

Kommentaar:

Context 3

Grupp turiste seisis viskitehase hoovis ning ootas kannatlikult piletijärjekorras. Eemal hoovis askeldasid mehed. Nad

1. veeretasid vaate
2. veeretasid vaate hoovi
3. veeretasid vaadid hoovi

Kõige paremini kõlab vastusevariant:

Kõige halvemini kõlab vastusevariant:

Kommentaar:

Appendix 2

Experiment 1: Results

Note that the object cases which were left unchanged back into the original form by the participants are given in **green**.

Context 1

1. Punased viljad on igati köitvad, aga vähesed viitsivad nende seest seemneid/**seemned** nokkida.

- S1: viitsivad nende seest **seemned** nokkida
- S2: viitsivad nende seest seemned seemneid (nokitakse ükshaaval) nokkida
- S3: viitsivad nende seest seemned nokkida. → Parem seemneid nokkida või seemned välja nokkida
- S4: viitsivad nende seest seemneid nokkida
- S5: viitsivad nende seest **seemned** nokkida

Context 2

2. Head lugemist on ka raske valida, sest erinevaid raamatuid ilmub palju. Nii jätamegi sageli väärtteosed/**väärtteoseid** ostmata.

- S1: väärtteoseid ostmata. (peaks olema nimetav kääne – väärtteosed)
- S2: väärtteoseid väärtteosed (ostma- tulemus, lõpetatus) ostmata.
- S3: väärtteoseid ostmata. → Parem väärtteosed.
- S4: väärtteosed ostmata; nominatiiv, a'la j2tan 6unad ostamata
- S5: väärtteosed ostmata

3. Eestlased on aga lugejarahvas. Seepärast loob Eesti Päevaleht oma lugejatele võimaluse/**võimalust** osta hoolega valitud XX sajandi kirjandusklassikat hinnaga vaid 65 krooni raamat.

- S1: loob Eesti Päevaleht oma lugejatele võimalust. loob võimalust kriibib kõrva, paneks siingi nimetava käände, või siis pakub võimalust, see on normaalsem
 - S2: loob Eesti Päevaleht oma lugejatele võimalust võimaluse (täissihitis, loob mille- loob ja valmis, finito)
 - S3: loob Eesti Päevaleht oma lugejatele võimalust; Natuke parem võimaluse
 - S4: loob Eesti Päevaleht oma lugejatele võimaluse
 - S5: loob Eesti Päevaleht oma lugejatele võimaluse. Loob mille? mitte mida?
-

4. Alates 15. oktoobrist 2005 anname igal laupäeval välja ühe/üht uue/uut raamatu/raamatut. Nii 30 laupäeva järjest, kusjuures iga raamat on müügil vaid nädala.

- S1: anname igal laupäeval välja üht uut raamatut. annab välja mille? - ühe uue raamatu; Kui oleks anname välja üht raamatut, siis sellest järeldub, et nad jäävadki seda välja andma ja ei saagi lõpetatud selle raamtuga. Ainuvõimalik – ühe uue raamatu.
- S2: anname igal laupäeval välja üht uut raamatut ühe uue raamatu (ühte ja sama raamatut siis iga laupäev?).
- S3: anname igal laupäeval välja üht uut raamatut; ühe uue raamatu
- S4: anname igal laupäeval välja ühe uue raamatu; annab v2lja mille?
- S5: anname igal laupäeval välja ühe uue raamatu

5. Kõiki/kõik raamatuid/raamatud saab ka tellida.

- S1: Kõik raamatud saab ka tellida. kõik raamatuid saab tellida, mida? Tellida.
- S2: Kõik raamatud (kõiki raamatuid- on võimalus raamatuid tellida on usutavam lause) saab ka tellida
- S3: Kõik raamatud saab ka tellida.
- S4: Kõiki raamatuid saab ka tellida; tellida mida?
- S5: Kõiki raamatuid saab ka tellida. Tellida mida?

6. Meie soov oli koostada sari/sarja nii, et valik oleks võimalikult lai – erinevad teemad, erinevad kümnendid, erinevast rahvusest autorid.

- S1: soov oli koostada sarja nii
- S2a: soov oli koostada sarja nii
- S2b: soov oli koostada sarja (sari- üks kord koostatakse) nii
- S3a: soov oli koostada sarja nii
- S3b: soov oli koostada sarja nii; → võiks olla ka sari, aga minu jaoks grammatikalisuses vahet pole; võib-olla modaalsus vähendab perfektivsust, soov ei pruugi täituda
- S4: soov oli koostada sari nii
- S5: soov oli koostada sari nii. Koostada mis?

7. Muidugi ka raamatud/raamatuid Eesti klassikutelt.

- S1: Muidugi ka raamatuid Eesti klassikutelt.
- S2: Muidugi ka raamatuid Eesti klassikutelt.
- S3: Muidugi ka raamatuid Eesti klassikutelt.
- S4: Muidugi ka raamatud Eesti klassikutelt; eelmises lauses kõik nimetavas
- S5: Muidugi ka raamatuid Eesti klassikutelt

8. Päevalehe lugejana on Sul hea võimalus see/seda ainulaadne/ainulaadset sari/sarja oma kodus aukohale seada.

- S1: võimalus seda ainulaadset sarja oma kodus aukohale seada
S2: võimalus seda ainulaadset sarja oma kodus aukohale seada. see ainulaadne sari aukohale.-(seadmine toimub üks kord, lõpetatus)
S3: võimalus seda ainulaadset sarja oma kodus aukohale seada. → Pigem see ainulaadne sari.
S4: võimalus seda ainulaadne sari oma kodus aukohale seada; võimalus see tass lauale panna
S5: võimalus seda ainulaadset sarja oma kodus aukohale seada

Context 3

9. Ma oleksin oodanud, et tulevikku vaatav president oleks sellele pühendanud vähemalt pool kõne.

- S1: vähemalt pool kõne.” - kriibib kõrva, ma paneks vähemalt poole kõnest; aga hädapärast käib kah
S2: vähemalt pool kõne.” Raske
S3: vähemalt pool kõne.” → pool kõnet
S4: vähemalt pool kõnest
S5: vähemalt poole oma kõnest

Context 4

10. Ju siis on paremad need, kes ei kõlbanud siberisse saata 40. aastal, sest siis viidi aju, 49. ja 50-53. aastatel viidi oskustöölised-töötajad/oskustöölisi- töötajaid

- S1: viidi aju, 49. ja 50-53. aastatel viidi oskustöölisi- töötajaid
S2a: viidi aju, 49. ja 50-53. aastatel viidi oskustöölisi- töötajaid.
S2b: viidi aju, 49. ja 50-53. aastatel viidi oskustöölisi- töötajaid (võiks kasutada ka oskustöölised- töötajad, siis sobiks aju käändega kokku)
S3a: viidi aju, 49. ja 50-53. aastatel viidi oskustöölisi- töötajaid
S3b: viidi aju, 49. ja 50-53. aastatel viidi oskustöölisi- töötajaid. tavalisem oleks võib-olla ajusid, aga ainsus ei häiri, eriti kõnekeelses kontekstis
S4: viidi aju, 49. ja 50-53. aastatel viidi oskustöölisi- töötajaid
S5: viidi aju, 49. ja 50-53. aastatel viidi oskustöölisi- töötajaid.ei muudaks: kui oleks ,oskustöölised’, siis oleks justkui kõik viidud.

11. Ja Merile annan ka andeks tema alatused/alatusi.

- S1: annan ka andeks tema alatusi
S2: annan ka andeks tema alatusi.(ainult mõned alatused? Lõpetatus- Andeks andma- annan andeks tema alatused)
S3: annan ka andeks tema alatusi. → alatused

- S4: annan ka andeks tema alatused; a'la annan tema ehted tagasi
S5: annan ka andeks tema alatused. Mis?

Context 5

12. Lindude hulgas on luiki/luiged, kormorane/kormoranid ja parte/pardid.

- S1: Lindude hulgas on luiged, kormoranid ja pardid. Lindude hulgas on --- seal lauses kasutaksin osastavat, hulgas on luiki jne. Kuid seal sobib see nimetav ka täitsa hästi.
- S2: Lindude hulgas on luiged, kormoranid ja pardid. (on luiki, kormorane ja parte.- ei ole terve maailma luiged, ainult mõned on)
- S3: Lindude hulgas on luiged, kormoranid ja pardid. → Natuke parem luiki, kormorane ja parte
- S4: Lindude hulgas on luiki, kormorane ja parte. Kui on nimetav loetelu, siis tundub, et nimekiri on ammendav. Kui on osastavas k22ndes, siis on lihtsalt v2lja toodud mõned, st „luiged, varesed, pardid” – harakaid pole.
- S5: Lindude hulgas on luiki, kormorane ja parte. Keda? Mingi osa.

13. Piirkonna läbikammimine jätkub, järelevalvet/järelevalve tõhustatakse rannikualal ja Gotlandi saarel.

- S1: järelevalve tõhustatakse rannikualal. paneks järelevalvet
S2: järelevalve tõhustatakse (järelevalvet, tõhustama-partitiivverb?)
S3: järelevalve tõhustatakse → järelevalvet
S4: järelevalvet tõhustatakse; mida?
S5: järelevalvet tõhustatakse; mida?

Context 6

14. Kuid siiani oli saladuseks, kuidas tekkisid/tekkisid lühikese aja jooksul kitsas geograafilises piirkonnas arvukalt/arvukad erinevaid/erinevad toonivarjundeid/toonivarjundid.

- S1: Kuid siiani oli saladuseks, kuidas tekkisid lühikese aja jooksul kitsas geograafilises piirkonnas arvukad erinevad toonivarjundid
- S2: Kuid siiani oli saladuseks, kuidas tekkisid lühikese aja jooksul kitsas geograafilises piirkonnas arvukad erinevad toonivarjundid. (tundub veidi imelik, aga põhimõtteliselt võib vist kah).
- S3: Kuid siiani oli saladuseks, kuidas tekkisid lühikese aja jooksul kitsas geograafilises piirkonnas arvukad erinevad toonivarjundid. → ei leia midagi häirivat
- S4: Kuid siiani oli saladuseks, kuidas tekkisid lühikese aja jooksul kitsas geograafilises piirkonnas arvukad erinevad toonivarjundid
- S5: Kuid siiani oli saladuseks, kuidas tekkisid lühikese aja jooksul kitsas geograafilises piirkonnas nii arvukad erinevad toonivarjundid. Mis?
-

15. Frosti hinnangul tekkisid/tekkis heledamad/heledamaid blondid/blonde juuksed/juukseid toidupuuduse tagajärjel neis piirkondades, kus naistel polnud võimalik endale ise toitu hankida ja nad sõltusid täiesti küttide poolt toodud toidupoolisest.

- S1: Frosti hinnangul tekkis heledamaid blonde juukseid toidupuuduse tagajärjel
S2: Frosti hinnangul tekkis heledamaid blonde juukseid (heledamad blondid juuksed -tekkisid salgukaupa?) toidupuuduse tagajärjel
S3: Frosti hinnangul tekkis heledamaid blonde juukseid toidupuuduse tagajärjel neis piirkondades, → Pigem tekkisid heledamad blondid juuksed
S4: Frosti hinnangul tekkis heledamaid blonde juukseid toidupuuduse tagajärjel
S5: Frosti hinnangul tekkisid heledamad blondid juuksed toidupuuduse tagajärjel.
Mis?

Context 7

16. Kaitseliidu ülema korraldusel viiakse Tallinna malevas juhtunu asjaolude selgitamiseks läbi teenistuslik/teenistuslikku juurdlus/juurdlust.

- S1: läbi teenistuslikku juurdlust. ma kasutaksin nimetavat käänet – viiakse läbi teenistuslik juurdlus, aga antud juhul siin osastav pole ka vale.
S2: läbi teenistuslikku juurdlust. (teenistuslik juurdlus, lõpetatus)
S3: läbi teenistuslikku juurdlust
S4: läbi teenistuslik juurdlus; viis 12bi mille?
S5: läbi teenistuslik juurdlus. Mis?

17. Kaitseminister Jürgen Ligi teatas, et ootab kaitseväe juhatajalt Tarmo Kõutsilt neljapäevaks selgitusi/selgitused iseseisvuspäeva paraadil svastika kasutamise kohta, aga ka ülevaadet/ülevaate reageeringutest ja ametkondlikust uurimisest, vahendab BNS.

- S1: selgitused iseseisvuspäeva paraadil svastika kasutamise kohta, aga ka ülevaate reageeringutest. ootab ikka selgitusi ja ülevaadet. Minu arust see lausa grammatiliselt vale.
S2a: selgitused (selgitusi, verb nõuab) iseseisvuspäeva paraadil svastika kasutamise kohta, aga ka ülevaate reageeringutest
S2b: ka ülevaate (ülevaadet- seotud verbiga ootama)
S3: selgitused iseseisvuspäeva paraadil svastika kasutamise kohta, aga ka ülevaate reageeringutest → selgitusi, ülevaadet
S4: selgitusi iseseisvuspäeva paraadil svastika kasutamise kohta, aga ka ülevaadet reageeringutest
S5: selgitusi iseseisvuspäeva paraadil svastika kasutamise kohta, aga ka ülevaadet reageeringutest. Mida?

Context 8

18. Presidendi ja tema kaasa igast väljaütlemisest üritatakse välja lugeda signaali/**signaal** kas kandideerimise või sellest loobumise kohta.

- S1: üritatakse välja lugeda signaal. välja lugeda signaal – väga kummaline sõnastus, kohmakas, mingi -ism äkki? Anglitsism? Signaal seal täiesti ülearune sõna, vabalt võib ära jätta ja lause tähendus on selge. Kui jätta, siis sobiks välja lugeda signaali – aga ikkagi on selline variant väga kõrvakriipiv
- S2: üritatakse **välja lugeda signaal**
- S3a: üritatakse **välja lugeda signaal**
- S3b: üritatakse välja lugeda **signaal**. võiks olla ka signaali, aga signaal ei häiri üldse – modaalsus ei tühista perfektivsust, mille tekitab adverb välja?
- S4: üritatakse välja lugeda signaali. Lugeda mida?
- S5: üritatakse välja lugeda signaali

19. Villu Reiljan üritab otsekui Rüütli hooldaja presidendile sõnu/**sõnad** ja mõtteid/**mõtted** suhu toppida, mida Rüütel justkui taaskandideerimisest arvab.

- S1: **sõnad ja mõtted** suhu toppida. otsekui Rüütli hooldaja ... see lausestus on ka kohmakas, pidin kaks korda lugema, et aru saada, mis mõeldi
- S2: **sõnad ja mõtted** suhu toppida, [kahtleb, et 2kki sõnu ja mõtteid?]
- S3: **sõnad ja mõtted** suhu toppida; → Natuke parem sõnu ja mõtteid
- S4: sõnu ja mõtteid suhu toppida.
- S5: sõnu ja mõtteid suhu toppida. Viidates valikulisusele.

Context 9

20. Tavaliselt usutakse, et sõjakamad mängud muudavad lapsed/**lapsi** agressiivseks, muu sisuga mängud aga eluvõõraks ning tekitavad neis petliku/**petlikku** tunde/**tunnet**, et kõiki probleeme saab lahendada vaid arvutihiire klahvile vajutades.

- S1: muudavad **lapsi** agressiivseks, muu sisuga mängud aga eluvõõraks ning tekitavad neis **petlikku tunnet**, et kõiki probleeme saab lahendada vaid arvutihiire klahvile vajutades
- S2: muudavad **lapsi** agressiivseks, muu sisuga mängud aga eluvõõraks ning tekitavad neis petlikku tunnet (petliku tunde- tundub loomulik; muidu saab vist kasutada ka tekitama mida?- nt tekitas paksu verd), et kõiki probleeme saab lahendada vaid arvutihiire klahvile vajutades.
- S3a: muudavad **lapsi** agressiivseks, muu sisuga mängud aga eluvõõraks ning tekitavad neis **petlikku tunnet**, et kõiki probleeme saab lahendada vaid arvutihiire klahvile vajutades.
- S3b: muudavad lapsi agressiivseks, muu sisuga mängud aga eluvõõraks ning tekitavad neis petlikku tunnet, et kõiki probleeme saab lahendada vaid arvutihiire klahvile vajutades. → võiks olla ka lapsed ja petliku tunde, aga partitiiv ei häiri üldse. Võib-olla oleks parem, kui oleks „agressiivsemaks“.
- S4: muudavad lapsed agressiivseks, muu sisuga mängud aga eluvõõraks ning

tekitavad neis petliku tunde, et kõiki probleeme saab lahendada vaid arvutihiire klahvile vajutades.

S5: muudavad lapsed agressiivseks, muu sisuga mängud aga eluvõõraks ning tekitavad neis petliku tunde, et kõiki probleeme saab lahendada vaid arvutihiire klahvile vajutades

21. Toronto ülikooli psühholoogiadotsent Ellen Bialystok viis hiljuti koos sadade tudengitega läbi sellealase/sellealast ulatusliku/ulatuslikku katsesarja/katsesarja.

S1: viis hiljuti koos sadade tudengitega läbi sellealast ulatuslikku katsesarja.

S2a: viis hiljuti koos sadade tudengitega läbi sellealast ulatuslikku katsesarja

S2b: viis hiljuti koos sadade tudengitega läbi sellealast ulatuslikku (sellealase ulatusliku- midagi viiakse läbi üks kord, lõpetatus) katsesarja

S3: viis hiljuti koos sadade tudengitega läbi sellealast ulatuslikku katsesarja. →
Loogilisem oleks sellealase ulatusliku katsesarja

S4: viis hiljuti koos sadade tudengitega läbi sellealase ulatusliku katsesarja.

S5: viis hiljuti koos sadade tudengitega läbi sellealase ulatusliku katsesarja

22. Nähtuse põhjus on tema kinnitusel see, et arvutisõitlastel on tänu pidevale kuvaril toimuvate muutuste jälgimisele välja arenenud võime tajuda korraga mitut tegevust ning ühtlasi jätta tähelepanuta asjad/asju, mis on parajasti käsitletava probleemi lahendamise seisukohalt ebaolulised.

S1: jätta tähelepanuta asju

S2a: jätta tähelepanuta asju

S2b: jätta tähelepanuta asju, mis... (võib kasutada nii jätta tähelepanuta asjad kui jätta tähelepanuta asju, võib-olla sobib järgneva osalausega kokku rohkem "asjad, mis")

S3a: jätta tähelepanuta asju

S3b: jätta tähelepanuta asju, → võiks olla ka asjad, aga partitiiv ei häiri, võib-olla jälle potentsiaalsuse tõttu, nt lause „Arvutisõitlased tajuvad korraga mitut tegevust ja jätavad tähelepanuta asju...“ oleks palju halvem kui „Arvutisõitlased tajuvad korraga mitut tegevust ja suudavad jätta tähelepanuta asju...“

S4: jätta tähelepanuta asju

S5: jätta tähelepanuta asju

Context 10

23. Muuseumi töötajad tegid kalmaari säilitamiseks tohutu/tohutut töö/tööd ja nüüd on ta üheksameetrises klaasakvaariumis välja pandud.

S1: tegid kalmaari säilitamiseks tohutut tööd

S2: tegid kalmaari säilitamiseks tohutut tööd Siin ei ole viga, pigem on mõlemad variandid võimalikud.

S3: tegid kalmaari säilitamiseks tohutut tööd

S4: tegid kalmaari säilitamiseks tohutut tööd, aga suure t88 ytleksin.

S5: tegid kalmaari säilitamiseks tohutut tööd

Context 11

24. Uudne meestepesu, mis surub kõhu/kõhtu sisse ja rõhutab puusajoont, osutus menukaks ja proovipartii osteti veebruaris kiiresti ära.

- S1: surub kõhtu sisse ja rõhutab puusajoont
S2: surub kõhtu sisse ja rõhutab puusajoont
S3a: surub kõhtu sisse ja rõhutab puusajoont
S3b: surub kõhtu sisse ja rõhutab puusajoont. võiks olla ka kõhu, aga partitiiv ei häiri, võib-olla sellepärast, et surumine on tõlgendatav imperfektiivsena
S4: surub kõhu sisse ja rõhutab puusajoont. Surun Age uksest sisse!; v2rvin p6ski punaseks – vale! bigem oleks: v2rvin p6sed punaseks.
S5: surub kõhu sisse ja rõhutab puusajoont. Rõhu v2lja – mille?

25. Triumph tõi turule kahte sorti pikad/pikki korsetid/korsette, üks ulatub nabast põlvedeni ja teist kantakse madala vöökohaga pükste all

- S1: tõi turule kahte sorti pikki korsette,
S2: tõi turule kahte sorti pikki korsette pikad korsetid tõi turule mille?/lõpetatus/tulemus
S3: tõi turule kahte sorti pikki korsette, → kahte sorti pikad korsetid
S4: tõi turule kahte sorti pikad korsetid.
S5: tõi turule kahte sorti pikki korsette

26. Mõlemad läksid nagu soojad saiad ja firma kavatses välja töötada uusi lõikeid/uued lõiked, näiteks suveriiete all kandmiseks.

- S1: kavatses välja töötada uued lõiked,
S2a: kavatses välja töötada uued lõiked
S2b: kavatses välja töötada uued lõiked (grammatika oleks nagu korrektne, aga “uusi lõikeid” oleks võib-olla parem, sisust lähtuvalt, sest järgneb, “näiteks”)
S3: kavatses välja töötada uued lõiked
S4: kavatses välja töötada uued lõiked
S5: kavatses välja töötada uusi lõikeid. Mida?

27. Korsetipõhise meeste aluspesu peale mõtlevad/mõtleb ka teised/teisi firmad/firmasid, kirjutas ajaleht Nihon Keizai Shimbun.

- S1: mõtleb ka teisi firmasid. mõtlevad ka teised firmad, oleks vähe loomulikum
S2a: mõtleb ka teisi firmasid,
S2b: mõtleb ka teisi firmasid (mõtlevad ka teised firmad- mõtlema kasutatakse tavaliselt koos nimetavaga, kes mõtleb?)
S3a: mõtleb ka teisi firmasid
S3b: mõtleb ka teisi firmasid. võiks olla ka mõned teised firmad
S4: mõtlevad ka teised firmad

S5: mõtleb ka teisi firmasid

Context 12

28. USA valitsuse poolt palgatud teadlased on loonud ajusse istutatava vidina, mis võimaldab kaugjuhtimisega anda hai ajule signaale/signaalid, teatab Ananova.

- S1: anda hai ajule signaalid,
S2: anda hai ajule signaalid, Signaale, anda mida?
S3: anda hai ajule signaalid, → Parem signaale
S4: anda hai ajule signaale
S5: anda hai ajule signaale. Mida?

29. Pentagon loodab ära kasutada haide loomuliku/loomuliku võimekust/võimekuse liikuda vees hääletult, tunda elektrivoolu ja keemiliste ainete jälgi.

- S1: ära kasutada haide loomuliku võimekuse
S2a: ära kasutada haide loomuliku võimekuse
S2b: ära kasutada haide loomuliku võimekuse- haide loomulikku võimekust, ära kasutama mida? keda? tavaliselt
S3a: ära kasutada haide loomuliku võimekuse
S3b: ära kasutada haide loomuliku võimekuse → võiks olla ka loomulikku võimekust, aga genitiiv ei häiri, sest ära kasutama võimaldab perfektivset tõlgendust?
S4: ära kasutada haide loomulikku võimekust
S5: ära kasutada haide loomulikku võimekust

30. Ajusse istutatud elektroodid tekitavad seal impulsse/impulsid, mis panevad kala vajalikul moel käituma.

- S1: tekitavad seal impulsid. paneks pigem impulsse, aga nimetav kääne on kah norm
S2: tekitavad seal impulsid. (tekitavad mida? Impulsse)
S3: tekitavad seal impulsid, → Natuke parem impulsse
S4: tekitavad seal impulsse?
S5: tekitavad seal impulsse. Mida? Paanikat?

Context 13

31. Laev sõitis kitsast/põdravasikast umbes 10–15 meetri kauguselt mööda, mehed otsustasid loomakese/loomakest kaldale toimetada.

- S1: otsustasid loomakest kaldale toimetada. otsustasid loomakse kaldale toimetada peaks ikka olema
S2: otsustasid loomakest kaldale toimetada. (loomakese, tükkhaaval ei toimetatulemus)

- S3: otsustasid loomakest kaldale toimetada. → loomakese
S4: otsustasid loomakese kaldale toimetada. A'la Aitasid vanaproua yle tee.
S5: otsustasid loomakese kaldale toimetada. Kelle?

32. Esialgu viisid mehed umbes 15-kilose metslooma kaimehe ruumi sooja, pärast võtsid jahimehed kitsetalle/põdravasikat oma hoole alla.

- S1: võtsid jahimehed põdravasikat oma hoole alla. võtsid põdravasika oma hoole alla – ainuvõimalik mu meelest.
S2: võtsid jahimehed põdravasikat oma hoole alla. (tulemus- põdravasika)
S3: võtsid jahimehed põdravasikat oma hoole alla. → põdravasika
S4: võtsid jahimehed põdravasika oma hoole alla
S5: võtsid jahimehed põdravasika oma hoole alla

Experiment 2: Results

Note that the object cases which were left unchanged back into the original form by the participants are given in **green**.

Context 1

1. Riigikogu valis neljapäeval parlamendi uueks esimeheks keskerakondlase Toomas Vareki/**keskerakondlast Toomas Varekit**, tema poolt hääletas 54 saadikut. Teiseks jäänud Peeter Tulviste poolt hääletas 41 saadikut.

- S1: keskerakondlase Toomas Vareki, kelle poolt hääletas 54 saadikut
- S2: keskerakondlase Toomas Vareki -- Grammatiline viga, lause ei ühildu.
Küsimus peaks olema kelle?
- S3: keskerakondlase Toomas (kustut. e) Vareki (kust. t)
- S4: (valis esimeheks keskerakondlase Toomas Vareki)
- S5: **keskerakondlast Toomast Varekit**
- S6: keskerakondlast Toomast Varekit – võiks olla keskerakondlase Toomas Vareki
- S7: keskerakondlast Toomast Varekit (keskerakondlase Toomas Vareki. Kollasega märgitud lause on vales käändes)
- S8: keskerakondlast Toomast Varekit, Peaks olema “keskerakondlase Toomas Vareki”, sest ta sai sinna ametisse. Pealegi jääb muidu tunne, et valiti ainult ühte inimest.
- S9: keskerakondlast Toomast Varekit (valima verb nõuab toomas vareki)
- S10a: keskerakondlast Toomast Varekit Keskerakondlase Toomas Vareki ehk siis valis KELLE

2. ...ning lausus tänusõnad/**tänusõnu** ka eelmisele esimehele, akadeemik Ene Ergmale

- S1: lausus **tänusõnu** ka eelmisele esimehele
- S2: lausus **tänusõnu** ka eelmisele esimehele,
- S3: lausus **tänusõnu** ka eelmisele esimehele
- S4: lausus **tänusõnu** ka eelmisele esimehele
- S5: lausus **tänusõnu** ka eelmisele esimehele
- S6: lausus **tänusõnu** ka eelmisele esimehele
- S7: lausus **tänusõnu** ka eelmisele esimehele
- S8: lausus **tänusõnu** ka eelmisele esimehele
- S9: lausus **tänusõnu** ka eelmisele esimehele
- S10a: lausus **tänusõnu** ka eelmisele esimehele

3. ...et olen näinud siin saalis higi ja pisaraid/**pisarad**, et siin isegi süüakse ja taastatakse energiavarusid/**energiavarud**, loetakse ajalehti, koguni Kroonikat.

- S1: higi ja pisaraid. Siin isegi süüakse ning taastatakse energiavarusid, loetakse ajalehti
- S2: higi ja pisaraid (küsimus mida?), et siin isegi süüakse ja taastatakse **energiavarud**, loetakse ajalehti
- S3: higi ja **pisarad**, et siin isegi süüakse ja taastatakse **energiavarud**, loetakse ajalehti
- S4: higi ja **pisarad**, et siin isegi süüakse ja taastatakse energiavarud, loetakse ajalehti, koguni Kroonikat. Vahel vajub siin mõni silm kinni kah, aga ma tean, et see johtub suurest töötegemisest.” – punasega märgitud ala on imelikult sõnastatud. See peaks olema omaette, sest sel puudub minu jaoks side esimese lause osaga.
- S5: higi ja **pisarad**, et siin isegi süüakse ja taastatakse **energiavarud**, loetakse ajalehti,
- S6: higi ja **pisarad**, et siin isegi süüakse ja taastatakse **energiavarud**, loetakse ajalehti
- S7: higi ja **pisarad**, et siin isegi süüakse ja taastatakse **energiavarud**, loetakse ajalehti
- S8: higi ja pisarad, et siin isegi süüakse ja taastatakse energiavarud, loetakse ajalehti. Peaks olema “*pisaraid*” ning “*energiavarusid*”, sest ta nägi midagi – nad peavad olema osastavas käändes.
- S9: higi ja **pisarad**, et siin isegi süüakse ja taastatakse energiavarud (süüakse energiavarud- hakkaks niimoodi tunduma-- taastatakse energiavarusid), loetakse ajalehti
- S10a: higi ja **pisarad**, et siin isegi süüakse ja taastatakse **energiavarud**, loetakse ajalehti
- S10b: higi ja **pisarad**, et siin isegi süüakse ja taastatakse energiavarud, /energiavarusid/ loetakse ajalehti

4. ...et vahel on saadikud läinud omavahel hambaid/**hambad** teritades üle piiri.

- S1: hambaid teritades üle piiri
- S2: hambaid (peab vastama küsimusele mida?, mitte mis?) teritades üle piiri
- S3: hambaid teritades üle piiri
- S4: **hambad** (hambaid) teritades üle piiri.
- S5: **hambad** teritades üle piiri
- S6: omavahel hambad teritades – kriibib kõrva, aga pole kindel mis siin asemel täpselt olema peaks üle piiri
- S7: hambad teritades (hambaid teritades) üle piiri
- S8: **hambad** teritades üle piiri
- S9: hambad teritades (teritama mida? Hambaid) üle piiri
- S10a: **hambad** teritades üle piiri
- S10b: hambad teritades Hambaid teritades

5. “Meil kõigil on erinevad vaated/**erinevaid vaateid**,” sõnas Varek.

- S1: on erinevad vaated
S2: on erinevad vaated (meil kõigil on erinev mis? Ehk siis erinevad vaated)
S3: on **erinevaid vaateid**
S4: on **erinevaid vaateid**
S5: on **erinevaid vaateid**
S6: on **erinevaid vaateid**
S7: on **erinevaid vaateid**
S8: on erinevaid vaateid. Ei pea ütlema, mida me omame (*erinevaid vaateid*), piisab, kui öelda, mis meil on (*erinevad vaated*).
S9: on **erinevaid vaateid**
S10a: on erinevaid vaateid Erinevad vaated

6. ... et erinevad mõtted välja öelda ja jõuda seaduse vastuvõtmiseni.”

- S1: erinevad mõtted välja öelda
S2: erinevaid mõtteid (mida?) välja öelda
S3: erinevad mõtted välja öelda
S4: erinevad mõtted välja öelda
S5: erinevad mõtted välja öelda
S6: erinevad mõtted välja öelda
S7: erinevad mõtted välja öelda
S8: erinevad mõtted välja öelda
S9: erinevad mõtted välja öelda
S10a: erinevad mõtted välja öelda

7. see annab kohustuse omavahelised vastuolud/**omavahelisi vastuolusid** ületada.

- S1: **omavahelisi vastuolusid** ületada
S2: omavahelised vastuolud (ei ühildu) ületada
S3: **omavahelisi vastuolusid** ületada
S4: omavahelisi vastuolusid (omavahelised vastuolud) ületada
S5: annab kohustuse KOHUSTAB **omavahelisi vastuolusid** ületada
S6: **omavahelisi vastuolusid** ületada
S7: **omavahelisi vastuolusid** ületada
S8: omavahelisi vastuolusid ületada. Peaks olema “*omavahelised vastuolud ületada*”, sest tegemist on takistusega, *mis* tuleb kõrvaldada
S9: omavahelisi vastuolusid ületada. (Ületamine on lõplik, vastuolud ületada)
S10a: **omavahelisi vastuolusid** ületada
S10b: omavahelisi vastuolusid ületada Omavahelised vastuolud, st nimetav kääne.

8. “Aga meil on olnud ka ühiseid võite, mis on toonud ühiseid rõõme ja hajutanud erakondlikud erimeelsused.”

- S1: “Aga meil on olnud ka ühiseid võite, mis on toonud ühiseid rõõme ja

- hajutanud erakondlikke erimeelsusi.”
- S2: “Aga meil on olnud ka ühiseid võite, mis on toonud ühiseid rõõme ja hajutanud erakondlikud erimeelsused.”
- S3: Aga meil on olnud ka ühiseid võite, mis on toonud ühiseid rõõme ja hajutanud erakondlikud erimeelsused.”
- S4: “Aga meil on olnud ka ühiseid võite, mis on toonud ühiseid rõõme ja hajutanud erakondlikud erimeelsused.”
- S5: Aga meil on olnud ka ühiseid võite, mis on toonud ühiseid rõõme ja hajutanud erakondlikud erimeelsused.”
- S6: “Aga meil on olnud ka ühiseid võite, mis on toonud ühiseid rõõme ja hajutanud erakondlikud erimeelsused.”
- S7: “Aga meil on olnud ka ühiseid võite, mis on toonud ühiseid rõõme ja hajutanud erakondlikud erimeelsused.”
- S8: “Aga meil on olnud ka ühiseid võite, mis on toonud ühiseid rõõme ja hajutanud erakondlikud erimeelsused.”
- S9: “Aga meil on olnud ka ühiseid võite, mis on toonud ühiseid rõõme ja hajutanud erakondlikud erimeelsused.”
- S10a: “Aga meil on olnud ka ühiseid võite, mis on toonud ühiseid rõõme ja hajutanud erakondlikud erimeelsused Erakondlikke erimeelsusi/erimeelsuseid – sarnaselt kahele eelmisele lauselõigule

9. ...on tunda järgmise kevade parlamendivalimiste pingeid/pinged.

- S1: parlamendivalimiste pingeid
- S2: parlamendivalimiste pingeid (mida?, sest kui jätaksime antud sõna nimetavasse käändesse, siis see ei ühilduks).
- S3: parlamendivalimiste pinged
- S4: parlamendivalimiste pinged (pingeid)
- S5: parlamendivalimiste pinged
- S6: parlamendivalimiste pinged - pingeid
- S7: parlamendivalimiste pinged.(pingeid. Peaks olema osastavas käändes aga kollases on nimetavas)
- S8: parlamendivalimiste pinged. Peaks olema “parlamendivalimiste pingeid”, sest tuntakse osastavas käändes (tuntakse mida?).
- S9: parlamendivalimiste pinged. (on tunda mida? Pingeid)
- S10a: parlamendivalimiste pinged Parlamendivalimiste pingeid

Context 2

10. ...raamat peidab endas salakavalalt igavat kirjandusteadust/igava kirjandusteaduse, kahe sada aastat tagasi elanud kirjaniku kirjavahetust/kirjavahetuse, kus pingpongina kitsaid literatuuri asju aetakse.

- S1: igavat kirjandusteadust, kakssada aastat tagasi elanud kirjaniku kirjavahetust
- S2: igava kirjandusteaduse, kakssada (grammatiline viga sajalised kirjutatakse kokku ja kääne oli ka vale) aastat tagasi elanud kirjaniku kirjavahetuse,
- S3: igava kirjandusteaduse, kahe sada aastat tagasi elanud kirjaniku kirjavahetuse,

- S4: igava kirjandusteaduse, kahe sada aastat tagasi elanud kirjaniku kirjavahetuse (Nii kaunistatud lause, et mõte jääb segaseks)
- S5: igava kirjandusteaduse, kahe KAKS sada aastat tagasi elanud kirjaniku kirjavahetuse,
- S6: igava kirjandusteaduse, kahe sada aastat tagasi – sõnade järjekorda võiks muuta nii, et `kahe` ja `sada` ei oleks kõrvuti, muidu jääb mulje et jutt on 200st aastast. elanud kirjaniku kirjavahetuse, kus pingpongina kitsaid literatuuri asju aetakse. Ühest pikast kohmakast lausest võiks kaks lihtsamat teha.
- S7: igava kirjandusteaduse, kahe sada aastat (kakssada aastat. Sajalised kirjutatakse kokku) tagasi elanud kirjaniku kirjavahetuse(kirjavahetust), kus pingpongina kitsaid literatuuri asju aetakse. (See lause on kuidagi kummaline ja lause sisu jääb mulle segaseks. Äkki oleks targem lauset nii ümber sõnastada. Ei peaks pelgama, et äärmiselt kaunilt kujundatud (kunstnik Tio Tepandi) raamat peidab endas salakavalalt kakssada aastat tagasi elanud kirjaniku kirjavahetust igavast kirjandusteadusest, kus pingpongina kitsaid literatuuri asju aetakse.
- S8: igava kirjandusteaduse, kahe sada aastat tagasi elanud kirjaniku kirjavahetuse. Parem lause algus oleks: “*Ei peaks pelgama, et see kunstnik Tio Tepandi äärmiselt kaunilt kujundatud...*”; “*igava kirjandusteaduse*” asemel võiks olla “*igavat kirjandusteadust*”, sest jutt käib sellest, mida raamat peidab (sama kehtib ka “*kirjavahetuse*” kohta).
- S9: igava kirjandusteaduse, (peidab mida? Kirjandusteadust) kahe sada aastat tagasi elanud kirjaniku kirjavahetuse, (kirjavahetust)
- S10a: igava kirjandusteaduse, kahe sada aastat tagasi elanud kirjaniku kirjavahetuse. Ma ütleks pigem et peidab endas MIDA, mitte MILLE.

11. ...et tegemist on pigem tekstiga seebiseriaalist, kus lembesõnad ning õhkamine vaatavad vastu pea igalt leheküljelt.

- S1: kus lembesõnad ning õhkamine vaatavad
- S2: lembesõnad ning õhkamine vaatavad
- S7: lembesõnad ning õhkamine(õhkamised) vaatavad

12. Lühikese ajaga anti raamatust välja kolm trükki, ning Underi sonette/sonetid sukkadest, pitsivahust ja valgest ihust (millest poetess luuletas muuseas Tuglase otsesel mõjutusel) lugesid koolitüdrukud õhetavi põsi üksteisele peast ette.

- S1: Underi sonette sukkadest
- S2: Underi sonetid sukkadest
- S3: Underi sonetid sukkadest
- S4: Underi sonetid sukkadest
- S5: Underi sonetid sukkadest
- S6: Underi sonetid sukkadest
- S7: Underi sonetid sukkadest
- S8: Underi sonetid sukkadest. “Sonetid” peaks olema osastavas käändes (“ning Underi sonette”), sest loeti mida?
- S9: Underi sonetid sukkadest

S10a: Underi **sonetid** sukkadest

13. Samas sai ta teatud seltskonnas endale kaela tiitli/**tiitlit** «libude laulik».

- S1: endale tiitli «libude laulik».
S2: kaela tiitli (mille?, mitte mida?) «libude laulik».
S3: kaela **tiitlit** «libude laulik».
S4: kaela **tiitlit** «libude laulik»
S5: kaela tiitlit **TIITLI** «libude laulik»
S6: kaela tiitlit - tiitli «libude laulik»
S7: kaela **tiitlit** «libude laulik»
S8: kaela tiitlit «libude laulik». Osastava asemel peaks olema omastav (“*tiitli*”), sest ta sai kaela *mille?*
S9: kaela tiitlit «libude laulik». (sai kaela mille? Tiitli)
S10a: kaela **tiitlit** «libude laulik»
S10b: kaela tiitlit «libude laulik» Tiitli. Sai kaela MILLE

14. 1933 avaldas Tuglas Underi juubeliks Loomingus loo/**lugu** paljutähendava pealkirjaga «Rõõm ühest sõprusest».

- S1: juubeliks „Loomingus” loo paljutähendusliku pealkirjaga
S2: juubeliks Loomingus loo (mille?)
S3: juubeliks „Loomingus” **lugu**
S4: juubeliks Loomingus **lugu**
S5: juubeliks Loomingus **lugu**
S6: juubeliks Loomingus lugu – loo
S7: juubeliks Loomingus **lugu**
S8: juubeliks Loomingus lugu. Peaks olema omastavas käändes (“*loo*”), sest avaldas *mille?*
S9: juubeliks Loomingus **lugu**
S10a: juubeliks Loomingus lugu Avaldas loo (avaldas MILLE)

15. 1936. aasta andis Underile võimaluse/**võimalust** võrdväärseks värsskirjaliseks vastulauseks: «Tõesti, ammuks... kas see polnud alles eile?»

- S1: andis Underile võimaluse
S2: andis Underile võimaluse (mille?)
S3: andis Underile **võimalust**
S4: andis Underile **võimalust**
S5: andis Underile **võimalust**
S6: andis Underile võimalust - võimaluse
S7: andis Underile **võimalust**
S8: andis Underile võimalust. Osastava asemel peaks olema omastav (“*võimaluse*”), sest andis *mille?*
S9: andis Underile võimalust. (andis mille? Võimaluse)
S10a: andis Underile võimalust Andis võimaluse (andis MILLE)

16. 1917. aastal oli Under kahe tütre emana juba hüljanud abikaasa Carl Hackeri, mõni aasta varem süttinud kirepalangust Adsoni vastu.

S1: hüljanud abikaasa Carl Hackeri

17. Nüüd leidsid teineteist maapaost naasnud Tuglas ja Under, keda pealegi ühendas mänguline kirjandusrühmitus «Siuru».

- S1: Nüüd leidsid teineteist maapaost
S2: Nüüd leidsid teineteist maapaost
S3: Nüüd leidsid teineteist maapaost
S4: Nüüd leidsid teineteist maapaost
S5: Nüüd leidsid teineteist maapaost
S6: Nüüd leidsid teineteist maapaost
S7: Nüüd leidsid teineteist maapaost
S8: Nüüd leidsid teineteist maapaost naasnud Tuglas ja Under, keda pealegi ühendas, ... Paremp sõnastus oleks: “Nüüd leidsid maapaost naasnud Tuglas ja Under teineteist, pealegi ühendas neid...”
S9: Nüüd leidsid teineteist (leidsid teineteise- üks kord, lõplikult) maapaost
S10a: Nüüd leidsid teineteist maapaost

18. Tuglas aga abiellus sügisel 1918 Elo Tuglasega, kellest sai mehe kumardaja ja ümmardaja elu lõpuni, nagu Adson vabastas Underi/Underit igaveseks ajaks kõigist argimuredest.

- S1: Adson vabastas Underit
S2: Adson vabastas Underi (kelle?)
S3: Adson vabastas Underit
S4: Adson vabastas Underit
S5: Adson vabastas Underit UNDERI
S6: Adson vabastas Underit
S7: Adson vabastas Underit (Underi. Peaks olema omastavas käändes aga kollases on osastavas)
S8: Adson vabastas Underit. Peaks olema omastavas käändes (“vabastas Underi”), sest vabastas kelle?
S9: Adson vabastas Underit (vabastamine- lõplik, Underi)
S10a: Adson vabastas Underit Vabastas Underi (kelle)

19. Ilus raamat, ilus armastuslugu ja ilus kultuurilugu. Lisaks väärtuslikud selgitused/väärtuslikke selgitusi kirjavahetuse juurde.

- S1: Lisaks väärtuslikke selgitusi
S2: Lisaks väärtuslikke selgitusi
S3: Lisaks väärtuslikke selgitusi
S4: Lisaks väärtuslikke selgitusi
S5: Lisaks väärtuslikke selgitusi

- S6: Lisaks väärtuslikke selgitusi
S7: Lisaks väärtuslikke selgitusi
S8: Lisaks väärtuslikke selgitusi
S9: Lisaks väärtuslikke selgitusi (väärtuslikud selgitused? Oleks loomulikum)
S10a: Lisaks väärtuslikke selgitusi
S10b: Lisaks väärtuslikke selgitusi Lisaks väärtuslikud selgitused kirjavahetuse juurde. (kuigi praegune variant ei ole ka paha)

Context 3

20. Vaasalinna kohal lendavad haned ei kannu enda seljas enam mitte väikest Nils Holgerssoni, vaid kurja pisikut.

S1: vaid kurja pisikut

21. Nad pörkavad oma teel kokku Katuse-Karlssoniga ja nakatavad temagi.

S1: nakatavad temagi
S7: nakatavad temagi. (tedagi)

22. Karlssoni käest saavad omakorda linnugripi/linnugrippi Väikevend, Majasokk ja onu Julius.

S1: saavad omakorda linnugrippi
S2: saavad omakorda linnugripi (mille?)
S3: saavad omakorda linnugripi
S4: saavad omakorda linnugrippi
S5: saavad omakorda linnugrippi
S6: saavad omakorda linnugrippi
S7: saavad omakorda linnugrippi (linnugripi. Vale kääne on kollases. See sõna peaks vastama küsimusele mille.)
S8: saavad omakorda linnugrippi. Peaks olema omastavas käändes. Osastav on õige vaid siis, kui nad jäävad linnugrippi.
S9: saavad omakorda linnugrippi
S10a: saavad omakorda linnugrippi Saavad omakorda linnugripi (mille)

23. ... kes lendab meie akna taha linnumajja puistatud teri nokkima.

S1: taha linnumajja puistatud teri nokkima.

24. Ja kes jaksakski kogu seda/selle parve kinni püüda ning läbi vaadata!

S1: Ja kes jaksakski kogu selle parve kinni püüda ning läbi vaadata!
S2: Ja kes jaksakski kogu selle parve kinni püüda ning läbi vaadata!
S3: Ja kes jaksakski kogu selle parve kinni püüda ning läbi vaadata!

- S4: Ja kes jaksakski kogu selle parve kinni püüda ning läbi vaadata!
S5: Ja kes jaksakski kogu selle parve kinni püüda ning läbi vaadata!
S6: Ja kes jaksakski kogu selle parve kinni püüda ning läbi vaadata!
S7: Ja kes jaksakski kogu selle parve kinni püüda ning läbi vaadata!
S8: Ja kes jaksakski kogu selle parve kinni püüda ning läbi vaadata!
S9: Ja kes jaksakski kogu selle parve kinni püüda ning läbi vaadata!
S10a: Ja kes jaksakski kogu selle parve kinni püüda ning läbi vaadata!

25. Kõik need tuvid ja varblased, kes igal pool uulitsatel ringi tuterdavad ja parkides ausambaid/ausambad roojavad – mida nad õieti noka vahel kannavad?

- S1: ausambaid
S2: ausambaid (mida?)
S3: ausambad
S4: ausambad
S5: ausambad
S6: ausambad
S7: ausambad
S8: ausambad roojavad. Peaks olema “ausambaid (täis) roojavad”, sest praegu jääb mulje, et ausambad tegelevad sellega.
S9: ausambad
S10a: ausambad Ausambaid roojavad – mida roojavad. Vale kääne oli.

26. Milliste batsillidega katavad nad meie suurmeeste kivipäid/kivipead?

- S1: kivipäid
S2: kivipead
S3: kivipead
S4: kivipead
S5: kivipead
S6: kivipead
S7: kivipead
S8: kivipead
S9: kivipead
S10a: kivipead

27. Olgu, kodulinde/kodulinnud suudame me kontrollida, nemad elavad omalaadsetes kontsentratsioonilaagrites, meie järelvalve all.

- S1: kodulinde
S2: kodulinde (keda?)
S3: kodulinde
S4: kodulinnud
S5: kodulinnud
S6: kodulinnud
S7: kodulinnud (kodulinde. Vale kääne kollases, peaks vastama küsimusele mida.)
S8: kodulinnud. Sõna peab olema osastavas (kodulinde/kodulindusid), sest keda

me suudame kontrollida?

S9: kodulinnud

S10a: kodulinnud. Kodulinde suudame kontrollida – vale kääne oli.

28. Kui mõni haigestub, on meil suhteliselt lihtne kogu kamp/kogu kampa ühekorraga ära gaasitada.

S1: kogu kampa ühekorraga ära gaasitada.

S2: kogu kamp (peab olema nimetavas käändes)

S3: kogu kampa

S4: kogu kampa

S5: kogu kampa

S6: kogu kampa

S7: kogu kampa

S8: kogu kampa

S9: kogu kampa (kogu kamp – ära gaasitamine- lõpetatus)

S10a: kogu kampa Ma ütleks vist “kogu kamp”, kuigi pead ei anna

29. Nad on otsekui vaenlase lennuvägi, mille taevasse ilmudes tuleks anda õhuhäire.

S1: anda õhuhäire

30. Inimesed poevad voodi alla nagu kolm põrsakest, keda ründas hunt ning kuulavad ängistusega tuvi kergeid samme aknaplekil.

S1: tuvi kergeid samme aknaplekil.

31. ...sest jumal teab, milliseid viiruseid ta endast maha jättis.

S1: milliseid viiruseid

S2: milliseid viiruseid

S3: milliseid viiruseid

S4: milliseid viiruseid

S5: milliseid viiruseid

S6: milliseid viiruseid

S7: milliseid viiruseid

S8: milliseid viiruseid

S9: milliseid viiruseid (lõpetatus- millised viirused maha jättis)

S10a: milliseid viiruseid Millised viirused?

32. Lind on kui snaiper, kes varitseb puu otsas oma õnnetut ohvrit ning tulistab talle siis õlale valge liraka/valget lirakat.

S1: valge liraka

S2: valge liraka (mille?)

- S3: valget lirakat
S4: valget lirakat
S5: valget lirakat
S6: valget lirakat
S7: valget lirakat. (valge liraka. Vale kääne, peaks olema omastavas)
S8: valget lirakat. Peaks olema omastavas käändes (“valge liraka”), sest tulistab *mille?*
S9: valget lirakat. (tulistab valge liraka- tulistab loodetavasti üks kord)
S10a: valget lirakat
S10b: valget lirakat Valge liraka.

33. Kas leidub üldse siin ilmas paika/paik, kus enne inimest poleks käinud mõni lind?

- S1: ilmas paik
S2: ilmas paik
S3: ilmas paik
S4: ilmas paik
S5: ilmas paik
S6: ilmas paik
S7: ilmas paik
S8: ilmas paik. Peaks olema osastavas käändes (“paika”), sest leidub *mida?*
S9: ilmas paik
S10a: ilmas paik
S10b: ilmas paik Paika?

34. Kes söandaks veel lasta oma lapsi liivakasti?

- S1: oma lapsi liivakasti
S2: oma lapsi liivakasti
S3: oma lapsi liivakasti
S4: oma lapsi liivakasti
S5: oma lapsi liivakasti
S6: oma lapsi liivakasti
S7: oma lapsi liivakasti
S8: oma lapsi liivakasti
S9: oma lapsi liivakasti
S10a: oma lapsi liivakasti

35. Esimene kevadine lõokeselaul täidab hinge õudusega.

- S1: täidab hinge õudusega

36. See väljend kaob või siis omandab teise tähenduse

- S1: omandab teise tähenduse

37. Toonela tähendas surnute riiki.

S1: surnute riiki

38. Siis on aeg hakata otsi/otsad kokku tõmbama

S1: hakata otsad kokku tõmbama

S2: hakata otsad kokku tõmbama

S3: hakata otsad kokku tõmbama

S4: hakata otsad kokku tõmbama

S5: hakata otsad kokku tõmbama

S6: hakata otsad – otsi kokku tõmbama

S7: hakata otsad (otsi. Vale kääne, peakas olema osastavas)

S8: hakata otsad kokku tõmbama. Nimetava käände asemel sobiks paremini “otsi kokku tõmbama”, sest tõmmata kokku *mida*?

S9: hakata otsad kokku tõmbama

S10a: hakata otsad kokku tõmbama Hakata OTSI kokku tõmbama

39. ...ning jagada välja käsud selle kohta, mis saab pärast sinu surma su kepi ja piibust.

S1: välja käsud selle kohta

40. Kas ei saaks lindudega kuidagi võidelda? Nad/neid näiteks maha lüüa?

S1: Neid näiteks maha lüüa?

S2: Neid näiteks maha lüüa?

S3: Neid näiteks maha lüüa?

S4: Neid näiteks maha lüüa?

S5: Neid näiteks maha lüüa?

S6: Neid näiteks maha lüüa?

S7: Neid näiteks maha lüüa?

S8: Neid näiteks maha lüüa?

S9: Neid näiteks maha lüüa?

S10a: Neid näiteks maha lüüa?

41. Hiinlased püüdsid kunagi varblaseid/varblased hävitada, midagi head ei toonud see kaasa neilegi.

S1: varblasi hävitada

S2: varblased hävitada

S3: varblased hävitada

S4: varblased hävitada

S5: varblased hävitada

S6: varblased hävitada

- S7: varblased (varblaseid. Vale kääne, peaks olema osastavas käändes)
S8: varblased hävitada
S9: varblased hävitada
S10a: varblased hävitada Varblasi (KEDA hävitada, mitte KES hävitada)

42. Tõeline filosoof peabki olema alati valmis seda/selle maailma maha jätma.

- S1: selle maailma maha jätma
S2: selle maailma maha jätma
S3: selle maailma maha jätma
S4: selle maailma maha jätma
S5: selle maailma maha jätma
S6: selle – seda maailma maha jätma
S7: selle (seda. Vale kääne, peaks olema osastavas) maailma maha jätma
S8: selle maailma maha jätma. Peaks olema “seda”, sest maha jätta *mida*?
S9: selle maailma maha jätma
S10a: selle maailma maha jätma Seda maailma (MIDA maha jätma)

Situation 1

Best: 1, 1, 1, 1, 1, 1, 2, 1, 1, 1, 1

Worst: 3, 3, 2, 2, 2, 3, 3, 3, 2, 2, 2

Comment:

S1: mida teeb – värvib(värvin) aeda variant kõlab kõige paremini, sest see väljendab üldist tegevust, „värvin aeda roheliseks” on juba täpsustavam.

S2: kestev tegevus

S3: Variant 2 on imelik seepärast, et tal on tegevus pooleli ning küsiti, et mida ta hetkri teeb.

S4: Kui tuleb mees ja näeb, et teine värvib aeda, siis piisab vastusest 1 küll.

S5: Oleneb muidugi olukorrast. Juhul kui naabrimees mingil põhjusel aeda just roheliseks tahtis värvida sobib ka 3. aga muidu on 1 parim variant. Nr 2 aga on liigne info.

S6: -

S7: Aed peaks siin olema osastavas käändes nagu see on esimeses ja teises variandis. Kolmandas on aga omastavas ning seetõttu kõlab lause imelikult.

S8: Number 1 kõlab kõige paremini, sest tavaliselt vastataksegi nii lühidalt. Number 3 kõlab halvasti, sest lause kõlab kuidagi poolikult – tundub, et põhjendus, miks aeda värvitakse, on puudu.

S9: Küsitakse mida teed? Vastus aeda värvin/värvin aeda. Vastavalt küsimusele. Kui oleks küsimus- mis värvi sa aia värvid? Siis sobiks vastus nr 3 kõige paremini. (või lihtsalt- roheliseks)

MS: Vastus 1 sobib aga ainult siis kõige paremini, kui naabrimees tahtis teisega ülbtseda vms (kuna seda tegevust pidi ju ka küsija nägema). Kui nad olid aga suured sõbrad ja iga päev omavahel suhtlesid, siis sobib isegi paremini vastus nr 3 (stiilis: „eh, otsustasin aia roheliseks värvida“).

S10a: Kusjuures ma oleks pakkunud „värvib aeda“, aga see selleks.

Situation 2

Best: 2, 2, 2, 2, 2, 2, 2, 2, 2, 2, 2

Worst: 1, 1, 1, 1, 1, 1, 1, 1, 1, 1, 1

Comment:

S1: „Jüri leidis seened” – selle järgi tunduks, nagu olid mingid konkreetsed seened, mis Jüri metsast leidis. Et oli kindel hulk seeni. 2. lause on sellepärast parem, et see on selline üldine lause.

S2: Kääne peaks olema osastav mitte nimetav.

S3: Kääne nõuab nimisõna käänamist. Ta ei leidnud kõiki seeni vaid mõned kõikidest olemasolevatest seentest.

S4: „seeded” kõlab nagu „määratud artikliga” ja „seeni” on umbmäärasem, sest enne pole teada, mis seeni nad sinna otsima läksid.

S5: Nr 1 väidab nagu oleks mingid kindlad seened metsa peidetud.

S6: -

S7: Seened peaksid olema osastavas käändes ja vastama küsimusele mida. Esimeses variandis on aga seened nimetavas käändes ja vastavad küsimusele mis.

S8: Number 2 kõlab paremini, sest üldiselt küsitakse “Mida ta leidis?” või “Mida ta otsima tuli?” ning vastata saab vaid “Seeni.”

S9: Jüril ei ole võimalik leida kõik metsa seened. Ja jutt ei käi ka konkreetsest seenehunnikust.

MS: Vastuses 1 'seeded' viitaks nagu kindlatele seentele ja arvule, mis aga antud kontekstis nonsense

S10a: Esimene vastus viitab justkui seentele, mis olid sinna ära peidetud ja tuli nüüd üles otsida (a la lihavõttemunad Inglismaal). Metsas ei ole ju kunagi garantiisid, et seal seeni on. Teine on parem.

Situation 3

Best: 2, 1, 2, 1, 1, 2, 2, 1, 1, 1, 2

Worst: 3, 3, 3, 3, 3, 3, 3, 3, 3, 3, 3

Comment:

S1: 2. variant kõlab kõige paremini, sest antud olukorras oleks parem veidi täpsem, konkreetsem sõnastus, mitte nii üldine.

S2: kestev tegevus, askeldasid

S3: ka see tegevus on poolik. Esimene variant ei sobi sellepärast, et see kõlab nagu teinuks nad pulli.

S4: sõna hoovi on juba tekstis mitu korda, seega on 1 hea ja 2 puhul mingi analoog teise punktiga. Ma vist ei olegi eesti keelt nii põhjalikult õppinud, et oskaks asju lahti seletada muud moodi kui tunnetuslikult.

S5: Kui nad juba olid hoovis siis nad ei saanud neid vaate enam hoovi veeretada.

S6: -

S7: Ma ei oskagi seda põhjendada, kõik need kolm varianti kõlavad normaalselt.

S8: Number 3 kõlab kehvasti, sest tundub, et too tegevus on lõpetatud või on lause poolik – mida nad tegid, kui olid vaadid hoovi veeretanud? Teised kõlavad nii, nagu tegevus jätkuks.

S9: variant 2 oleks ka ok, aga siis tuleks sõnakordus, hoovi. 3 ei sobi, sest enne ei ole juttu mingitest konkreetsetest vaadidest.

MS: Ma ei oska põhjendada, miks ma eelistan parimaks vastuseks nr 1, kuigi nr 2 ka vist puht grammatiliselt vale ei oleks

S10a: kolmas variant eeldab juba lõpetatud tegevust, Sinu katkest jääb mulje, et turistid vaatavad ja tõdevad, et mis toimub (mitte ei räägi pärast sugulastele, et mis hoovis juhtus)