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Partitives

Studies on the Syntax and Semantics of Partitive and Related Constructions

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Is partitive case inherent or structural?

Anne Vainikka and Joan Maling

1. Introduction

The term partitive has been used in three different but potentially related ways in the literature:

(i) as the traditional name of a morphological case;
(ii) as the name of an Abstract Case in GB-theory associated with indefiniteness (cf. Belletti (1988));
(iii) as a semantic notion associated with a partial interpretation, e.g. many of the students (cf. De Hoop (1992) inter alia).

In this paper we will concentrate on the status of Belletti’s Abstract Partitive and its relationship to morphological partitive case, rather than on the semantic partitive.

Belletti (1988) provides an analysis of the Definiteness Effect (Miljak 1974) which proposes a connection between indefiniteness and Partitive Case. The morphological justification for this proposal comes from Finnish, which has an overt partitive case morphologically distinct from accusative. The essential feature of Belletti’s analysis is that Partitive is analyzed as an inherent Case, while Accusative is (assumed to be) a structural Case.

1. Thanks to Helen de Hoop, Jacob Hocksetn, Howard Lamik, Diane Helgë, Uppo Villaar, and Elodie A. Sigurdsdottir for comments on an earlier version of this paper.
2. In fact, as pointed out by de Hoop (1992), in Finnish the semantic partitive pattern with strong quantifiers, while the morphological partitive pattern with weak quantifiers.
3. As is customary, we use Case to refer to morphological cases, and Core to refer to the Abstract Case of GB-theory. Similarly, we will use Partitive to refer to Belletti’s notion of abstract Partitive Case, but partitive to refer to simple morphological partitives, as in Finnish.
2. Partitive is not an Inherent Case

2.1 Introduction

Belletti (1988) provides a new analysis for the so-called "Definiteness Effect" attested in various languages (cf. Milisuk 1974), a well-known phenomenon which blocks definite NPs from occurring in certain syntactic constructions, most notably existential sentences in English as shown in (1):a.

(1a) There is a man in the garden. (Belletti 3b)
(1b) There is the man in the garden. (Belletti 4b)

Belletti’s basic idea is that sentences such as (1b) are ruled out because the so-called unaccusative verb is in existential constructions is an unaccusative verb incapable of assigning (accusative) Case (cf. Perlmann 1978, Burzio 1980). That is, (1b) is ungrammatical because the NP the man does not receive Case. This is an interesting idea since it involves analyzing the Definiteness Effect as a syntactic phenomenon derivable from the Case-assigning properties of a certain class of verbs.

If (1b) is ruled out because the verb does not assign Case to its complement, why, then, is (1a) grammatical? In effect, Belletti turns the problem of the Definiteness Effect around: rather than explaining why definite NPs are not allowed in existential constructions, we now need an explanation for why indefinite NPs are allowed in these constructions. Belletti proposes the following solution: indefinite NPs can get Case in a special way. The special way in which indefinite NPs in existential constructions get Case is via the assignment of an inherent Case: a universal Partitive Case. Thus, indefinite NPs are licensed as complements to unaccusative verbs by virtue of Partitive Case, but definite NPs are ruled out, because they are incompatible with Partitive Case.6

2.2 Reasons for assuming that Partitive is an Inherent Case

Following Chomsky (1981, 1986), Belletti argues that a distinction between two types of Case: structural and inherent Case. Inherent Case is associated with Beta-marking and is assigned at D-Structure, whereas structural Case is assigned independently of theta-marking, at S-Structure (a similar distinction is made in other frameworks, e.g. Zaenen & Malin 1984 within LFQ). The crucial property of inherent Case is that it can only be assigned in connection with theta-assigning roles. Belletti suggests that Partitive is just such an inherent Case; the theta-roles involved being an "existential theta-roles" (Belletti 1988, footnote 5). Belletti assumes that Partitive is not associated with a particular role in a verb’s theta-grid (cf. footnote 3), presumably since Partitive can be assigned to an object-NP with any theta-role. It is crucial for Belletti’s analysis that Partitive is an inherent Case — otherwise it would have to be structurally assigned by the verb, and the explanation of the Definiteness Effect which relies on the suggestion that
the verb cannot assign (Strictons) Case in the relevant constructions would
not go through.

Bellotti provides several arguments for assuming that Partitive is an
inherent Case. First, there is a semantic property involved in the assignment
of Partitive Case, namely indefiniteness. However, as Lasnik (1992) points
out, it is usually assumed (by Bellotti, as well) that inherent Case is associated
with thematic roles, rather than a semantic property that cuts across various
theta-roles. Thus, this reasoning for assuming that Partitive is inherent does
not seem very compelling, and we will not consider this to be an argument for
the inherence of Partitive Case. Bellotti also discusses a constraint on the
distribution of bare plurals' NPs. Bare plurals cannot occur as subjects of the
small clause complement of consider type verbs in Italian (cf. Bellotti
1988: 29). However, this argument seems irrelevant to the assignment of
Partitive Case, since Partitive (i.e. indefinite) NPs may occur as subjects of
the small clause complement of consider in Italian.

A further reasoning for assuming that Partitive is an Inherent Case is to
avoid violating Burzio's Generalization. According to Chomsky (1986), the
trace of NP-movement is not Case-marked. However, Bellotti needs to
assume that the impersonal passive in French (and Italian) can assign
inherent Partitive Case (cf. Bellotti 1988: 6) in order to account for the
Definition Effect observed in the impersonal passive construction:

(2) a. Il a été tué par l'homme. (Bellotti's 10a)
    there has been killed the man

(2b) a. Il a été tué par le l'homme. (Bellotti's 10b)
    there has been killed the man

By assuming that partitive is an inherent Case, Burzio's generalization can
be maintained for structural Case assignment. In the examples in (2), it is
assumed that the passive verb cannot assign accusative case to the following
NP, that accounts for the ungrammaticality of (2b). However, as with
unaccusative verbs, an indefinite NP as in (2a) is possible due to the
availability of Partitive Case assignment.

7. The analysis to be presented in this paper also ends up violating Burzio's Generalization.
   However, we do not consider this to be a problem for the analysis, since it is questionable whether
   Thus, maintaining Burzio's Generalization seems to us not to be a strong reason for assuming that Partitive is
   an inherent Case.

The strongest argument for the inherent status of Partitive Case comes
from raising verbs (Bellotti 1988: 27-30). Raising verbs such as sembra
'seem' do not allow an overt subject in their small clause complement in
Italian as shown in (3b), even if this NP is indefinite:

(3a) Molti studenti sembrano ( + intelligent)
   many students appear intelligent

(3b) *Molti studenti sembrano + intelligent
   many students appear intelligent

Bellotti attributes the ungrammaticality of such examples to the hypothesis
that Partitive is an inherent Case associated with theta-role assignment.
Since a raising verb does not assign a theta-role to the subject of its small
clause complement, it cannot assign an inherent Case to this NP.

Lasnik (1997) discusses passives of ECM verbs, a particular instance of
the wider class of raising to subject verbs. As noted above for French, the
impersonal passive construction in Italian exhibits the Definition Effect;
this is attributed to the fact that passive verbs can assign Partitive Case but
not Accusative Case. An ECM verb like consider (in the active voice) can
assign Accusative Case, as shown by the fact that the subject of the small
clause complement may be a definite NP as in (4):

(4) Ho sempre considerato [Gianni intelligente]
    I have always considered Gianni intelligent
    (Bellotti's 67a)

But the passive of an ECM verb does not license an overt subject, even when
it is indefinite, as shown in (5b):

(5a) a. *Sono considerato + intelligent
    are considered some students intelligent

Bellotti attributes the ungrammaticality of such examples to the hypothesis
that Partitive is an inherent Case associated with theta-role assignment.
Since a raising verb does not assign a theta-role to the subject of its small
clause complement, it cannot assign an inherent Case to this NP.

8. It is not clear why accusative should not be possible here, as an instance of ECM.
   Under Bellotti's analysis, lack of Partitive assignment can only be used as an
   explanation when Accusative is not available elsewhere.
Consider the following sentence:

Since (5a) is grammatical, Partitive in Italian must be a theta-linked Inherent Case. Although passive verbs in Italian generally have the ability to assign Partitive, a raising verb like consider does not assign a theta-role to the subject of its small clause complement, and therefore Partitive assign-ment (to an indefinite NP) is impossible. We will return to this argument in Section 3.4.

2.4 A problem with assuming that the Indo-European Partitive is inherent

Despite the reasons given above for assuming that Partitive is an Inherent Case, Lassnik (1992) points out that there is reason to think that Partitive is a structural Case in both English and Italian. It is widely assumed in current work (cf. e.g. Saffi 1987) that the copula be takes a Small Clause complement, as shown in (6):

(6) [c be (NP XP)]

A definite NP (subject of the Small Clause) must raise to Spec(CP) position, while an indefinite NP may remain in situ, giving rise to an existential sentence. Under this analysis of existential sentences, however, the Definite Effect cannot be attributed to Partitive being an inherent Case, since the subject of the Small Clause cannot be assigned inherent Case by the matrix verb. In addition to the argument based on the Small Clause analysis, Lassnik (1992) argues that unaccusative verbs do assign Case under adjacency, unlike what has been assumed previously. Note also that in some Germanic languages the copula assigns morphological accusative case to the predicative NP (cf. Maling & Sprong (1991) for discussion). Lassnik concludes that the assigns Case structurally both in English and Italian, while it may be that content verbs assign Partitive Case inherently. We will argue in Section 3 that even content verbs assign Partitive Case structurally.

2.4.1 Indefiniteness and the Finnish partitive

Beličev's idea of a universal Partitive Case associated with indefiniteness is based on data from Finnish. In fact, Finnish is the only language described in Beličev's work in which Partitive is morphologically realized (but cf. De Hoop 1992 and Lassnik 1992 for possible morphological realizations of Partitive in Turkish, Hebrew, Russian and Greenlandic (Eskimo)). In most languages Partitive is an Abstract Case, not overtly realized. It is worth noting that the Finnish partitive case, although overt, does not have the properties that Beličev attributes to it.

The basic problem is that the Finnish partitive is not associated with indefiniteness. Beličev takes the following content to show that partitive is associated with indefiniteness:

(7) a. *Häkk pani kirja
   he put books-ACC/PL
   pystyttelee. (+Beličev's la)
   'He put the books on the table'
   b. *Häkk pani kirjat
      he put books-PL
      pystyttelee. (+Beličev's lb)
      'He put (some) books on the table'

In (7a) the definite object NP is marked with accusative case, while in (7b) the indefinite object NP occurs in partitive case. Traditional grammars of Finnish attribute the alternation between accusative and partitive to two semantic distinctions: renitenti/insistentive (telic/atelic) and definite/indefinite (cf. e.g. Hakkarainen & Karlsson (1978), Karlsson (1983), and Heinämaa (1984)).

9. This results in the intransitive situation where some instances of the Finnish partitive are at the same time instances of Abstract Accusative, while various instances of Beličev's Partitive would show up as true intransitives (cf. Suggs (1987: 32-33) where it is argued that in hoistative, Beličev's Partitive ends up being morphologically realized as accusative, clausal, genitive or nominative). Maling (1988) also observes that the Definite Effect is present in independent and partitive case.

10. According to some authors, the Finnish partitive sometimes has the meaning of potential or contrasted with a 0-d (cf. 2 a instances (1983), i.e. the semantic passive reading.

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Syntactically speaking, partitive is the basic unmarked case of the object, corresponding to the English accusative, while the distribution of the Finnish accusative is semantically predictable (as argued in Yanikkia (1989)).

Partitive often occurs on a definite NP in non-resultative sentences, as independently noted in Yanikkia (1988) and De Hoop (1989), both commenting on Bellleti (1988). Consider the following examples: 11

(8) a. Hän haki kirjan.
    he read book-ACC
    'He read the book'

b. Hän haki kirjoja.
    he read book-PAR
    'He was reading the book'

In (8a) the accusative object implies that the reading of the book was completed; in (8b) completion of the book is not implied. Note that both the accusative object and the partitive object can readily be interpreted as definite NPs, since Finnish has no overt definite/ indefinite articles, we need to rely on the possible interpretations of the bare noun.

In Bellleti's examples above, the partitive object in (7a) implies that the putting of the books on the table has been finished, while the action may not have been completed in (7b) with the partitive object. Since Bellleti assumes that something "special" (cf. his footnote 5 and 6) is going on with singular NPs in Finnish, let us consider the following examples with plural objects:

(9) a. Kirjoitin pari nüitä
    I wrote just
    'I was just writing these invitations on Friday when you called.'

b. Kirjoitin nimoja
    I-wrote these-ACC
    'I wrote (and finished) these invitations on Friday.'

Again, there is no difference in definiteness between the objects in (9a) and (9b) – both are definite. The choice between accusative and partitive gives rise to an aspectual distinction.

A further property of Bellleti's Partitive – one which is presumably related to indefiniteness – is that it is incompatible with universal quantification (Bellleti 1988: 5) and with the quantifiers most (footnote 16). Again, this does not hold for the Finnish partitive (also De Hoop 1992).

(10) a. Joikaa koketti kaskeet renkaita.
    Joikaa tried all-PAR recipes-PAR
    'Joikaa tried all the recipes'

b. Pekka kokoeli suomenkielisi renkiä.
    Pekka tried mostly-PAR recipes-PAR
    'Pekka tried mostly (of the recipes)'

Thus, unlike Bellleti's universal Inherent Partitive, the Finnish partitive is compatible with both definiteness and the quantifiers all and most.

We have seen that partitive NPs in Finnish are not always indefinite. For the sake of completeness, let us briefly consider the possibility that all indefinite NPs occur in partitive case. In fact, indefinite NPs often occur in partitive case, but this is not an absolute requirement. Consider an example with the quantifier 'some', which according to Bellleti is a prototypical indefinite quantifier (Bellleti 1988: 5, fn. 15):

(11) Sejo oli tavaton灯具 joksau naisenkiistin tielehti.
    Sejo had met some-ACC interesting-ACC
    'Sejo had met (a 'handsome' interesting artist.'

Even if we could claim that examples such as the above are somehow special and that indefinite NPs always occur in partitive case, this would not suffice to provide evidence for Bellleti's analysis. It is crucial for Bellleti that inherent Partitive can only be assigned to indefinite NPs (to provide an explanation for the fact that only indefinite NPs may occur in existential
The adjective *näkkäs* in (12a) and the entire NP *puihimmä karjaival* in (12b) must agree in number with the subject of the Small Clause. The matrix verb should not be able to assign Inert Case to the subject position of a Small Clause, and yet we find that the Finnish participle readily occurs in this position. This indicates that the Finnish participle cannot be an inherent Case.

Thus, it appears that the Finnish participle cannot be an instance of Bellucci’s universal Partitive Case. The Finnish participle is neither restricted to definite NPs nor is it inherently assigned. In the next section we will argue that inherent Case in general does not have the properties that Bellucci attributes to the participle, suggesting that the participle is not an inherent Case.

2.5 Bellucci’s Partitive Case does not have the properties of Inert Case

Although, as we have seen, the Finnish participle does not have the properties that Bellucci associates with Partitive Case, it is conceivable that some other language might have an Inert Case with the required properties – properties which the objects of English, Italian and Finnish intransitive verbs share. In this instance we show that the relevant properties do not hold for Inert Case cross-linguistically.

2.5.1 Optionality

Bellucci notes that the assignment of Partitive Case must be systematically optional for all verbs, so that a definite argument of an un accusative verb will not get ruled out at D-Structure before it undergoes NP movement in a position where it can get assigned Partitive rather than Partitive Case, prior to the preverbal subject position or, in a language like Italian, to a preserved VP-primed position (Bellucci’s example 38). Bellucci suggests (fn. 14) that optionality might be a general property of Case assignment, however, optional assignment is not a property of inherent Case cross-linguistically. Inert Case is typically associated with a particular position in a verb’s theta-grid, an assumption which is made to account for the phenomenon of case preservation under NP movement (Zaenen, Haspel and Tartousi 2005). While diachronic changes in a verb’s case grid are, of course, possible, Inert Case marking on a given verbal argument is

2.4.2 Inert Case and the Finnish participle

If possible, we would expect a Finnish Inert Case in English, with a case-mark….
Bellića claims that "quicky subjects and passive subjects behave exactly alike" (p.27) with respect to agreement, and cites Finnish data in support of this claim, cf. the lack of agreement in (14):

(14) Vieraan


diine


= (Bellića’s 62)

Since we have shown (Section 2.4) that the FInnish paritic is not an instance of Bellića’s Paritic examples such as (12) do not provide us any information about the nature of Partic Case. We will see in Section 2 that the lack of agreement in (14) is due to the fact that the partitive NP has been moved from the object position, where it was assigned structural particule case. Thus, the partitive NP in (14) is no more comparable to quicky subjects than an accusative object in English is: both are instances of structural object Cases, and neither agrees with the verb.

Therefore, Paritic Case does not behave “nominally like” inherent Case. Moreover, it is not true that Paritic NPs fail to agree with the verb. In fact, what Bellića fails to observe is that in the Indo-European languages under discussion, verbal agreement with the indefinite postverbal NP analyzed as bearing Paritic Case is obligatory, as shown in the Finnish examples in (15):

(15) a. Pud eru konni murgi strakur se fallinu.

it: are come

many boys-NOM from-the-mountain

‘Many boys came from the mountain.’

b. Pud eru konni murgi strakur se fallinu.

it is come

many boys-NOM from-the-mountain

‘Many boys are from the mountain.’

Since otherwise only nominative NPs trigger agreement with finite verbs in Icelandic, under Bellića’s analysis it would be necessary to say that inherent Partitive is not only morphologically identical to structural Nominative Case, but moreover, is the only inherent Case which triggers agreement. Agreement with the postverbal indefinite NP that Bellića analyzes as bearing Paritic Case is also obligatory in Italian.16

15. In Korean where the Goal argument of many ditransitive verbs exhibit case alternations between accusative and dative (cf. Maling and Kim [1991]), this, however, seems to be very different phenomenon from the optional assignment of Belliće’s Paritic.

16. Interestingly, Belliće fails to give any monomorphic finite examples with plural indefinite NPs. Thanks to Andrea Colloredo for providing the examples in (15c-17).
3. Partitive is a Structural Case

3.1 Summarizing the discussion

So far we have seen that assuming Bellotti’s Partitive to be an inherent Case is problematic for various reasons. There is evidence that the Finnish partitive – which provides the empirical justification for Bellotti’s Partitive Case – is not an inherent Case, but a structural one. Furthermore, the properties that Bellotti attributes to Partitive Case are not properties of an inherent Case, cross-linguistically speaking. In addition, Lastik (1992) has argued that the English (and Italian) Partitive assigned by be and other transparent verbs is a structural Case. Lastik (modifying Bellotti 1988) assumes that context (i.e. nonopaque) verbs in English and Italian may assign either structural Accusative or inherent Partitive Case. Since Partitive assignment in these languages is only visible when Accusative cannot be assigned (resulting in the Definiteness Effect), it is impossible to test empirically whether context verbs actually assign Partitive Case – inherently, optionally, or at all.

Recall the reason for assuming that Partitive is an inherent Case (Section 2.2). One argument from Italian will hold, even given Bellotti’s arguments about Partitive being structurally assigned in the existential and transitive constructions. Included under this generalization is Lastik’s argument that the passive form of clauses cannot assign Partitive (unlike other opaque verbs) due to the lack of three-role assignment to the relevant NP, in a similar vein, Bellotti explained the fact that raising verbs cannot assign Partitive to the subject of the Small Clause as follows from the lack of three-role assignment.

Hence, setting aside this argument for the moment, we wish to explore the possibility that Partitive Case is always a structural Case. We assume that Abstract Case is assigned in order to license syntactic positions other than being assigned to arguments, as assumed under the Variability Condition (cf. Chomsky 1981; 1986). Let us first consider Finnish partitives, and then turn to a discussion of Abstract Partitive (cf. indefiniteness).

3.2 The Finnish partitive is a Structural Case assigned at D-Structure

3.2.1 Objective Case

Recall our discussion in Section 2.4, where we argued that the Finnish partitive is not an inherent Case. The fact that it occurs on the subject of Small Clause complements suggests that partitive is a metaphorically assigned Case (since the matrix verb does not assign a theta-role to the subject of the small clause; cf. the examples in 2.4.2).

Of the two objective cases in Finnish, the accusative case has traditionally been taken to be the unmarked case, while partitive is something special. However, Vainikka (1989, 1993) has argued for the opposite view that a special feature is required for the assignment of accusative case, while partitive is an ‘everywhere’ case (cf. also Lastik 1984 for a similar view).

Thus, accusative is associated with a restitutive aspect, and only occurs when assigned by a verb with the feature [+COMPLETED]:

(18) a. Maaja 10 10 hatun.
    Maaja-NOM bought hat-ACC
    'Maaja bought a hat'

b. Maaja 10 10 hataus.
    Maaja-NOM bought hat-PAR
    'Maaja was buying a hat'

When the action has not been completed, as in (18b), only partitive case is possible. Furthermore, in negative sentences the object occurs in partitive case only: 18

(19) a. Maaja ei ostannut hatun.
    Maaja-NOM not bought hat-ACC
    'Maaja did not buy a hat'

b. Maaja ei ostannut hataus.
    Maaja-NOM not bought hat-PAR
    'Maaja did not buy a hat'

It has been proposed (cf. e.g. Vanhikka 1989) that the feature [+COMPLETED] is incompatible with negation; one cannot simultaneously negate a verb and imply that the action has been completed.

Apart from being the typical case of complements of verbs, partitive is also the usual case of objects of prepositions, whereas accusative is impossible:

(20) a. ilman sateenvetoria
    without umbrella-PAR

b. *ilman sateenvetoria
    without umbrella-ACC

In addition, some quantifiers in Finnish occur with a partitive NP; again, accusative is never possible with such heads:

(21) a. kaksimaita peikkeä
    two many boy-PAR
    'two many boys'

b. *kaksimaita pojien
    two many boy-PAR
    'two many boys'

Based on the fact that accusative only occurs in one construction combined with a specific semantic feature, while partitive occurs in various constructions, Vanhikka (1989; 1993) has proposed that the Finnish partitive is the structural (default) Case of the complement position, i.e. the Finnish partitive is the default realization of the Abstract Case assigned to the complement position, completely comparable to the English accusative. In Finnish, the so-called accusative only arises if it is assigned based on a specific semantic feature. 19

Given this analysis of the Finnish partitive, it is not surprising to find that partitive is common in existential sentences, as in (22a), and in unaccusative constructions, (22b):

(22) a. Keittiössä oli silkkina
    kitchen-in was-3SG dirty-PAR/PL
    'There were dirty dishes in the kitchen.'

b. Kasaposta tuli asukkaita
    store-from came-3SG customer-PAR/PL
    'There came customers from the store.'

Let us assume, following the Unaccusative Hypothesis (Perlmutter 1978; Hume 1980) that the partitive NP is the complement of the unaccusative

18. This is reminiscent of the genitive of negation in Russian; note that since in our view cases which have been traditionally considered adjectives cases may turn out to be structural cases, it is in principle possible that the genitive in Russian is also a structural case.

19. As is well known, the aspectual property expressed by the feature [+COMPLETED] is not a lexical property of the verb alone, but is a compositional property of the predicate, i.e. this verb has its complement, directional modifiers, etc. (Vanhikka 1972 and Dowty 1979, among others). For example, the simple verb 'to eat' expresses an active activity, and 'eat pizza' is also [+COMPLETED], but 'the pizza is eaten' is [-COMPLETED]. Thus, unlike Case exponence aspectual properties, it is not assigned by the verb directly, but by the entire prepositional complex.
verb in these examples, as also assumed by Helletti (1988). We propose that the passive case is found in these examples due to the fact that the verb does not have the feature [+COMPLETED] and thus accusative cannot be assigned.20

Similarly, an ECM verb in Finnish cannot assign the feature [+COMPLETED] to the subject of its Small Clause complement, and only passive, the structural Case of the complement position, is possible in such contexts.

3.2.2 Structural Case assigned at D-Structure

As we have seen, in Finnish passive case – rather than accusative – is the structural Case of the object position. However, unlike structural Case in general, the Finnish passive appears to be assigned already at D-Structure. In addition to WI-movement and other A'-movements, passive Case readily undergo NP-movement.21 Consider the following examples:

20. There is related construction in Finnish which may involve accusative assignment by the unaccusative verb, related to the future [+COMPLETED]:

(1) Keittiömaan ulos
    *koti
    'The kitchen has new rug.'

(2) Nuottagesi
    *nuoti
    'All the customers left the store.'

However, since in Finnish the plural accusative form is identical to the nominative, the passive NP could be either nominative or accusative in this construction. If these examples involve assignment of passive case to a definite NP by the unaccusative verb, we may conclude that the Definiteness Effect does not hold in Finnish with respect to the complement position of unaccusative verbs. However, due to the lack of overt selection, it is sometimes difficult to determine whether a particular NP is definite or indefinite. Cf. Chatrasoma (1991) for an insightful analysis of definite and indefinite NPs in Finnish.

21. These types of examples clearly involve movement to the SpecIP position rather than to SpecCP. Wh-phrases and topicalized NPs obligatorily precede the NP in SpecIP, regardless of whether A'-movement takes place or not. One NP has to move to the position immediately preceding the verb in V1TV. This NP need not be the subject, as shown in (23). Cf. Vanuksi (1989, Ch. 4) for further discussion.

(23) a. Lomaitse aistii aina
    *nuoti
    'There are dirty dishes everywhere.'
    Peikka
    *nuoti
    'Peikka is considered intelligent.'
    Sotilas
    *nuoti
    'Sotilas was taken to the hospital.'

As shown in (23a), the passive NP of an existential sentence may precede the verb (without being topicalized). The subject of the Small Clause complement of connective may be pervizivized and raised, again in passive case, as shown in (23b). In the (imperceptual) passive construction, the verb retains its case assignment properly (both for passive and accusative), and a passive or accusative NP may be raised to the preverbal position.22

Given that passive case is preserved under movement, we are forced to conclude that the Finnish passive is assigned at D-Structure although it otherwise behaves as a structural Case.23

3.2.3 Summary of Finnish objective case

Passive case is the morphological realization of structural Case assigned by the head to the complement position; this assignment takes place already at

22. The NP raised to SpecIP in the unperceptual passive constructions need not be the D-Structure object. Instead, the object in (23b) the locative phrase could have been moved raising the NP) which is not a topicalization construction.

23. See also Dr Hauser (1992), based on Vanuksi (1989), proposes that the Finnish passive is in the sense of 'Weak Case', a structural Case assigned at D-Structure. However, we differ from Dr Hauser's notion of structural Case in the Indo-European languages is assigned at S-Structure of discussion below.
D-Structure. Accusative case is assigned by a special aspectual feature to the complement, presumably also at D-Structure. Heads which have this feature only assign pative case in Finnish. This includes the following heads: prepositions, quantifiers, most instances of illocutive verbs, and the ECM verb *päästis*. Since these heads do not have the feature [COMPLETE] they cannot assign accusative case to the complement, hence the only possible case of the complement is the default realization, pative case. In the analysis we have proposed, the distribution of the Finnish pative is independent of the notion of definiteness.

3.3 The Indo-European Partitive as a Structural Case

3.3.1 Structural Case and markedness

Under our assumptions a head may assign to its complement either (i) no Case, (ii) structural Case only, or (iii) both structural and inherent Case. Intransitive verbs, nouns, and adjectives belong to the first category. An example of a head which assigns only structural Case (i.e. pative) is the Finnish preposition which never takes an accusative complement. Transitive verbs, on the other hand, belong to the third group: the semantic feature responsible for accusative assignment is available to them, resulting in pative/accusative alternation.

Since structural Case is assigned purely configurationally, based on X-Theory, we expect a structurally Case-marked NP to represent the unmarked form occurring in any particular syntactic position. For example, nominative case is the unmarked form for elements occurring in Spec(IP) position. Inherent Case-marking, on the other hand, is not predictable from the configuration, but derives from the lexical and/or derivational properties of a particular head: we therefore consider inherently Case-marked NPs to represent a marked form in any particular syntactic position. Furthermore, since structural Case is independent of particular lexical entries, it would be surprising to find restrictions on structural Case assignment beyond restrictions that can be coded in X-theory (e.g., that N/A heads cannot assign Structural Case). Thus, we do not expect to find a configuration in which structural Case cannot be assigned but inherent Case is available (which is what Bellois proposed for unaccusative verbs), while the reverse situation may arise.

Bellois's (1988) fundamental idea is that the definite/indefinite distinction of English, Italian, and other languages should be encoded in the Abstract Case system. Her Pative Case corresponds to the definite feature of an NP complement. Although we have argued that Bellois's Pative is not an inherent Case, we wish to consider the possibility that the Abstract Pative is a structural Case. In other words, we will address the question of whether indefinite NPs are marked in the complement position in the Indo-European languages, i.e., structurally assigned, like the Finnish pative, and whether definite NPs in that position are somehow special, i.e., assigned based on a specific semantic feature, similar to the Finnish accusative.

The fact that many Indo-European languages exhibit the Definiteness Effect suggests in our system that indefiniteness is indeed the unmarked feature in the complement position. That is, there are constructions in which only indefinite NPs may occur, while the reverse seems not to hold.

Let us now turn to a further construction (in Dutch) which supports the idea that Abstract Pative is a structural Case, as opposed to S-Structures: i.e., that indefinite NP is the unmarked form in the complement position.

3.3.2 Structural Partitive in Dutch

Indefinite NPs in Dutch exhibit the adjacency effects typical of structural Case assignment. Consider the following examples (from De Hoop (1992, Ch.3)).

24. The Indo-European Pative would be the structural Case only for full NPs (i.e., for nouns which mark the (unmarked) indefinite def. In a language like English we can say that the unmarked form of a full NP in complement position is an indefinite NP, while the unmarked form of a pronoun in this position is inacc (because personal pronouns are [+indefinite] in a language where both indefiniteness and case features are marked on an NP, and, as German, the unmarked form of any NP in the complement position would be an indefinite accusative NP.)

25. Although indefiniteness may be the unmarked feature in the complement position, other positions such as the subject position would presumably have a different unmarked form, just as different pronouns are associated with different grammatical cases.

26. For example, if the quantifier is taken to head the construction such as kauas tayo or moni tayo, it’s conceivable that the quantifier is assigning an indefinite NP as its complement (e.g., Hans). Recall Section 3.2.1 that in Finnish such quantifiers take a pative complement.
(24) a. dat de politie gisteren in Zaandam geregeld heeft
dat the police yesterday in Zaandam regulated
that the police yesterday linguists arrested has

b. dat de politie gisteren in Zaandam geregeld heeft
dat de politie gisteren in Zaandam geregeld heeft
dat the police yesterday the linguists arrested has
that the police yesterday the linguists arrested has

(25) a. dat de politie gisteren in Zaandam geregeld heeft
dat de politie gisteren in Zaandam geregeld heeft
dat the police yesterday in Zaandam regulated
that the police yesterday in Zaandam regulated

b. dat de politie gisteren in Zaandam geregeld heeft
dat de politie gisteren in Zaandam geregeld heeft
dat the police yesterday in Zaandam regulated
that the police yesterday in Zaandam regulated

According to De Hoop, non-specific indefinite NPs cannot be scrambled out of their D-Structure position in Dutch; although (25b) is grammatical — with a scrambled definite NP — (24b) is ungrammatical.

Based on data from other Dutch and other languages, De Hoop (1992) argues that what she terms "Weak Case" (corresponding to Belletti’s Partitive) is a structural Case. We agree with her arguments. However, she assumes that Weak Case (while Strong Structural Case is assigned at S-Structure). To account for the scrambling facts (24-25), she stipulates that NPs marked with Weak Case cannot move from their D-Structure positions via NP-movement: A’-movement, however, is possible. That is, indefinite NPs have-generally in the complement position may not scramble, although both definite and indefinite NPs may participate in A’-movement.

We propose that the Dutch data can be accounted for elegantly by assuming that the Indo-European Partitive (i.e. indefiniteness feature in the object position) is assigned at S-Structure, contrary to De Hoop’s proposal. If Partitive is a structural Case that can only be assigned by a governing head at S-Structure (as proposed by Lamik 1992), then there is no way to assign Case to a position too far away from the head, such as the landing site of NP-movement. As long as Case Transmission is not available (following Lamik 1992), the scrambled NP in (25b) does not violate structural Case. It should thus be impossible for non-specific indefinite NPs to occur in a position into which structural Case cannot be assigned at S-Structure. Definite NPs in

27. De Hoop argues that Scrambling in Dutch is an instance of A’-movement, not A’-movement.

28. We follow standard Case Theory in assuming that a trace of A’-movement, such as

Dutch, on the other hand, see assigned (Accessive) Case at D-Structure and therefore they freely undergo NP-movement. Note that this phenomenon is not expected in English, since the only landing site of NP-movement in English is the subject position where the NP gets structural Nominative Case.

3.3.3 Unaccusative verbs

Recall that Lamik (1992) argues that the English/Italian Partitive assigned by unaccusative verbs should be analyzed as a structural Case. If Belletti’s Partitive is a structural Case, and if we stipulate that unaccusative verbs can only assign structural Case, then these verbs can only license a complement position when the object is an indefinite NP.

In other words, unaccusative verbs, including be, cannot assign the marked [+-definite] feature to their complement. The only possible form of the complement in the unmarked position is an indefinite NP. Using Belletti’s terminology, this would mean that

Well-movement can be Case-marked, resulting in a situation where structurally Case-marked and NP NPs may occur far away from the Case assigner, such NPs receive Case via deep structure.

39. This analysis of the Definiteness Effect may seem unexceptional; note, however, that it is no less explanatory than Belletti’s explanation based on Abstract Inertial Partitive Case. Since, as we have shown, Belletti’s Partitive does not have a morphological counterpart, “Partitive NP” in both his analysis and in our analysis both show a resemblance of “indefinite object NP”. In his analysis, however, the notion of head which only assigns structural Case is independently motivated by syntactic and morphological case marking in Italian.

40. The exception to the Definiteness Effect, such as the best reading or the pronoun reading (e.g. Well, there’s always the new family) would most naturally be analyzed in our approach as licensing a definite NP in a position other than the complement position. Consider the following contrast (i) If I leave the house, I enter the room.

(i) If I leave the house, I enter the room.

In the context that (i) is grammatical, this suggests that a definite argument of an unaccusative verb is possible in a non-agent position. Cf. Definiti (1998). Yet, it is more convincing to argue that possessor definite objects of unaccusative verbs in Italian do not occupy the position of sister to the verb.
unaccusative verbs cannot assign an inherent Accusative to their complements, but only the structural Partitive Case is available, while Bellotti proposed that only an inherent Partitive Case is available for these verbs. Similarly, the unimperative passive constructions discussed by Bellotti which exhibit the Definiteness Effect (as in French) involve an impersonal passive verb which is only capable of assigning structural Case to the complemented position.\(^{31}\)

At already mentioned in Section 2.5.1, Bellotti notes to assume that Partitive assignment is optional in order for the fact that definite NPs are possible as subjects of unaccusative verbs. If Partitive were rigidly assigned to D-Structure, only indefinite NPs should even be found as the subject of an unaccusative verb in Italian (since, according to the Unaccusative Hypothesis, such subject NPs originate in the object position). However, if Partitive is a structural Case, assigned at S-Structure after NP movement, an NP can be base-generated in the object position and moved out before structural Case assignment takes place. This accounts for the definite arguments of unaccusative verbs in Italian without a special stipulation of optionality of Case assignment. Furthermore, the special assumption about Case stacking of Nominals and Partitive that Bellotti makes it is not required (Bellotti 1988: 25) if Partitive is a structural Case assigned only at S-Structure; cf. also the discussion in Section 2.5.2.

3.3.4 Case vs. definiteness – (complementary distribution)

The conclusion we have reached, based on Bellotti's basic idea, is a very interesting one in so far as it suggests that morphological case and the overt realization of definiteness may belong to the same syntactic process. Abstract Case assignment with a morphological default realization. It may not be an accident that Finish has a rich case system has no overt marking of (in)definiteness, while English has a rich system of definiteness combined with little case realization. Note that the substantiality of English that has overt

\[case\text{ marking, personal pronouns, has no overt realization of definiteness.}\]

If the two phenomena are part of the same process, it is not surprising to find (a degree of) complementary distribution.\(^{32}\)

Let us conclude by returning to the Italian data.

3.4 The Italian Partitive as a Structural Case

3.4.1 Indefinite as an 'Elsewhere' Case

The Definiteness Effect holds for unaccusative verbs and unimperative passive verbs in Italian, but only indefinite NPs occur as complements of such verbs. Since definite NPs cannot occur in these constructions (while the distribution of indefinite NPs does not seem to be restricted), we have an argument for Partitive being the unmarked structural Case for the complement position in Italian, exactly as in English and Dutch. The difference between English and Italian in that the English passive verb assigns no Case to the complement position, while the Italian passive verb assigns Case to the complement position. Recall that both objective cases are preserved in the Finnish imperational passive; the Italian passive, however, only gives rise to the default form, indefinite NPs.

Again, as with English and Dutch, our conclusion is that Partitive Case (i.e., indefiniteness marking on an object) is a structural Case in Italian, contrary to Bellotti's assumption. On the other hand, Accusative (i.e., [Definite] in the object position) behaves less like a structural Case; its assignment is based on a semantic feature.

3.4.2 The arguments for Inherent Case revisited

Recall the remaining argument for Partitive as an inherent Case in Italian: causative verbs, including the passives of ECM verbs, exhibit no Definiteness

\[2.\] Although languages such as German and artistic where NPs may be marked for case and for definiteness are counterparts to this construction, it might be possible to distinguish languages (or syntactic positions within languages) based on whether case marking is "straight" (i.e. definiteness marking, or whether such a distinction could reflect a parameter choice (i.e. cases of the Italian passives e.g. in the DP projection.)
Effect; i.e. they do not assign Partitive to the embedded subject. This can be explained if Partitive is an inherent Case, since no theta-role is assigned by the matrix verb. Note that for both the passive form of consider and the raising verbs, not only Partitive assignment is blocked but also Accusative assignment, resulting in obligatory raising of the embedded subject.

A serious problem with Belleri's analysis of raising verbs is that in Finnish (and also in Icelandic) the embedded subject position is not licensed even when the embedded verb assigns lexical (inherent) Case to its subject. Consider the examples in (26):

(26) a. Nytäätä (sdt), entä simulaa on janu.
    see-s3sg ir-3rl that you-ADE is-3sg thirst
    'If you are thirsty'

b. Simulla nytäätä olenan jano,
    you-ADE see-s3sg be-inf thirst
    'You seem to be thirsty'

c. Nytäätä (sd) simulla oelen jano.
    see-s3sg ir-3rl you-ADE be-inf thirst

The embedded clause in (26) has a quicky subject in adverbial case (one of the locative cases, meaning of). This quicky subject acts as a subject of a tensed clause as shown in (26a). It may be raised out of an infinitival clause, resulting in a raising construction as shown in (26b). However, the quicky subject is not allowed to remain in the subject position of the embedded infinitival clause, as shown in (26c), although the NP bears inherent Case. This suggests that more than case assignment is at stake in (26c), and that no subject position is licensed in the embedded infinitival of a raising verb, regardless of case marking.\footnote{That is, the presence of lexically-specified case is not sufficient to license a syntactic position; structural Case is required for licensing a position.}

\textit{even case-marked NPs have to raise.} Although it is not clear why raising verbs cannot assign Case to the subject of their small clause complement, we are confident that an explanation based on the assumption that Partitive is an inherent Case is too costly, in other respects, the advantages of analyzing both the Indo-European Partitive and the Finnish partitive as structural Cases far outweigh the explanation of raising verbs as involving assignment of inherent Case.

4. Conclusion

The distribution of indefinite NPs in object position in various Indo-European languages indicates that it is the unmarked form of an NP in this position. In the spirit of Belleri (1988) we have explored the possibility that definiteness marking is a feature encoded in Abstract Case assignment. For full NPs in various Indo-European languages, the morphological realization of abstract Objective Case is an indefinite marking, while in Finnish (which does not morphologically mark (in)definiteness) the realization of structural Case in the object position is partitive case. Define full NPs in Indo-European, and accusative NPs in Finnish, are licensed in this position only in the presence of a specific feature.

Under our analysis, the Definiteness Effect arises due to the inability of unaccusative verbs to assign any special features; only the (default) realization of structural Case is available for these heads. Why certain heads assign only structural Case and others to Case at all remains a topic for future research. (However, our analysis of unaccusative verbs along these lines is supported by the similar behavior of certain heads in Finnish (e.g. prepositions) with respect to overtly marked morphological case. We have shown that Belleri's assumptions about morphological case cannot be upheld. We argue that neither the morphological partitive of Finnish nor the Abstract Partitive of Indo-European is assigned inherently.\footnote{Cf. Sigurdsson (1995) for an analysis of raising verbs according to which the subject of the embedded infinitival is not properly head marked, and the subject is forced to raise.}
Rather, by extending Lasnik’s (1992) analysis we argue that both are examples of structural Case.

References

Bare plurals, plural pronouns and the partitive constraint

Karina Wilkinson

0. Introduction

In this paper, I will be concerned with the problem of giving a semantic analysis of plural pronouns contained in partitive NPs where the antecedents of the pronoun is a bare plural. A problem arises if we try to maintain the following two claims:

(I) The partitive constraint is a semantic constraint.

(II) The relation between a plural pronoun and a bare plural antecedent that doesn't c-command the pronoun is coreference.

Bare plurals are not allowed in partitive NPs:

1. *each of beetles
2. *most of cats
3. *some of people

However, plural pronouns whose antecedent is a bare plural are grammatical in partitives as the examples in (2) and (3) show.

(2) Judicial decisions protecting the environment are rare, and the Supreme Court is overruling many of them.

(3) Raccoons came into my backyard, so I poisoned all of them

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