A Configurational Account of Finnish Case

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1 Introduction

This paper argues that Finnish case provides support for the *configurational case model* and against the *functional-head case model*. In the configurational case model, a case can be a DEPENDENT CASE such that it is assigned only when there is another structurally case-marked DP in the domain (Marantz 1991, McFadden 2004, Baker and Vinokurova 2010, Preminger 2011). This model differs from the traditional *functional-head case model* in which all case is assigned by functional heads via AGREE (Chomsky 2000, 2001). Finnish structural-case assignment comprises two processes: nominative-genitive case competition and the partitive-nonpartitive alternation. In nominative-genitive case competition, of the DPs without lexical or partitive case, the structurally highest DP receives nominative and all other lower DPs receive genitive (1). The DPs that compete for nominative are the external argument (EA) and the internal argument (IA), as expected, but also a class of adjuncts.

(1) a. **Tarja** luotti [Kekkose-en]$_{\text{LEX}}$ [**yhde-n vuode-n**] [**kolmanne-n kerra-n**]
Tarja.NOM trusted.3SG Kekkonen-ILL one-GEN year-GEN third-GEN time-GEN
'Tarja trusted Kekkonen for a year for a third time'

b. [Kekkose-en]$_{\text{LEX}}$ luote-ttiin [**yksi vuosi**] [**kolmanne-n kerra-n**]
Kekkonen-ILL trust-PASS.PAST one.NOM year.NOM third-GEN time-GEN
'Kekkonen was trusted for a year for a third time' [Maling 1993:59]

Crucially, adjuncts in nominative-genitive case competition can receive genitive in passives. In the functional-head case model, v_{PASS} would not assign case, following the standard account of Burzio's Generalisation—otherwise, the IA would receive genitive case. However, genitive is in fact assigned in passives (1b) where the relevant functional head (e.g., v_{AG}) is not available. The pattern falls out naturally though in the configurational case model: genitive is a dependent case. It only requires that another structurally case-marked DP be present in the case-assignment domain—a requirement satisfied in (1b).

In the partitive-nonpartitive alternation, the case borne by the IA corresponds to the telicity of the eventuality. When the eventuality is atelic, the IA bears partitive (2a). When the eventuality is telic, the IA bears nominative or genitive (collectively "nonpartitive") depending on nominative-genitive case competition (2b).

(2) a. Etsi-n {**karhu-a** / ***karhu-n**}
seek-1SG bear-PTV bear-GEN
'I am looking for the/a bear'

b. Saa-n {***karhu-a** / **karhu-n**}
get-1SG bear-PTV bear-GEN
'I will get the/a bear'
[Kiparsky 1998:268]

The configurational account of Finnish case relies on the interaction of two domains of case assignment: the *v*P phase and the AspP phase. In the *v*P phase, nominative is the unmarked case and genitive is the dependent case. In the AspP phase, partitive is the unmarked case and genitive is the dependent case. Building off of Kratzer's (2004) semantics of telicity, the partitive-nonpartitive alternation reflects whether the IA has moved out of VP to [Spec, AspP] in order to satisfy the [TELIC] feature on Asp^0, where the presence of [TELIC] yields a telic interpretation of the eventuality by asserting that the eventuality culminates. When the IA moves, it raises to the edge of AspP, a syntactic

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position accessible in the *v*P phase given the Phase Impenetrability Condition; this allows it to partake in nominative-genitive case competition (3a). When the IA does not move, it receives unmarked partitive case in VP (3b). In (3) and henceforth, solid arrows represent dependent-case assignment and dashed arrows represent movement.

(3) a. $[_{vP}\ \text{EA}_{\text{NOM}}\ v^0\ [_{\text{AspP}}\ \underline{\text{IA}}_{\text{GEN}}\ \text{Asp}^0_{[\text{TELIC}]}\ [_{\text{VP}}\ \text{V}^0\ \langle\text{IA}\rangle\ ]\ ]\ \underline{\text{Adjunct}}_{\text{GEN}}\ ]$

b. $[_{vP}\ \text{EA}_{\text{NOM}}\ v^0\ [_{\text{AspP}}\ \text{Asp}^0\ [_{\text{VP}}\ \text{V}^0\ \underline{\text{IA}}_{\text{PTV}}\ ]\ ]\ \underline{\text{Adjunct}}_{\text{GEN}}\ ]$

An additional upshot of this analysis is that it succinctly accounts for two otherwise disjoint phenomena in Finnish with fewer stipulations than analyses based on the functional-head case model, such as Nelson (1998) and Vainikka and Brattico (2014).

The paper is organised as follows: Section 2 presents the data about nominative-genitive case competition and the partitive-nonpartitive alternation in Finnish. Section 3 introduces Preminger's (2011) syntactic implementation of the configurational case model. Section 4 applies this model to Finnish structural case and discusses the theoretical implications. Section 5 concludes.

2 Background on Finnish Structural Case

Finnish has four structural cases: nominative, accusative, genitive, and partitive. Table 1 contains the structural case paradigm (Kiparsky 2001, Hakulinen et al. 2004). Following Keine and Müller (2008), I assume that accusative case is differential object marking (DOM) conditioned by animacy and definiteness which only occurs on human pronouns in telic eventualities (see also Csirmaz 2005).[1] In this paper, I set aside DOM and do not address how it is assigned.

	Nouns: 'rutabaga'		Nonhuman pronouns: 3π		Human pronouns: 3π	
Case	SG	PL	SG	PL	SG	PL
Nominative	lanttu	lantu-t	se	ne	hän	he
Accusative (DOM)	–	–	–	–	häne-t	heidä-t
Genitive	lantu-n	lanttuj-en	se-n	nii-den	häne-n	heidä-n
Partitive	lanttu-a	lanttuj-a	si-tä	nii-tä	hän-tä	heit-ä

Table 1: Finnish structural case paradigm.

2.1 Nominative-Genitive Case Competition

At the clausal level, all DPs whose case is unvalued, i.e., those not marked with lexical or partitive case, compete for nominative case. The structurally highest DP receives nominative and all structurally lower DPs receive genitive. I refer to this competition as NOMINATIVE-GENITIVE CASE COMPETITION. To illustrate, consider the set of sentences in (4). (4a) is a simple transitive sentence: the EA *Pekka* receives nominative because it is structurally highest and the IA *kirja* 'book' receives genitive. When the EA is absent, e.g., in a passive (4b), the IA *kirja* 'book' is now the structurally highest DP and therefore receives nominative.

[1] It is possible to recast the case paradigm in a more intuitive way where the label "accusative" refers to the case that canonically marks objects: *t*-marked nouns bear DOM. *n*-marked nouns are accusative, but accusative is also used for possessors. Thanks to Bronwyn Bjorkman for first pointing this out to me. I will however not use this shift in terminology in order to remain more consistent with the existing literature on Finnish case.

(4) a. **Pekka** osti **kirja-n** *EA* → NOM, *IA* → GEN
Pekka.NOM bought.3SG book-GEN
'Pekka bought the/a book'

b. **Kirja** oste-ttiin *IA* → NOM
book.NOM buy-PASS.PAST
'The book was bought' / 'People bought the book'

The DPs that compete for nominative are the EA and the IA, as expected, but also durational adjuncts (e.g., *for an hour*), spatial measure adjuncts (e.g., *a kilometre*), and multiplicative adjuncts (e.g., *three times*). I refer to the class of adjuncts that partake in nominative-genitive case competition as DMM (durational, measure, multiplicative) adjuncts. To see a DMM adjunct win the case competition and receive nominative, we must use a verb that assigns a lexical case to its IA because then the IA will not partake in nominative-genitive case competition, allowing DMM adjuncts to be the highest competing DPs. For example, the verb *luottaa* 'trust' assigns illative case to its IA. In (5a), the EA receives nominative and the two DMM adjuncts receive genitive. When (5a) is passivised as (5b), the first DMM adjunct is now structurally highest, so it receives nominative and the second DMM adjunct receives genitive. Finally, if the first DMM adjunct is removed, the second DMM receives nominative (5c).

(5) a. *EA* → NOM, $Adjunct_1$ → GEN, $Adjunct_2$ → GEN
Tarja luotti Kekkose-en [**yhde-n vuode-n**] [**kolmanne-n kerra-n**]
Tarja.NOM trusted.3SG Kekkonen-ILL one-GEN year-GEN third-GEN time-GEN
'Tarja trusted Kekkonen for a year for a third time'

b. $Adjunct_1$ → NOM, $Adjunct_2$ → GEN
Kekkose-en luote-ttiin [**yksi vuosi**] [**kolmanne-n kerra-n**]
Kekkonen-ILL trust-PASS.PAST one.NOM year.NOM third-GEN time-GEN
'Kekkonen was trusted for a year for a third time'

c. $Adjunct_2$ → NOM
Kekkose-en luote-ttiin [**kolmas kerta**]
Kekkonen-ILL trust-PASS.PAST third-NOM time-NOM
'Kekkonen was trusted for a third time' [Maling 1993:59]

Like a lexically case-marked DP, a DP marked with partitive does not partake in nominative-genitive case competition such that a DMM adjunct can receive nominative when the IA is partitive (6).

(6) Muistele matka-a **vuosi**!
reminisce.IMP trip-PTV year.NOM
'Reminisce about the trip for a year!' [Maling 1993:58]

As will be discussed in sections 3 and 4, the pattern in (5) and (6), particularly (5b), is the crucial empirical evidence for the configurational-case model because dependent case is assigned where the relevant functional head is not available.

2.2 Partitive-Nonpartitive Alternation

The case borne by the IA corresponds to the telicity of the eventuality (Kiparsky 1998, Kratzer 2004, Csirmaz 2005, a.o.). When the eventuality is atelic, the IA bears partitive, as illustrated in (7) with *etsiä* 'seek', an obligatorily atelic verb.[2] When the eventuality is telic, the IA bears genitive or nominative depending on nominative-genitive case competition, as illustrated in (8) with *saa* 'get', an obligatorily telic verb. I refer to this alternation as the PARTITIVE-NONPARTITIVE ALTERNATION, where "nonpartitive" refers collectively to nominative and genitive.

[2] As a disclaimer, partitive case does not yield a partitive reading. A true partitive reading in Finnish uses elative case: *jotain lapsi-sta* 'some children-ELA'. Therefore, I use the term "partitive" to refer to partitive case.

(7) Etsi-n {**karhu-a** / ***karhu-n**}
seek-1SG bear-PTV bear-GEN
'I am looking for the/a bear'
[Kiparsky 1998:268]

(8) Saa-n {***karhu-a** / **karhu-n**}
get-1SG bear-PTV bear-GEN
'I will get the/a bear'
[Kiparsky 1998:268]

An eventuality's telicity is largely determined by the choice of verb, which might tempt one to conclude that partitive is a lexical case assigned by specific verbs. However, it is possible to force a telic interpretation using an event delimiter, such as a goal or a resultative, which the case marking reflects. For example, in (9a), the IA *auto* 'car' is partitive because the eventuality ⟨*drive the car*⟩ is atelic. When a goal is added, in (9b), the IA changes to a nonpartitive case because the eventuality has been delimited and therefore is telic.

(9) a. Ajoi-n {**auto-a** / ***auto-n** }
drove-1SG car-PTV car-GEN
'I drove the/a car'

b. Ajoi-n {**auto-n** / ***auto-a** } talli-in
drove-1SG car-GEN car-PTV garage-ILL
'I drove the/a car into the/a garage' [Csirmaz 2005:55]

Moreover, verbs that have both telic and atelic interpretations allow a partitive IA and a nonpartitive IA matching the interpretation. The classic example of such a verb is *ampua* 'shoot': When *ampua* is interpreted as atelic, that is the event does not necessarily end with something being shot, the IA is partitive (10a). When *ampua* is interpreted as telic, that is the event ends with something being shot, the IA is nonpartitive (10b).

(10) a. Ammui-n **karhu-a**
shot-1SG bear-PTV
'I shot at the/a bear'

b. Ammui-n **karhu-n**
shot-1SG bear-GEN
'I shot the/a bear' [Kiparsky 1998:267]

(7–10) show that the partitive-nonpartitive alternation is contingent on telicity and not on the particular verb selected, which means that partitive cannot be reduced to a lexical case.

It is worth noting that the partitive-nonpartitive alternation is not a result of and does not affect the interpretation of the DP. For example, in (9a), the speaker is not driving part of a car or, in (10a), the speaker is not shooting part of a bear. Although an undelimited IA yields an atelic eventuality, an atelic eventuality does not always yield an undelimited IA, and similarly for telic eventualities.[3]

2.3 Section Summary

The descriptive algorithm that assigns morphological case in Finnish is in (11). Step 1 handles the assignment of lexical cases following Nikanne (1993). Steps 2–4 handle the assignment of structural cases.

(11) FINNISH CASE ALGORITHM

1. Assign the relevant lexical case to complements of P^0 heads.
2. Assign partitive to the IA if the eventuality is atelic.
3. Starting from the bottom of the structure, for every pair of DPs with unvalued case, assign genitive to the lower one.
4. Assign nominative to any remaining DPs with unvalued case.

[3]There is another use of partitive case in Finnish that affects the interpretation of the DP, causing it to be interpreted as undelimited. However, I assume that this DP-level partitive is distinct from the telicity-conditioned partitive because the DP-level partitive occurs on subjects, which do not affect the telicity of an eventuality. Although the two partitives share some similarities, such as being restricted to structurally case-marked positions, in the interest of space, I set aside the DP-level partitive.

The challenge is to implement the algorithm (11) in the syntax. To do so, I will adopt the configurational case model of Preminger (2011) with an additional proposal from Baker and Vinokurova (2010) concerning case assignment at the phase edge.

3 Configurational Case Model

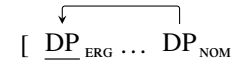
In the traditional model of morphological case assignment, specific functional heads assign case either to their specifier (Chomsky 1980, 1981) or to some DP via AGREE (Chomsky 2000, 2001).[4] I call this model the FUNCTIONAL-HEAD CASE MODEL. The standard instantiation of the functional-head model is that T^0 assigns nominative and v^0 assigns accusative. There is however another model of morphological case assignment known as the CONFIGURATIONAL CASE MODEL wherein case is assigned according to the structural configuration of DPs with respect to one another (Marantz 1991; see also Yip et al. 1987). The configurational case model has fostered much attention recently in the literature: McFadden (2004), Bobaljik (2008), Baker and Vinokurova (2010), Preminger (2011, in press), Levin and Preminger (in press), Baker (in press). In the configurational model, case is assigned according to the DISJUNCTIVE CASE HIERARCHY (12).

(12) DISJUNCTIVE CASE HIERARCHY
lexical/inherent case → dependent case → unmarked case [Marantz 1991]

According to (12), the algorithm for the calculus of case proceeds in three steps as follows: First, assign idiosyncratic lexical and inherent cases. Second, for each pair of remaining DPs, assign one DP in the pair dependent case; this step is known as CASE COMPETITION. Third, assign unmarked case to any DP whose case is still unvalued. The dependent-case relationship is parameterised in each language: In a nominative-accusative alignment, like English and Finnish, the structurally lower DP in the pair receives dependent case, which we call "accusative" (13). In an ergative-absolutive alignment, like Basque and Walpiri, the structurally higher DP in the pair receives dependent case, which we call "ergative" (14).[5]

(13) *Nominative-accusative alignment*

(14) *Ergative-absolutive alignment*



The conceptual motivation for the configurational model over the functional-head model is that dependent case succinctly accounts for Burzio's Generalisation (BG)—that a verb can assign accusative iff it assigns an external θ-role (Burzio 1986). In the functional-head model, BG is accounted for by stipulating that different types of v^0 are arbitrarily inserted into the structure, some which assign accusative and an external θ-role, e.g., v^0_{AG}, and some which do neither, e.g., v^0_{PASS}. This stipulation provides no explanation about the connection between assigning accusative case and assigning an external θ-role; the connection is merely stipulated. In the configurational model, introducing an EA into a structure containing an IA feeds dependent-case assignment because there are now two DPs in the case-assignment domain, the necessary condition for the assignment of dependent case; this derives BG without unexplanatory stipulation.

The commonly cited empirical motivation for the configurational model over the functional-head model is intransitive ECM constructions. In intransitive ECM constructions, the embedded subject raises to the object position of an intransitive matrix clause and receives dependent case, even though the relevant functional head to assign dependent case would not be available in the matrix clause because it is intransitive. Baker and Vinokurova (2010) illustrate this pattern in Sakha, a Turkic language spoken in Northern Siberia (15).

[4] I reserve the term "case" to refer exclusively to morphological case. I take no stance on whether morphological case is connected to so-called "abstract Case", i.e., the licensing of DPs; see McFadden (2004).

[5] If ergative is an inherent case associated with external argumenthood (Woolford 1997), the parameterisation of the dependent-case relationship is unnecessary. I remain agnostic on this issue since it has no bearing on Finnish, a language with a nominative-accusative case alignment.

(15) Masha [**Misha-ny** [yaldj-ya dien]] tönün-ne
Masha Misha-ACC fall.sick-FUT.3SG.SUBJ that return-PAST.3SG.SUBJ
'Masha returned (for fear) that Misha would fall sick' [Baker and Vinokurova 2010:618]

These facts fall out naturally in the configurational model: the embedded subject raises to the matrix-object position such that a dependent-case relationship can be established with the matrix subject, as schematised in (16).

(16) [$\overbrace{\text{DP}_{\text{NOM}}\ \underbrace{\text{DP}}_{\uparrow}\ _{\text{ACC}}}$ [⟨DP⟩ V^0] V^0]

However, as Baker and Vinokurova themselves note, accusative in Sakha is DOM restricted to DPs that are specific or definite. Given the general lack of uncertainty about DOM, accusative in Sakha is amenable to other analyses and therefore is not compelling evidence for the configurational model. Finnish nominative-genitive case competition does not face this problem, which is why I argue that it provides solid empirical evidence for the configurational model.

I adopt the syntactic implementation of the configurational case model of Preminger (2011) in which the Disjunctive Case Hierarchy falls out naturally as a consequence of when and where DPs are merged into the syntactic structure. DPs enter the derivation with an unvalued [CASE] feature which, in Preminger's obligatory-operations model, does not need to be valued. Lexical case is assigned under c-selection wherein a lexical head assigns the respective idiosyncratic lexical case to the DP that it c-selects, i.e. its sister, upon first merge (17).

(17) [$_{\text{VP/PP/XP}}$ $V^0/\overbrace{P^0/X^0\ \ \text{DP}}$]

In Preminger's system, dependent case is assigned under c-command, i.e., when two DPs with unvalued case establish a c-command relationship with each other. In a nominative-accusative alignment, the *c-commanded* DP receives dependent case. In an ergative-absolutive alignment, the *c-commanding* DP receives dependent case.[6] Last, if a DP is still unvalued for case at SPELLOUT, its unvalued [CASE] feature is spelled out as unmarked case. The advantage of Preminger's syntactic case calculus is that the structure consisting of a lexical head and the DP that it c-selects will necessarily be built before any larger structure containing that DP and another DP in a c-command relationship. Therefore, the precedence relations in the Disjunctive Case Hierarchy fall out naturally based on when and where DPs are merged into the structure.

The assignment of dependent case is subject to the locality condition that dependent-case relationships cannot be established across case-assignment domains, which, following McFadden (2004) and Baker and Vinokurova (2010), I assume is the phase. The standard locality condition imposed by phases is the PHASE IMPENETRABILITY CONDITION (PIC) (18) where the phase edge remains accessible to operations in the next highest phase (Chomsky 2001).

(18) PHASE IMPENETRABILITY CONDITION
The domain of phase head H^0 is not accessible to operations at the next highest phase ZP; only H^0 and its edge are accessible to such operations. [Chomsky 2001]

Therefore, a DP with unvalued case located at the edge of a phase partakes in case competition in both that phase and the next highest phase such that it can receive dependent or unmarked case in the higher phase, as schematised in (19).[7]

[6]The method of assigning dependent case is atypical of syntactic processes. I tentatively assume that the assignment of lexical and dependent case is encapsulated in a separate syntactic operation distinct from AGREE (Preminger 2011). I leave the precise details of dependent-case assignment to future research.

[7]It is necessary to restrict dependent-case assignment to A-positions to avoid incorrectly predicting that a DP that has undergone $\overline{\text{A}}$-movement to a higher position can assign dependent case, which would be problematic for successive cyclic movement; see McFadden (2004:209–210) for discussion.

(19) [ZP DP … [HP DP H^0 [… DP …]]]

Additionally, the morphological realisations of dependent case and unmarked case depend on the type of phase (Yip et al. 1987, Baker and Vinokurova 2010). In other words, each phase type can have a different dependent case and a different unmarked case. For example, in English, genitive is the unmarked case in the DP phase and nominative is the unmarked case in the *v*P and CP phases. Given the proposal in (19), this means that the realisation of unmarked and dependent case for a phase applies only to its complement because DPs at the edge will spell out in the next highest phase and therefore the realisation of unmarked and dependent case depends on the higher phase.

4 Application to Finnish Case

In this section, I apply the configurational case model to Finnish. First, I introduce Kratzer's (2004) semantics for telicity and partitive case. Then, I argue that the movement required for the semantics of telicity feeds the IA of a telic eventuality participating in nominative-genitive case competition.

4.1 Kratzer's Semantics for Telicity

Telicity is standardly defined as an algebraic property of eventualities: an atelic eventuality is CUMULATIVE (20a) and a telic eventuality is QUANTISED (20b). There is a homomorphism between the eventuality and the IA to ensure that a cumulative IA yields an atelic eventuality and a quantised IA yields a telic eventuality (Krifka 1992).

(20) a. P is CUMULATIVE iff $\forall x, y\,[P(x) \wedge P(y) \rightarrow P(x \sqcup y)]$

b. P is QUANTISED iff $\forall x, y\,[P(x) \wedge P(y) \rightarrow \neg y \sqsubset x]$ [Krifka 1992:32]

The problem with the standard account of telicity is that it does not clearly spell out how a morphological case can be assigned dependent on an algebraic property computed at LF. As a solution to this problem, Kratzer (2004) proposes that a telic interpretation results from the feature [TELIC] having been optionally merged into the syntactic structure, i.e., telicity is represented in the syntax. When [TELIC] is present, the eventuality receives a telic interpretation, and when [TELIC] is not present, the eventuality receives an atelic interpretation.

Kratzer considers two possible denotations for [TELIC]. In the first denotation, [TELIC] asserts that the eventuality culminates (21a). The culmination requirements are idiosyncratically specified in the verb's denotation (21b).

(21) a. $[\![[\text{TELIC}]]\!] = \lambda R.\lambda x.\lambda e.\,[R(x)(e) \wedge \text{culminate}(x)(e)]$

b. $[\![\text{shoot}]\!] = \lambda x.\lambda e.\,[\text{shoot-at}(x)(e) \wedge [\text{culminate}(x)(e) \leftrightarrow \text{hit}(x)(e)]]$ [Kratzer 2004:391]

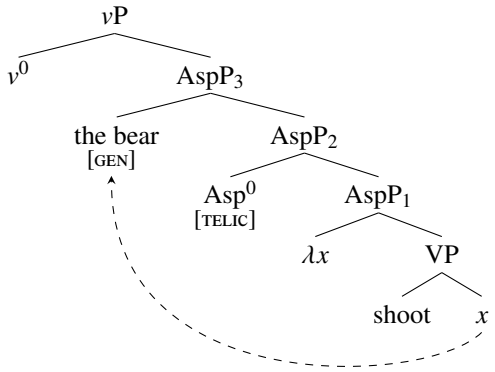
In the second denotation, [TELIC] imposes a more general culmination requirement by imposing a mapping between the IA and the eventuality in the spirit of Krifka's MAPPING TO EVENTS (22).

(22) $[\![[\text{TELIC}]]\!] = \lambda R.\lambda x.\lambda e.\,[R(x)(e) \wedge \exists f\,[\text{measure}(f) \wedge \forall x'\,[x' \sqsubseteq f(x) \rightarrow \exists e'\,[e' \sqsubseteq e \wedge R(x')(e')]]]]$ [Kratzer 2004:394]

In (22), the measure() function bears the burden of determining the granularity by which the IA measures out the eventuality. It is "a general cognitive mechanism that determines a range of functions that map referents of certain direct objects into concrete or abstract 'measuring rods'" (Kratzer 2004:394). For the sake of simplicity, I assume the first denotation and that [TELIC] is located on Asp^0, a functional head related to situation aspect and located below *v*P; other assumptions with respect to [TELIC] are compatible with the analysis presented in section 4.2. An illustration of how Kratzer's semantics works is in (23).[8]

[8]There is a nonstandard assumption in (23) about how the EPP-movement to [Spec, innerAspP] works.

(23)



a. $[\![\text{AspP}_2]\!] =$
$\lambda x.\lambda e.$ [shoot-at(x)(e)$\wedge$
[culminate(x)(e) $\leftrightarrow$ hit(x)(e)]
$\wedge$ culminate(x)(e)]

b. $[\![\text{AspP}_3]\!] =$
$\lambda e.$ [shoot-at(the bear)(e)$\wedge$
[culminate(the bear)(e) $\leftrightarrow$
hit(the bear)(e)] $\wedge$
culminate(the bear)(e)]

Crucially, the denotation of [TELIC] requires that the IA raises to [Spec, AspP] for the structure to be interpretable. I argue that this movement feeds the IA of a telic eventuality participating in nominative genitive case competition because it raises the IA to a syntactic position accessible in the *v*P phase where nominative-genitive case competition occurs.

4.2 Two Domains of Case Assignment

In Finnish, there are two domains of case assignment: the *v*P phase for nominative-genitive case competition and the AspP phase for the partitive-nonpartitive alternation. The movement required by [TELIC] for the structure to be interpretable raises a DP from the AspP phase to the *v*P phase to participate in nominative-genitive case competition.

The partitive-nonpartitive alternation reflects whether the IA has moved out of VP to [Spec, AspP]. The case alternation is due to the fact that AspP is a phase, i.e., a case-assignment domain, in which partitive is the unmarked case and genitive is the dependent case.[9] When the eventuality is atelic, [TELIC] is not present, the IA remains in-situ, and its unvalued [CASE] feature spells out as partitive (24a).[10] When the eventuality is telic, [TELIC] is present, the IA raises to [Spec, AspP] for the structure to be interpretable such that it partakes in nominative-genitive case competition in the *v*P phase (24b). Therefore, this movement to [Spec, AspP] bleeds the assignment of partitive.[11]

(24) a. $[_{\text{AspP}}\ \text{Asp}^0\ [_{\text{VP}}\ \text{V}^0\ \ \text{IA}_{\text{PTV}}\ ]\ ]$

b. $[_{\text{AspP}}\ \ \text{IA}_{\text{NOM/GEN}}\ \text{Asp}^0_{[\text{TELIC}]}\ [_{\text{VP}}\ \text{V}^0\ \ \langle\text{IA}\rangle\ ]\ ]$

In this sense, partitive is a "default", the structural case that a DP receives if it remains *structurally too low* (see Vainikka 1989 for a similar claim).

Nominative-genitive case competition is the result of case competition in the *v*P phase; here the analysis is much more straightforward. In the *v*P phase, nominative is the unmarked case and genitive is the dependent case. The *v*P phase contains the EA, the IA if the eventuality is telic, and all the DMM adjuncts. (25) and (26) illustrate the case assignment in a telic eventuality and an atelic eventuality respectively.[12]

Kratzer proposes that the movement is driven by coindexation of the [TELIC] and the IA which enables [TELIC] to bind the trace left behind by the IA after it moves. This proposal essentially amounts to bundling the λ-abstraction with the [TELIC]-bearing Asp^0, so I have represented it as such for the sake of simplicity.

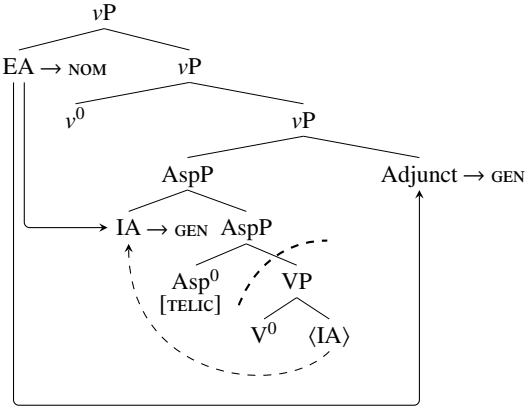
[9] I stipulate the phasehood of AspP for expository purposes. An alternative would be to argue that VP is a phase, as Baker and Vinokurova (2010) argue is true for some languages, and V^0 hosts [TELIC]. Another alternative is that v^0 hosts [TELIC], but one would have to articulate how the semantic composition would work because v^0 would both establish a mapping between the IA and the eventuality and introduce the EA.

[10] Since the AspP phase will only ever contain one DP, the IA, dependent case will never surface in AspP, but I have stated that the dependent case is genitive to be consistent with the *v*P phase.

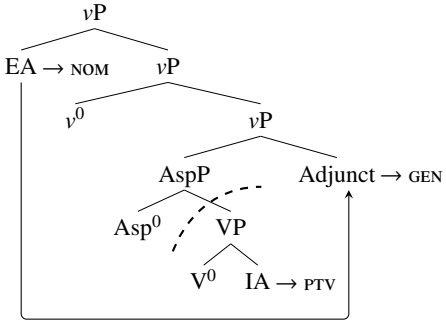
[11] I am assuming that the movement of the IA to [Spec, AspP] in telic eventualities is A-movement.

[12] In (25) and (26), the DMM adjunct is represented as being structurally higher than the IA, but this is only for the sake of simplicity. NPI licensing shows that the IA c-commands any DMM adjuncts, e.g. *John drove no*

(25) *Telic eventuality*



(26) *Atelic eventuality*



(27) and (28) illustrate the case assignment in a passivised telic eventuality and a passivised atelic eventuality respectively. These derivations also apply to constructions where the IA can surface as nominative, such as imperatives, necessive constructions, and existential constructions.

(27) [$_{vP}$ IA_{NOM} v^0_{PASS} [$_{\text{AspP}}$ ⟨IA⟩ $\text{Asp}^0_{[\text{TELIC}]}$ [$_{\text{VP}}$ V^0 ⟨IA⟩]] $\underline{\text{Adjunct}}_{\text{GEN}}$] *Telic eventuality*

(28) [$_{vP}$ v^0_{PASS} [$_{\text{AspP}}$ Asp^0 [$_{\text{VP}}$ V^0 IA_{PTV}]] $\text{Adjunct}_{\text{NOM}}$] *Atelic eventuality*

Consider how one would account for nominative-genitive case competition in the functional-head case model following relatively standard assumptions: T^0 assigns nominative to the highest DP and v^0 assigns genitive to all other DPs. There are reasons to disprefer such an analysis. First, v^0 enters the derivation before T^0 such that it would assign genitive to the IA before T^0 could assigns it nominative; we would therefore need case overwriting or case stacking. Second, we would expect T^0 to reflect φ-agreement with the DP that it assigns nominative, but there is no verbal agreement outside of canonical active sentences. Third, we would need to allow for MULTIPLE AGREE so that v^0 could assign genitive to the IA and an arbitrary number of adjuncts. On the other hand, the configurational case model does not require so many stipulations. The genitive-marked adjuncts in (5) are expected because genitive is assigned in a dependent-case relationship, i.e., only if there is a structurally higher DP in the phase, which is the case in (5b) but not in (5c). Therfore, Finnish structural-case assignment provides support for the configurational case model.

5 Conclusion

This paper has presented a configurational account of Finnish case where Finnish has two domains of case assignment: the AspP phase for the partitive-nonpartitive alternation and the *v*P phase for nominative-genitive case competition. Following Kratzer's (2004) semantics for telicity, the IA must raise to [Spec, AspP] in a telic eventuality to yield an interpretable structure. This movement feeds the IAs of telic eventualities participating in nominative-genitive case competition in the *v*P phase because [Spec, AspP] is accessible in the *v*P phase given the PIC. Moreover, I have argued that Finnish-structural case assignment cannot be straightforwardly accounted for in the functional-head case model because dependent genitive case can be assigned to adjuncts in passives where the relevant functional head is not available. However, this pattern falls out naturally in the configurational case model where dependent case is licensed by another structurally case-marked DP.

car [for any length of time]. I assume that there is some structural configuration relevant for dependent-case assignment and NPI licensing where the IA of a telic eventuality c-commands DMM adjuncts.

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