

OBJECT CASES, DEFINITENESS, AND ASPECT IN FINNISH AND HUNGARIAN

How Hungarian learners of Finnish use the partitive
and total object cases

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Abstract

According to the most recent and most complete Finnish descriptive grammar, *Iso suomen kielioppi*, the use of the Finnish object cases is governed by three main factors: (1) the polarity of the sentence (affirmative / negative); (2) the aspect of the sentence (bounded / unbounded or perfective / imperfective); and (3) the quantitative boundedness / unboundedness (quantification) of the object-NP. In my paper, I briefly compare how object cases, quantification, definiteness and aspect are expressed in Finnish and Hungarian. I show that there are some similarities but also several differences between the ways the two languages express these grammatical categories. I argue that these structural differences may affect Hungarian learners' use of object cases in Finnish.

KEYWORDS: aspect; quantitative boundedness; definiteness; object cases; partitive; total; Finnish; Hungarian; Finnish as L2 ("S2")

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1. INTRODUCTION

The distinction between the Finnish object cases is often considered as one of the most difficult parts of Finnish grammar to learn for foreign learners of Finnish.¹

According to the most recent and most complete Finnish descriptive grammar, *Iso suomen kielioppi* (henceforth, ISK),² the use of the Finnish object cases is governed by three main factors: (1) the polarity of the sentence (affirmative / negative); (2) the aspect of the sentence (bounded / unbounded or perfective / imperfective); and (3) the quantitative boundedness / unboundedness (quantification) of the noun phrase denoting the object (the object-NP).

In order to facilitate comparisons between the Hungarian and Finnish language, in the present paper I chose to use the terms ‘quantitative boundedness’ / ‘unboundedness’,³ whereas in modern linguistics, the term quantification is more widely used.⁴ The corresponding Finnish term *kvantitatiivinen määräisyys* (quantitative definiteness) was first used by Paavo Siro, who also used the term *notiivinen määräisyys* (notional definiteness) to differentiate quantification from definiteness.⁵

I follow the terminology of ISK⁶ in using the term ‘total object’ (Finnish: *totaaliobjekti*) to refer to objects in the nominative, accusative or genitive cases, and in referring to partitive object (Finnish: *partitiiviobjekti*) when the object of the sentence is in the partitive case. By contrast, Huumo (2023) uses the term ‘restrictive object’ instead of total object, and Larjavaara (2019) uses the term *totalitiivi*.⁷ Again, I follow ISK in using the term genitive object when

¹ See, e.g., Helinä Koivisto: *Ulkomaalaissuomen syntaksia* [Syntax of foreign Finnish], Tampere, Tampereen yliopiston suomen kielen ja yleisen kielitieteen laitoksen julkaisuja 17, 1994: 214; Maisa Martin: Mikä on keskeisintä suomen kielessä? [What is the most important in Finnish language?], in Pekkola, Seppo (ed.): *Sadanmiehet. Aarni Penttilän ja Ahti Rytkösen juhla-kirja*. Jyväskylä, Suomen kielen laitoksen julkaisuja 41, 1999: 155–181.

² Auli Hakulinen – Maria Vilkkuna – Riitta Korhonen – Vesa Koivisto – Tarja Riitta Heinonen – Irja Aho: *Iso suomen kielioppi* [Comprehensive grammar of Finnish], Helsinki, Suomalaisen Kirjallisuuden Seura. 2004. <https://scripta.kotus.fi/visk/etusivu.php> (accessed 20 November 2023)

³ Spoelman, for example, also uses the terms ‘quantitative boundedness’ / ‘unboundness’ in Spoelman, Marianne: The use of partitive predicates by Estonian learners of Finnish at different levels of L2 proficiency. *Lähivertailuja* 21, 2011: 280–304. <http://arhiiv.rakenduslingvistika.ee/ajakirjad/index.php/lahevordlusi/article/view/LV21.11> (accessed 15 August 2023) and Spoelman, Marianne: *Prior Linguistic Knowledge Matters: The Use of the Partitive Case in Finnish Learner Language*, Oulu, Acta Universitatis Ouluensis Humaniora 111, 2013.

⁴ <https://dictionary.cambridge.org/us/grammar/british-grammar/quantifiers>

⁵ Paavo Siro: Suomen kielen subjektista kielen rakenteen osana [The Subject of the Finnish language as part of the language structure]. *Virittäjä* 1957, 181–190. 189. <https://journal.fi/virittaja/article/view/33451/45937> (accessed 20 November 2023)

⁶ Hakulinen et al.: ISK, §925.

⁷ See Tuomas Huumo: Toward a Cognitive Grammar account of the Finnish partitive case, in Minna Jaakola – Tiina Onikki-Rantajääskö: *The Finnish Case System – Cognitive Linguistic*

referring to the *-n* ending (the old term was ‘accusative’, which is motivated historically).⁸

In what follows, I briefly compare how object cases, quantification, definiteness, and aspect are expressed in Finnish and Hungarian. I show that there are some similarities but also several differences between the ways the two languages express these grammatical categories. I argue that these structural differences may affect how Hungarian learners use the object cases in Finnish.

The paper is structured as follows: in Chapter 2, I briefly review the materials and methods I used in my research. In Chapter 3, Chapter 4, and Chapter 5, I briefly compare how object case alternation, quantification versus definiteness, and aspect are expressed in Finnish and Hungarian. At the end of each chapter (in Subchapters 3.3, 4.3 and 5.3 respectively), I will present some of the most interesting explanations provided by the interviewed Hungarian learners, concerning the problems described in the respective chapters before. Then, in Chapter 6, I sum up and conclude the main results of my research.

2. MATERIALS AND THE METHODS

In my doctoral thesis,⁹ I analyzed Hungarian and German students’ use of Finnish object cases: In which syntactic contexts do they use the total object, and when do they use the partitive? I analyzed two corpuses: a fill-in test for object cases, which was created by myself, and language-exam essays from the Finnish National Certificates of Language Proficiency (YKI) corpus.¹⁰ In the present paper, I will only present some results of the fill-in tests in more detail.

In the fill-in test, language learners were asked to write the NP (usually an object argument) with the correct ending to the sentence, based on the nominative form that was presented to the participant. Task 1 consisted of 20 sections. It had a total of 50 gaps, most of which (48) tested the use of object cases. In my later analysis, I paid special attention to the use of the partitive versus total object cases, but the test also included imperative and necessary sentences,¹¹ where the learners had to choose not only between the partitive

Perspectives, Helsinki, SKS, 2023. and Matti Larjavaara: *Partitiivin valinta*, Helsinki, SKS, 2019.

⁸ For more details about the topic see, e.g., Matti Larjavaara: *Aspektuaalisen objektin synti* [The emergence of the aspectual object], *Virittäjä* 95 (4), 1991: 372–408. About the use of the terms see Huomo: *Toward a Cognitive Grammar*, 2023.

⁹ Erzsébet Panka: *Objektin sijanvaihtelun oppiminen ja opettaminen. Tutkimuskohteena unkarin- ja saksankielisten suomenoppijoiden sijanvalinnat kielenoppimisen eri vaiheissa*, [Learning and teaching Finnish object cases. On the choices of Hungarian and German learners of Finnish at different stages of language learning], PhD dissertation, Budapest, ELTE, 2019.

¹⁰ Finnish: Yleiset kielitutkinnot (YKI). For more details see: <https://www.oph.fi/en/national-certificates-language-proficiency-yki>

¹¹ Necessary sentences mainly express necessity, obligation or advisability. The subject is in the

versus the total object but also between the genitive versus the nominative form. Except for the objects to be tested, the other parts of the sentence were given in advance. In this way, learners had some contextual information available to them. At the end of the test, learners were asked to answer the following question: *What was the easiest and the most difficult part of the test?* I show two examples from Task 1 next.¹² Originally, these examples looked like the following in the test: *Tässä tutkimuksessa käsitellään* __ (*objektin sijanvaihtelu*). *Lukekaa* __ (*se*) (Task 1, Section 10); *Koska rakastan* __ (*vaimoni*), *haluan halata* __ (*hän*) *usein* (Task 1, Section 13). Here, the original sections are split into clauses, see Examples (1)–(2) and (3)–(4):

(1) Section number 10A, Task 1

<i>Tä-ssä</i>	<i>tutkimukse-ssä</i>	<i>käsitel-lään</i>	
this-INESS	study-INESS	deal-PASS.PRS	
	—	(<i>objekti-n sijanvaihtelu</i>)	
	GAP	object-GEN case.alternation.NOM	

‘This study deals with object-case-alternation’

(2) Section number 10B, Task 1

<i>Luke-kaa</i>	— (<i>se</i>)
read-IMP.2PL	GAP it.NOM
‘Read it’	

(3) Section number 13A, Task 1

<i>Koska</i>	<i>rakasta-n</i>	— (<i>vaimo-ni</i>)
because	love-1SG	GAP wife-PX1SG.NOM
‘Because I love my wife’		

(4) Section number 13B, Task 1

<i>...halu-an</i>	<i>halata</i>	— (<i>hän</i>)	<i>usein</i>
want-1SG	hug-INF	GAP she.NOM	often
‘I want to hug her often’			

genitive, and the predicate in the 3rd person singular. The predicate either consists of an auxiliary + main verb or a copula + nominal, or is a crystallised unit, e.g. *meidän täytyy lähteä* [we.GEN must leave-INF], *meidän on pakko lähteä* [we.GEN be.PRS.3SG compulsion leave-INF], *meidän on lähdettävä* [we.GEN be.PRS.3SG leave.PASS.PTC.PRS] ‘we have to leave’. The total object of a necessary construction is in the nominative (lexical NPs) or in the accusative (personal pronouns). See Hakulinen et al.: *ISK* §505, §1580–1583.

¹² The whole test and the detailed description of the sentences can be found in Panka: *PhD diss.*, 353.

The fill-in test was completed by 69 Hungarian learners (16 beginners, 29 intermediate and 24 advanced) and 46 German learners (34 intermediate and 12 advanced). In order to analyze the data more successfully, I also conducted introspective interviews with seven Hungarian learners while taking the test, and four Hungarian learners answered my questions in writing after completing the test. I will present some of the most interesting responses from the interviews at the end of each chapter in this paper.

3. DIRECT OBJECTS AND OBJECT CASES

According to grammars like *Magyar grammatika* (henceforth MGr)¹³ and ISK, the object is one of the arguments of a sentence; usually, it is considered as the second complement of a transitive verb. Semantically, the object does not have a clear single semantic function, but in the prototypical case, the object of the sentence refers to the entity toward which the action is directed and which, as a consequence, is affected by the action and undergoes a change.¹⁴ Objects are typically noun phrases (headed by a noun or pronoun) so in the present study, I will discuss only NP-objects.

In languages that have accusative case marking systems¹⁵ (such as Finnish or Hungarian), the object of the sentence is usually marked by a distinctive case ending, but there are languages which do not have such a marker or have it only under certain circumstances (e.g., English, French or German). The Finnish language is rather special in this respect because the object can be marked by four morphological cases. In the next subchapter, I will briefly describe the distribution of Finnish object cases.

3.1 The object case alternation in Finnish

In Finnish, the object can be marked by four morphological cases: nominative, accusative, genitive and partitive.

¹³ Judit Balogh – Lea Haader – Borbála Keszler – Nóra Kugler – Krisztina Laczkó – Klára Lengyel: *Magyar grammatika* [Hungarian grammar], Budapest, Nemzeti Tankönyvkiadó, 2000.

¹⁴ Balogh et al.: MGr. 414. See also: Hakulinen et al.: ISK §925–929.

¹⁵ See Bernard Comrie: Alignment of Case Marking of Full Noun Phrases, in: Dryer, Matthew S. – Haspelmath, Martin (eds.): *WALS Online*. <http://wals.info/chapter/98> (accessed 20 November 2023)

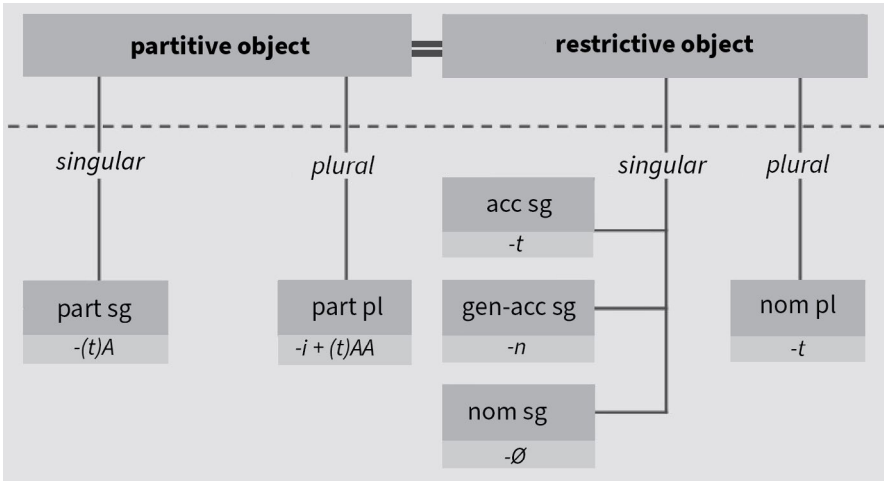


Figure 1: Case endings of the Finnish object, adopted from Spoelman¹⁶ (Note: Spoelman uses the terms ‘genitive-accusative’ instead of ‘genitive’ and ‘restrictive object’ instead of ‘total object’ along the lines of Huumo.¹⁷)

According to ISK,¹⁸ there are three basic situations in which a partitive object is used in a sentence. Firstly, an object is partitive when the sentence is negative, for instance, as in (5).

(5) Finnish

<i>En</i>	<i>ole</i>	<i>näh-nyt</i>	<i>si-tä</i>	<i>elokuva-a</i>
neg.1SG	be.CNG.PRS	see-PTCP.PST	that-PART	film-PART
‘I have not seen that film’				
(ISK §930)				

Secondly, the object is in the partitive when the sentence expresses the progressive or the imperfective aspect, as in (6).

(6) Finnish

<i>Katso-n</i>	<i>tässä</i>	<i>neloskanava-n</i>	<i>elokuva-a</i>
see-1SG	here	Channel.Four-GEN	film-PART
‘I am watching a/the film on Channel Four’			
(ISK §930)			

¹⁶ Marianne Spoelman: *Prior Linguistic Knowledge Matters: The Use of the Partitive Case in Finnish Learner Language*, Oulu, Acta Universitatis Ouluensis Humaniora 111, 2013: 45.

¹⁷ Tuomas Huumo: Kvantiteetti ja aika I, Nominaalisen aspektin näkökulma suomen objektin ja subjektin sijamerkintään [Quantity and time I. Nominal aspect perspective to Finnish object and subject cases]. *Virittäjä* 2006 (4): 504–538.

¹⁸ Hakulinen et al.: ISK §930.

Thirdly, the object is partitive when the object-NP of the sentence is quantitatively unbounded, as in (7).

(7) Finnish

<i>Sö-in</i>	<i>aamu-lla</i>	<i>puuro-a</i>	<i>ja</i>	<i>omena-n</i>
eat-PST.1SG	morning-ALL	porridge-PART	and	apple-TOT
'I ate porridge and an apple in the morning'				
(ISK §930)				

By contrast, total object can only be used in an affirmative and aspectually perfective sentence if the object is quantitatively bounded, as in (8).

(8) Finnish

<i>Ole-n</i>	<i>näh-nyt</i>	<i>se-n</i>	<i>elokuva-n</i>
be-1SG	see-PTCP.PST	that-TOT	film-TOT
'I saw that film'			
(ISK §930)			

Of the total object cases, the nominative can be used in singular and plural, the genitive only in singular, and the accusative only with personal pronouns.¹⁹ The syntactic structure of the sentence determines which of the total object cases is used. I will not discuss the use of the different case endings of the total object in this paper, instead I will concentrate on the distinction between the partitive and the total object.

The way in which the object is approached in the teaching of Finnish as a second and foreign language (shortly S2) naturally differs from the way in which it is presented in Finnish grammars. In my dissertation, I discussed this issue in more detail;²⁰ here, I will only briefly review how object cases are discussed in Leila White's S2-grammar,²¹ and in the most well-known S2-textbook series, *Suomen mestari 1–4*,²² as those are the most used teaching materials internationally and in Hungary.²³ In both S2-grammars and S2-textbooks, the rules of the use of object cases are simplified: the books explain that mass nouns and object-NPs of negative and progressive sentences are in the partitive

¹⁹ Hakulinen et al.: *ISK* §931, §934

²⁰ See Panka: *PhD diss.*, 41–58.

²¹ Leila White: *Suomen kielioppia ulkomaalaisille* [Finnish grammar for foreigners], Helsinki, Finn Lectura, 2001.

²² Sonja Gehring – Sanni Heinzmann: *Suomen mestari 1–4*. [Master of Finnish 1–4], Helsinki, Finn Lectura, 2010–2016.

²³ There are Finnish textbooks also for Hungarian learners of Finnish, e.g. Karanko, Outi — László Keresztes– Kniivilä, Irmeli: *Finn nyelvkönyv 1–2* [Finnish textbook 1–2]. Budapest, Nemzeti Tankönyvkiadó, 1985–1990; Sándor Maticsák— Anna Tarvainen: *Finn nyelv* [Finnish language]. Dupess, 2018., but they are not commonly used.

case. In addition (as a fourth rule), both White's grammar and Gehring's and Heinzmann's books mention some so-called "partitive verbs" (e.g., *odottaa* 'wait', *rakastaa* 'love' or *auttaa* 'help'), that are verbs whose objects are always in the partitive case.²⁴ Textbooks (and also White's grammar) usually do not discuss quantitative boundedness, mentioning only mass nouns (Finnish: *ainesanat*), and the concept of aspect is altogether absent.

The terms used in White's grammar are 'partitive object' (Finnish: *partitiivi-objekti*) versus 'accusative object' (Finnish: *akkusatiiviobjekti*) and the endings of accusative object are called *n*-accusative (Finnish: *n-akkusatiivi*), "endingless" accusative (Finnish: *päätteetön akkusatiivi*) and plural accusative (Finnish: *monikkoakkusatiivi*), while the ending for personal pronouns is called the *t*-form of accusative (Finnish: *t-akkusatiivi*).²⁵ In Gehring's and Heinzmann's books, the term 'total object' (or any superordinate term) is not used at all, the forms of the object-NPs are presented only as genitive, partitive, plural (Finnish: *monikko*) and nominative, and the ending of personal pronouns is not referred to by any term at all.²⁶

3.2 The accusative in Hungarian

In Hungarian, the object is marked by the accusative case. The accusative case ending is *-t*, which should be added to (almost) all NP-objects.²⁷

So, while in Hungarian there is only one ending (the accusative) for NP-objects, there are four object cases in Finnish (nominative, accusative, genitive and partitive). This fact alone would make the task of learning the use of the object cases difficult for Hungarian learners of Finnish.

Finnish grammars generally claim that there are 15 cases in Finnish (one of them, the accusative, is very limited: it can be used only with personal pronouns and the interrogative pronoun *kuka* 'who'). Hungarian grammars usually take 18 cases into account in Hungarian (these are the commonly used cases).²⁸ In Table 1, I compare the Finnish and the Hungarian case system.

²⁴ See, e.g., White: *Suomen kielioppia*, 249 and Gehring et al.: *Suomen mestari 1*, 201.

²⁵ White: *Suomen kielioppia*, 247–254.

²⁶ See, e.g., Gehring et al.: *Suomen mestari 2*, 54.

²⁷ The *-t* ending can only be absent in very rare, morphologically defined situations (e.g. after 1st and 2nd person singular possessive suffixes and in some pronouns), but even in these cases the absence of the ending is optional, e.g., *Vezsem a kalap-om* [hat-px1sg] / *a kalap-om-at* [hat-px1sg-acc] 'I take my hat'; *Látasz engem* [I.acc] / *engem-et* [I.acc-acc] 'You see me'. See, e.g., Balogh et al.: *MGr*, 415; or Ilona P. Lakatos (ed.): *Grammatikai gyakorlókönyv (mintaelemzésekkel és segédanyagokkal)* [Grammar exercise book (with sample analyses and supporting materials)], Budapest, Bölcsész Konzorcium, 2006: 119–120.

²⁸ See, e.g., Balogh et al.: *MGr*. 203–204.

Table 1: The Finnish and Hungarian case systems

Case	Finnish case ending(s)	Hungarian case ending(s)
1. nominative	ø	ø
2. partitive	-a/-ä, -ta/-tä, -tta/-ttä	
3. genitive	-n	(-nak/-nek)
4. dative		-nak/-nek
5. accusative	-t	-t
6. elative	-sta/-stä	-ból/ből
7. inessive	-ssa/-ssä	-ban/-ben
8. illative	-Vn, -hVn, -seen	-ba/-be
9. delative		-ról/-ről
10. superessive		-n/-on/-en/-ön
11. sublative		-ra/-re
12. ablative	-lta/-ltä	-tól/-től
13. adessive	-lla/-llä	-nál/-nél
14. allative	-lle	-hoz/-hez/-höz
15. terminative		-ig
16. essive	-na/-nä	-ként
17. translative	-ksi	-vá/-vé
18. abessive	-tta/-ttä	
19. instructive	-in	
20. comitative/ instrumental-comitative	-ine-	-val/-vel
21. causal-final		-ért
22. essive-modal		-ul/-ül

As can be seen from Table 1, the Finnish and Hungarian case systems are very similar. Almost the only (grammatical) case that is present in Finnish but completely absent in Hungarian is the partitive.²⁹ This is why learning the functions and the meaning of the partitive causes many difficulties for Hungarian learners. One of the most important functions of the partitive in Finnish is to mark the so-called partitive object.

In addition, the use of the total versus partitive objects in Finnish is further complicated for the learner by cognitively complex factors such as the aspect of the sentence (bounded versus unbounded or perfective versus imperfective) and the quantitative boundedness versus unboundedness of the object-NP. In Chapters 4 and 5, I will briefly compare how quantification versus definiteness and aspect are expressed in Finnish and Hungarian.

²⁹ And Hungarian has no genitive case, genitive structures combine possessors marked by possessive suffixes and possessors with or without the dative ending, see, e.g., Balogh et al.: *MGr.* 192–193.

3.3 Examples from Hungarian learners' responses regarding the use of object cases

The results of my research show that the use of the Finnish object cases is not always difficult for Hungarian learners: they usually used the partitive case correctly in negative sentences, with easily recognizable uncountable nouns and with some well-known partitive verbs.

In Chapter 9.21 of my doctoral thesis,³⁰ I concluded Hungarian learners' responses to the question '*What do you think was the easiest part of the test?*'. Here are two examples from the learners' answers:

Learner1: ...so for me, the easiest is that there is partitive in negative sentences and with mass nouns.

Learner2: Okay, it's easier for the easy ones, so let's say, I don't know, verbs like *rakastaa* ['love'], and *odottaa* ['wait'], and *auttaa* ['help'], and so on, these immediately indicate that the object is in the partitive...³¹

4. QUANTIFICATION AND DEFINITENESS

In linguistics, definiteness is a semantic feature of noun phrases that distinguishes between referents that are identifiable in a given context (definite noun phrases) and those that are not (indefinite noun phrases). The prototypical definite noun phrase picks out a unique, familiar, specific referent. It seems that the semantic basis of definiteness lies in different characteristics, such as salience, identifiability uniqueness and familiarity. But there is considerable variation in the expression of definiteness across languages.³²

For learners of Finnish, definiteness as a grammatical category becomes particularly relevant when trying to cope with the subject and object case marking system. In the Finnish grammatical tradition two notions of definiteness are used: quantitative, that is, based on the quantitative boundedness of the entity in question (English terminology: quantification), and notional, that is, based on the familiarity, recognizability, identifiability of the entity in

³⁰ Panka: *PhD diss*, 217–222.

³¹ The interviews were recorded in Hungarian, but sometimes learners used Finnish as well. This is indicated by italics.

³² Aguilar-Guevara, Ana – Pozas Loyo, Julia – Vázquez-Rojas Maldonado, Violeta (eds.): *Definiteness across languages*. (Studies in Diversity Linguistics 25). Berlin: Language Science Press. 2019, pp. III–IV.

question (English terminology: definiteness).³³ The Finnish terms *kvantitatiivinen* and *notiivinen* (quantitative and notional) were first used by Paavo Siro.³⁴

A noun phrase (NP) is definite (in terms of notivity) if the referent with which it is associated is known to the interlocutors, has a high degree of individuation, is precisely defined, names a certain, distinct, definable entity.³⁵ In many European languages, the definiteness of a noun phrase is marked by a definite article, as *the boy* in English, *le garçon* in French, *der Junge* in German or *a fiú* in Hungarian.

Conversely, a noun phrase is indefinite if its referent is not known, cannot be identified, or its identification is not relevant to the parties involved in the communication.³⁶ An indefinite noun phrase may, for example, refer to an indefinite member of a group. In many European languages, the indefiniteness of a noun phrase is expressed by an indefinite article; for example, English *a person*, French *un homme*, German *eine Person* and Hungarian *egy ember*.³⁷

4.1 Quantitative boundedness in Finnish

In Finnish, the definiteness of a noun phrase (NP) isn't indicated grammatically through articles, as Finnish lacks them. However, in spoken Finnish, definiteness can be signaled by using other types of determiners.³⁸ The marking of definiteness is partly based also on word order, as a preverbal NP is usually decoded as the theme of the clause (and therefore usually as definite). Frequently, however, definite reference can only be inferred from the context, or it is often irrelevant for the interpretation.³⁹

³³ Hakulinen et al.: *ISK* §1421.

³⁴ Paavo Siro: *Suomen kielen subjektista*, 189. – The terms quantitative 'definiteness' versus 'indefiniteness' (Finnish *kvantitatiivinen määräisyys* versus *epämääräisyys*) have been introduced in Finnish mostly to describe mass and plural, partitive marked nouns. Quantitative definiteness corresponds to what is referred to as "quantized". Notional definiteness corresponds to what is referred to as definiteness. – For other meanings that can be associated to the notion "definite" crosslinguistically, see Aguilar-Guevara, Ana – Pozas Loyo, Julia – Vázquez-Rojas Maldonado, Violeta (eds.): 2019. *Definiteness across languages*. (Studies in Diversity Linguistics 25). Berlin: Language Science Press. <https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.3265959>

³⁵ See Hakulinen et al.: *ISK* §1409; or A. Jászó Anna (ed.): *A magyar nyelv könyve* [The book of Hungarian language], Budapest, Trezor Kiadó, 1991: 224–226.

³⁶ Hakulinen et al.: *ISK* §1409.

³⁷ Ibid.

³⁸ In spoken Finnish, definiteness is most often indicated by the pronoun *se* 'that'; e.g., *Mitä se kirja maksoi?* 'How much did that book cost?'. *Se* shows similarities with definite articles in other languages, but it is not currently considered as an article in Finnish (cf. *ISK* §1418). Indefiniteness of the noun can also be expressed by pronouns, such as *eräs* 'certain', *jokin* 'some' and *muu* 'other'.

³⁹ Hakulinen et al.: *ISK* §1409–1422.

While definiteness is typically not marked in Finnish, the marking of the quantitative boundedness / unboundedness of the subject- and object-NPs is a very important factor determining case marking. Quantitative boundedness is closely related to the feature of countability / uncountability (in Finnish terminology *jaottomuus* ‘indivisibility’ / *jaollisuus* ‘divisibility’). Among the uncountable nouns in Finnish, there are the following groups of nouns: mass nouns, collective and abstract nouns, e.g., *jäätelö* ‘ice cream’, *raha* ‘money’, *energia* ‘energy’, *poikue* ‘litter’, *rakkaus* ‘love’, *ilo* ‘joy’, *tiede* ‘science’, and plural nouns.⁴⁰

Count nouns are always quantifiable, but uncountable nouns can be quantitatively bounded or unbounded.⁴¹ The quantitative boundedness of NPs in the subject or object role is expressed by a nominative or genitive case in Finnish. Thus, subject- or object-NPs with uncountable meaning can only be in the nominative or genitive case respectively if they refer to the total (unresidual) quantity of the substance or group, as shown in Example (9) (uncountable subject-NP) and (10) (uncountable object-NP).⁴²

(9) Finnish

<i>Kato-lta</i>	<i>putos-i</i>	<i>lumi</i>
roof-ABL	fall-PST.3SG	snow.NOM
‘(All of) the snow fell off the roof’		
(ISK §1421)		

(10) Finnish

<i>Mies</i>	<i>pudott-i</i>	<i>kato-lta</i>	<i>lume-n</i>
man.NOM	throw-PST.3SG	roof-ABL	snow-TOT
‘A/The man threw (all of) the snow off the roof’			
(ISK §1421)			

By contrast, the quantitative unboundedness of uncountable NPs in the role of subject or object is expressed by the partitive case in Finnish. Quantitatively unbounded NPs refer indefinitely, without restriction to the quantity of the substance or group, thus allowing the interpretation that there is a part or amount left over from it, as shown in Examples (11) and (12).⁴³

⁴⁰ For differences in expressing definiteness between Finnish and English in more detail cf., e.g., Andrew Chesterman: *On Definiteness. A study with special reference to English and Finnish*. Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1991.

⁴¹ Hakulinen et al.: ISK §1409–1422.

⁴² Ibid. §1421.

⁴³ Ibid. §1421.

(11) Finnish

<i>Kato-lta</i>	<i>putos-i</i>	<i>lun-ta</i>
roof-ABL	fall-PST.3SG	snow-PART

‘(Some) snow fell off the roof [but it is not relevant how much / whether all of it fell off]’
(ISK §1421)

(12) Finnish

<i>Mies</i>	<i>pudott-i</i>	<i>kato-lta</i>	<i>lun-ta</i>
man.NOM	throw-PST.3SG	roof-ABL	snow-PART

‘A/The man threw (some) snow off the roof [but it is not relevant how much / whether all of it was thrown off]’
(ISK §1421)

Since singular count nouns are always considered bounded in quantity, when functioning as objects, they are in the nominative or genitive case in affirmative sentences with bounded / perfective aspect. Thus, they can be in the partitive case only when the aspect of the sentence is imperfective / progressive, or in negative sentences.

4.2 Definiteness in Hungarian

In Hungarian, the notional or logical definiteness of the NP is overtly expressed by (definite or indefinite) articles: “the article usually expresses the contrast of definiteness / indefiniteness, familiarity / unfamiliarity, it is a logical particle”.⁴⁴

Furthermore, in Hungarian, definiteness of the object-NP affects verbal agreement. Verbs with 3rd person definite objects take forms of the so called “definite conjugation”, while verbs with indefinite (and 1st and 2nd person) objects are in the so called “general / indefinite” form.⁴⁵ The differences are contrasted in Examples (13) (indefinite conjugation) and (14) (definite conjugation).

(13) Hungarian

<i>Péter</i>	<i>egy</i>	<i>film-et</i>	<i>néz-ett</i>
Péter.NOM	ART_ INDF	film-ACC	watch-PST.3SG

‘Péter watched a film’
(constructed example)

⁴⁴ Balogh et al.: *MGr*, 282.

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, 416.

(14) Hungarian

<i>Péter</i>	<i>a</i>	<i>film-et</i>	<i>néz-te</i>
Péter.NOM	ART_DEF	film-ACC	watch-PST.3SG>3
'Péter watched the film'			
(constructed example)			

The ten main types of definite object-NPs in Hungarian are listed by Pete (2006).⁴⁶ In contrast to definiteness, quantitative boundedness has no explicit grammatical marker in Hungarian. For example, uncountable object-NPs occur usually without an article and precede the verb, as in Example (15).

(15) Hungarian

<i>Víz-et</i>	<i>iszik</i>
water-ACC	drink.3SG
'He drinks / is drinking water'	
(constructed example)	

Countable nouns with generic reference behave similarly, as shown in Example (16).⁴⁷

(16) Hungarian

<i>Level-et</i>	<i>ír</i>
letter-ACC	write.3SG
'He writes/is writing a letter'	
(constructed example)	

Although there are important (semantic) connections and substantial overlaps between quantitative boundedness and definiteness, they are different concepts. Quantitative boundedness is different from familiarity, uniqueness, and recognizability. An important distinction between the expressions of quantitative boundedness and definiteness is that although a quantitatively unbounded NP is often also indefinite, as in Examples (15) and (16), a quantitatively bounded NP can be either definite or indefinite in terms of what Siro's tradition refers to as notivity.

⁴⁶ See István Pete: A határozott tárgyas ragozásról [About the definite objective conjugation]. *Magyar Nyelvőr* 3: 2006: 319.

⁴⁷ Balogh et al.: *MGr*, 285–286.

4.3 Examples from Hungarian learners' responses regarding quantitative vs notional definiteness

In Finnish, it is the quantitative boundedness / unboundedness (quantification) of the object-NP that is encoded by the case of the object-NP: total object expresses that the object-NP is quantitatively bounded, but a quantitatively bounded NP can be either definite or indefinite in terms of notivity. In Hungarian, on the other hand, the key function of a definite NP is to indicate the notional or logical definiteness of the referent. Therefore, Hungarian learners of Finnish have problems in distinguishing between quantitative boundedness and notional definiteness and in some contexts, they have problems in applying the target language rules. Based on my research,⁴⁸ Hungarian learners often overgeneralize the rule 'indefinite or no article in Hungarian = partitive object in Finnish'. Now I show examples from learners' responses regarding the quantitative boundedness versus definiteness dilemma. Target-like Finnish sentence is shown in Example (17), Hungarian translation of the target-like Finnish sentence is shown in Example (18), and the learner's answer in the test is shown in Example (19).

(17) The target-like Finnish sentence

<i>Löys-it-kö</i>	<i>virhee-n</i>
find-PST.2SG-Q	error-TOT

'Did you find an/the error?'

(18) The Hungarian translation of (17)

<i>Talál-tál-e</i>	<i>ø</i>	<i>hibá-t</i>
find-PST.2SG-Q		error-ACC

'Did you find an error?'

(19) The learner's answer, version of (17)

<i>Löys-it-kö</i>	<i>virhe-itä</i>
find-PST.2SG-Q	error-PL.PART

'Did you find errors? / Did you find any error?'

The learner's explanation in the interview:

Learner3: Do I have to use the singular in the second sentence? (...) because if I use the singular, then I think the total object sounds better (...) but then the sentence means '*megtaláltad-e a hibát?*' [PREF.find.PST.2SG>3-Q ART_DEF error.ACC] ['Did you find the/that error?']

⁴⁸ Panka: *PhD diss*, 313.

Another learner's response regarding the quantitative boundedness versus definiteness dilemma is shown next, in the same order: the target-like Finnish sentence is shown in Example (20), Hungarian translation of the target-like Finnish sentence is shown in Example (21). There is no third sentence here, because the learner's answer was target-like; I only cite the learner's explanation regarding the quantitative boundedness versus definiteness dilemma here.

(20) The target-like Finnish sentence

<i>Jos</i>	<i>tiedä-t</i>	<i>käännökse-n</i>
if	know-2SG	translation-TOT

'If you know a/the translation...'

(21) The Hungarian translation of (20)

<i>Ha</i>	<i>tud-sz</i>	<i>egy</i>	<i>fordítás-t</i>
if	know-2SG	ART_INDEF	translation-ACC

'If you know a translation...'

This time, the learner's answer was target-like in the test with the total object case, but in the evaluative explanation, he wasn't that sure about the correct answer:

Learner4: Well, maybe that should be in the partitive case, because the translation is *tudsz egy fordítást* ['you know a translation'], but you do know the whole translation totally, so I am not sure...

5. ASPECT

In a linguistic sense, aspect is related to the boundedness of the situation described by a sentence. Aspect is thus a view of completeness of a situation: it expresses whether the action or event is bounded, successfully completed (perfective or bounded aspect), e.g., *I ate an/the apple*, or non-bounded, in progress (imperfective or unbounded aspect), e.g., *I am (just) eating an/the apple*.

ISK⁴⁹ describes aspect as a broad and multiply interpretable concept with close and complex ties to the temporal structure of the clause as well as to the aspectual situation types (telic / atelic; resultative / irresultative), the lexical-semantic meanings, and the Aktionstart of the verb. This complexity has been widely studied.⁵⁰ In the present paper, I discuss only the concepts that

⁴⁹ Hakulinen et al.: ISK §1498.

⁵⁰ See, e.g., Zeno Vendler: Verbs and times. *Philosophical Review* 66 (2), 1967: 143–60; or Bernard Comrie: *Aspect*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1976; or Ferenc Kiefer: *Aspektus és akcióminőség. Különös tekintettel a magyar nyelvre* [Aspect and Actionsart. With particular reference to Hungarian], Budapest, Akadémiai Kiadó, 2006.

are indispensable to my analysis of aspect in the Finnish and Hungarian language.

All languages can express aspect, but the grammatical tools by which they express it vary from language to language. In Slavic languages, for example, aspect is expressed by a system of perfective / imperfective verb pairs and triplets covering the whole verb paradigm; in other languages (e.g., in English, French, and German), the aspect of the sentence is expressed compositionally: it is influenced, among others, by temporal adverbs, object cases, and tenses.⁵¹ In the next two subchapters, I will briefly summarize the expression of aspect in Finnish and Hungarian.

5.1 Aspect in Finnish

In Finnish, the aspect of a transitive sentence is mainly expressed by the use of the total or partitive object-NP: total object expresses that a significant change has occurred or is to occur in the state of the object-NP of the sentence, as shown in Examples (22) and (23).⁵²

(22) Finnish

<i>Kirjoita-n</i>	<i>kirjee-n</i>
write-1SG	letter-TOT
'I write / I will write a/the (whole) letter'	
(ISK §1514)	

(23) Finnish

<i>Lue-n</i>	<i>kirja-n</i>
read-1SG	book-TOT
'I read / I will read a/the (whole) book'	
(constructed example)	

On the other hand, a partitive object expresses that the event is still in progress; the outcome (or change) has not yet occurred or is not relevant, as shown in Examples (24) and (25).⁵³

(24) Finnish

<i>Kirjoita-n</i>	<i>kirje-ttä</i>
write-1SG	letter-PART
'I am writing a/the letter / I write a part of a/the letter'	
(ISK §1514)	

⁵¹ Kiefer: *Aspektus*, 313–319.

⁵² Hakulinen et al.: *ISK* §1514.

⁵³ Ibid.

(25) Finnish

<i>Lue-n</i>	<i>kirja-a</i>
read-1SG	book-PART
'I am reading a/the book / I read a part of a/the book'	
(constructed example)	

So, in Finnish, transitive sentences with perfective or bounded aspect have a total object, as in Examples (22) and (23), while sentences with imperfective or unbounded aspect have a partitive object, as in Examples (24) and (25). As we can also see from the Examples (22)–(25), in Finnish, with certain transitive verbs (e.g., the so-called resultative–irresultative verbs, like *kirjoittaa* ‘write’ and *lukea* ‘read’) a total object and a partitive object can both be used depending on the context. So, with these verbs, the systematic opposition of the partitive versus total object expresses the boundedness and unboundedness of the aspect of the sentence.

However, this systematic case opposition does not hold for all verb groups in Finnish. Depending on their aspectual meaning, some verbs can typically have only a partitive object; others can have typically a total object, and yet others may have both a partitive and a total object, depending on the meaning of the sentence or the lexical sense of the verb.⁵⁴ So, an important feature of the Finnish verb system is that some verb groups, such as irresultative verbs (e.g., *odottaa* ‘wait’, *etsiä* ‘search’, *auttaa* ‘help’) or verbs expressing emotions and touch (e.g., *rakastaa* ‘love’, *halata* ‘hug’, *lyödä* ‘hit’, *iskeä* ‘slap’) do not allow a choice between total versus partitive object: we can say that the argument of these verbs is a partitive object, and we call these verbs partitive verbs.⁵⁵

5.2 Aspect in Hungarian

According to Hungarian grammars, the most important markers for indicating the aspect of the sentence are the so-called verbal prefixes.⁵⁶ Hungarian grammars generally regard the verbal prefix as a sign of the perfective aspect. But this is not always true, because a verb without prefix may also be able to represent perfective aspect with an external delimiter. Thus, the completion of an action can be expressed not only by verbal prefixes, but by other

⁵⁴ Therefore *ISK* (§1508) divides verbs into three groups according to the type of object they typically have.

⁵⁵ Paul Kiparsky: Partitive Case and Aspect, in Butt, Miriam – Geuder, Wilhelm (eds.): *The Projection of Arguments: Lexical and Compositional Factors*, CSLI Publications, Stanford. 1998: 265–308.

⁵⁶ Kiefer and Honti call them preverbs (for more details see Ferenc Kiefer – László Honti: Verbal ‘prefixation’ in the Uralic languages. *Acta Linguistica Hungarica* 50 (1–2), 2003: 137–153).

grammatical markers, too. According to Kiefer,⁵⁷ in Hungarian, there are both syntactic tools such as the use of certain delimiting arguments and morphological tools, that is, the verbal prefixes, for expressing the perfective aspect, as shown in Examples (26) (delimiting argument) and (27) (verbal prefix).

(26) Hungarian

<i>Mari</i>	<i>színház-ba</i>	<i>men-t</i>
Mari.NOM	theatre-ILLAT	go-PST.3SG
'Mari went to the theatre'		
(constructed example)		

(27) Hungarian

<i>Mari</i>	<i>el-men-t</i>
Mari.NOM	PREF-go-PST.3SG
'Mari went away'	
(constructed example)	

There is often a difference between the two languages in terms of what we mean by an event being completed, delimited, bounded or perfective. For example, there are verbs that can be bounded in Hungarian by means of a verbal prefix, but in Finnish, the same verbs are considered partitive verbs. This is the case, for example, with the Hungarian verb *vár* 'wait' and its Finnish equivalent *odottaa*: in Hungarian we can use the verb *vár* with a prefix, when the aspect of the sentence is perfective / bounded, as in Example (28), but in the Finnish sentence, there is always a partitive object, as in Example (29).

(28) Hungarian

<i>Péter</i>	<i>meg-vár-ta</i>	<i>Mari-t</i>
Peter.NOM	PREF-wait-PST.3SG>3	Mari-ACC
'Peter waited for Mari ~ Peter waited until Mari arrived'		
(constructed example)		

(29) Finnish

<i>Péter</i>	<i>odott-i</i>	<i>Mari-a</i>
Peter.NOM	wait-PST.3SG	Mari-PART
'Peter waited for Mari'		
(constructed example)		

In Finnish, verbs that express movement (e.g., *vetää* 'pull', *nostaa* 'raise', *painaa* 'push, press') are usually used with partitive object, as shown in Examples (30) and (32), while their Hungarian counterparts are almost always prefixed verbs, as in Examples (31) and (33).

⁵⁷ Ferenc Kiefer: *Jelentélmélet* [Theory of Semantics], Budapest, Corvina, 2000: 288.

(30) Finnish

<i>Anna</i>	<i>paina-a</i>	<i>painike-tta</i>
Anna.NOM	press-3SG	button-PART
'Anna presses a/the button'		
(constructed example)		

(31) Hungarian

<i>Anna</i>	<i>meg-nyom-ja</i>	<i>a</i>	<i>gomb-ot</i>
Anna.NOM	PREF-press-3SG>3	ART_DEF	button-ACC
'Anna presses the button'			
(constructed example)			

(32) Finnish

<i>Anna</i>	<i>nosta-a</i>	<i>kipeä-ä</i>	<i>kät-tä-än</i>
Anna.NOM	raise-3SG	sore-PART	hand-PART-PX.3
'Anna raises her sore hand'			
(constructed example)			

(33) Hungarian

<i>Anna</i>	<i>fel-emel-i</i>	<i>a</i>	<i>fájó</i>	<i>kez-é-t</i>
Anna.NOM	PREF-raise-3SG>3	ART_DEF	sore	hand-PX.3SG-ACC
'Anna raises her sore hand'				
(constructed example)				

So, while these Finnish sentences with the partitive object imply that the action has no relevant result that causes a change,⁵⁸ Hungarian sentences with the verbal prefix imply that the action is completed. In Hungarian, punctual verbs are almost always prefixed, as shown in Examples (34) and (35).

(34) Hungarian

<i>Péter</i>	<i>meg-simogat-ta</i>	<i>a</i>	<i>macská-t</i>
Peter.NOM	PREF-stroke-PST.3SG>3	ART_DEF	cat-ACC
'Péter stroked the cat'			
(constructed example)			

(35) Hungarian

<i>Péter</i>	<i>meg-üt-ötte</i>	<i>Dani-t</i>
Peter.NOM	PREF-hit-PST.3SG>3	Dani-ACC
'Péter hit Dani'		
(constructed example)		

⁵⁸ Hakulinen et al.: *ISK*, §1515.

In Finnish, in turn, these verbs stand almost always with a partitive object; they are the so-called partitive verbs, as shown in Examples (36) and (37).

(36) Finnish

<i>Peter</i>	<i>silitt-i</i>	<i>kissa-a</i>
Peter.NOM	stroke-PST.3SG	cat-PART
'Peter stroked a/the cat'		
(constructed example)		

(37) Finnish

<i>Peter</i>	<i>lö-i</i>	<i>Dani-a</i>
Peter.NOM	hit-PST.3SG	Dani-PART
'Peter hit Dani'		
(constructed example)		

5.3 Examples from Hungarian learners' responses regarding the partitive verbs in Finnish

Based on my research,⁵⁹ it seems that Hungarian learners often overgeneralize the 'Hungarian verbal prefix = Finnish total object' rule, and they use the total object in sentences where they would use verbal prefix in Hungarian. For example, Hungarian learners often use a non-target-like object case in sentences containing punctual verbs (e.g. *halata* 'hug', *lyödä* 'hit', *iskeä* 'slap, beat', *painaa* 'push, press'), which are usually used with prefixes in Hungarian (*meg-ölel* 'hug', *meg-üt* 'hit', *meg/be/le-nyom* 'push, press (down)'), because they automatically interpret the action as completed, even though these are irresultative verbs, so in Finnish a partitive object is used in these constructions.⁶⁰ Now I show two examples from Hungarian learners' responses regarding the use of Finnish partitive verbs. In Example (38), I show the target-like Finnish sentence, in Example (39) follows the Hungarian translation and in Example (40) the learner's response.

(38) The target-like Finnish sentence

<i>Käännös-tä</i>	<i>voi-t</i>	<i>muokata</i>	<i>paina</i>	<i>se-n</i>	<i>jäljessä</i>	<i>ole</i>	<i>painike</i>
			<i>-ma-lla</i>			<i>-va-a</i>	<i>-tta</i>
translation	can	edit.INF	press	it	after	be	button
-PART	-2SG		-INF-ADE	-GEN		-PTCP-PART	-PART
'A/The translation can be edited by pressing the button behind it'							

⁵⁹ Panka: *PhD diss*, 314, 316–317.

⁶⁰ Larjavaara explains the difference by introducing the terms 'aspect of change' (*muutosaspekti*) in Finnish and 'aspect of time' (*aika-aspekti*) in other languages; see more detail in Larjavaara: *Partitiivin valinta* [The choice of partitive], 2019: 209.

(39) The Hungarian translation of (38)

<i>A</i>	<i>fordítás-t</i>	<i>úgy</i>	<i>szerkeszt-</i>	<i>ha</i>	<i>meg-nyom-</i>	<i>a</i>	<i>mögött-e</i>	<i>lév-ő</i>	<i>gomb</i>
			<i>het-ed</i>		<i>od</i>				<i>-ot</i>
ART	translation-	so	edit-POT-	if	PREF-press-	ART_	after-3SG	be-	button-
_DEF	ACC		2SG>3		2SG>3	DEF		PTCP	ACC

‘You can edit the translation, if you press the button behind it’

(40) The learner’s answer, version of (38)

<i>Käännös-tä</i>	<i>voi-t</i>	<i>muokata</i>	<i>paina-</i>	<i>se-n</i>	<i>jäljessä</i>	<i>ole-va-n</i>	<i>painikkee-n</i>
			<i>ma-lla</i>				
Translation-	can-	edit.INF	press-	it-GEN	after	be-PTCP-	button-TOT
PART	2SG		INF-ADE			TOT	

‘A/The translation can be edited by pressing the button behind it’

The learner’s explanation:

Learner2: *Painamalla sen jäljessä olevan painikkee-n* [button-TOT] [‘By pushing the button after it’]. Oh, almost, if... Yeah. Because if you push a button, obviously, if you don’t push it many times, but you push it only once, it’s a total object. Yes.

Now I show another Hungarian learner’s response. In Example (41), I show the target-like Finnish sentence; in Example (42), the Hungarian translation follows, and in Example (43), the learner’s answer.

(41) The target-like Finnish sentence

<i>Kun</i>	<i>mies</i>	<i>lö-i</i>	<i>minu-a</i>	<i>sateenvarjo-lla</i>	<i>pää-hän</i>
when	man.NOM	hit-PST.3SG	I-PART	umbrella-ADE	head-ILLAT

‘When the man hit me over the head with an umbrella...’

(42) The Hungarian translation of (41)

<i>Amikor</i>	<i>a</i>	<i>férfi</i>	<i>fej-be</i>	<i>vág-ott</i>	<i>(engem)</i>	<i>az</i>	<i>esernyő-vel...</i>
when	ART_	man.	head-	hit-PST.3SG	(I.ACC)	ART_DEF	umbrella-INST
	DEF	NOM	ILLAT				

‘When the man hit me over the head with an umbrella...’

(43) The learner’s response, a version of (41)

<i>Kun</i>	<i>mies</i>	<i>lö-i</i>	<i>minu-t</i>	<i>sateenvarjo-lla</i>	<i>pää-hän...</i>
When	man.NOM	hit-	I-TOT	umbrella-ADE	head-ILLAT
		PST.3SG			

‘When the man hit me over the head with an umbrella...’

The learner’s explanation:

Learner3: *Kun mies löi minut* [I.TOT] [‘When the man hit me’], well I think it’s a clear accusative. It’s the same as *tappaa minut* [I.TOT] [‘kill me’], or yes. Or *näki mi- minut* [I.TOT] [‘saw me’].

6. SUMMARY

In view of the above discussed similarities and differences between the two languages in marking the object case and in coding quantitative boundedness versus definiteness and aspect, it seems that the main difficulties for Hungarian learners of Finnish arise from the fact that Hungarian language operates with only one object case. In Hungarian, the object-NP is morphologically marked, the case of the object is always the accusative. Hungarian lacks the partitive case. Therefore, finding the object-NP usually does not present a problem for Hungarian learners, while using the target-like object case is not always easy: learning the functions of the partitive case is a difficult process, and learning how to use the multiple object cases in Finnish is also difficult.

In Hungarian, the definiteness (the “logical” or “notional” definiteness) of the object-NP is mostly indicated by the use of the definite article and, on the other hand, by the definite conjugation of the verb. In Finnish, definiteness (the “logical” or “notional” definiteness) is not indicated by articles, as Finnish lacks them. Instead, quantitative boundedness versus unboundedness (“quantification” or “quantitative definiteness” in other terms) is indicated by the opposition of the partitive versus total object. However, my research suggests that, for Hungarian learners of Finnish, it is often difficult to distinguish quantitative boundedness and definiteness, and they often overgeneralize the ‘indefinite or no article in Hungarian = partitive object in Finnish’ rule (e.g., in sentences like ‘Did you find an/the error?’ and ‘If you know a/the translation...’), as Examples (17)–(19) and (20)–(21) illustrate.

Other problems can arise, when Hungarian learners of Finnish try to apply the ‘verbal prefix in Hungarian = total object in Finnish’ rule. In Finnish, certain verbs (e.g., verbs expressing touch, such as *lyödä* ‘hit’, *halata* ‘hug’ or verbs expressing movement, e.g., *työntää* ‘push’, *nostaa* ‘lift, raise’, *painaa*, ‘push, press’) are irresultative and usually have a partitive object. However, in Hungarian, these events are interpreted as bounded and completed because of the exact meaning of the verbs, and the verbs are usually used with a prefix like the completive *meg-* in *meg-nyomja a gombot* ‘press the button’, *meg-üt/meg-ver valakit* ‘hit/beat someone’, as Examples (38)–(40) and (41)–(43) illustrate.

The use of the Finnish object cases is influenced by and closely interacts with a variety of grammatically relevant features: quantity, definiteness, referentiality, countability, negation, and aspect⁶¹ and, in addition, these factors often overlap.⁶² My research shows that Hungarian learners usually use the

⁶¹ Huumo: *Kvantiteetti ja aika*, 506

⁶² Pentti Leino: *Lauseet ja tilanteet. Suomen objektin ongelmia* [Sentences and situations. Problems of the Finnish object], Helsinki, SKS, 1991: 137.

partitive case in a target-like manner in negative sentences, with easily recognizable uncountable nouns, and with some well-known partitive verbs. Apparently, these are the easiest features to grasp cognitively, probably because they are more central in the perception of a Hungarian learner. On the other hand, Hungarian learners seem to have difficulties in distinguishing quantitative boundedness and definiteness and in using certain irresultative but bounded partitive verbs, such as *lyödä* ‘hit’ in a target-like manner in Finnish (i.e., with a partitive object). I have argued that the structural differences between the ways in which the two languages express these grammatical categories may affect how Hungarian learners use the object cases in Finnish. This could be taken into consideration when developing new teaching methods.

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

- 1 – first person
- 2 – second person
- 3 – third person
- >3 – 3rd person object expressed by person-number suffix
- ABL – ablative
- ACC – accusative
- ADE – adessive
- ALL – allative
- ART_DEF – definite article
- ART_INDEF – indefinite article
- CNG – connegative (verb)
- GEN – genitive
- ILLAT – illative
- IMP – imperative
- INESS – inessive
- INF – infinitive
- INSTR – instrumental
- NEG – negative auxiliary
- NOM – nominative
- NP – noun phrase
- PART – partitive
- PASS – passive
- PL – plural
- POT – potential
- PREF – verbal prefix
- PRS – present
- PST – past tense

PTCP – participle
 PX – possessive suffix
 Q – question particle or clitic
 SG – singular
 TOT – total (object case)

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