A Role and Reference Grammar Description of Object Marking in Finnish

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HOW CAN FINNISH OBJECT MARKING BE CAPTURED IN ROLE AND REFERENCE GRAMMAR?

Partitive vs. Accusative
1) Ammu-i-n karhu-n
Shoot-PST-ISG bear-ACC
„I shot the bear (dead)“
active accomplishment [+telic]

2) Ammu-i-n karhu-a
Shoot-PST-ISG bear-PART
„I shot at the bear“
activity [-telic]

3) Saa-n karhu-t
Get-PRS.ISG bear-ACC.PL
„I’ll get the bears“

4) Saa-n karhu-j-a
Get-PRS.ISG bear-PL-PART
„I’ll get bears“

5) Saa-n karhu-n
Get-PRS.ISG bear-ACC
„I’ll get the/a bear“

Ambiguities: 3 readings
Ammuin karhuja
Ammu-i-n karhu-j-a
Shoot-PST-ISG bear-PL-PART

Summary

[+telic] → partitive
[-telic] → accusative

Quant. determinate → ACC
Quant. indeterminate → PART

RRG = SEMANTICALLY DRIVEN SYNTACTIC THEORY

Basis = lexical decomposition

State:
[- static], [+ dynamic], [+ telic], [- punctual]
Activity:
[- static], [+ dynamic], [+ telic], [- punctual]
Achievement:
[- static], [+ dynamic], [+ telic], [+ punctual]
Semelfactive:
[- static], [+ dynamic], [- telic], [- punctual]
Accomplishment:
[- static], [+ dynamic], [+ telic], [- punctual]
Active accomplishment:
[- static], [+ dynamic], [+ telic], [+ punctual]

„Carl ate pizza“
do' (Carl, [eat' (Carl, pizza)])

„Chris ran to the park“
do' (Chris, [run' (Chris)]) & INGR be-at' (park, Chris)

2 overarching macroroles are selected according to a hierarchy

Highest-ranking MR becomes „privileged syntactic argument“ (=subject)
The rock [ACT] broke the window [UND]
The lawyer [ACT] received the summons [UND]
Many tourists [ACT] saw the accident [UND]
The farmer [ACT] ate the potato [UND]

In case languages, cases are assigned on the basis of the hierarchy

A) Assign nominative case to the highest ranking macrorole argument (in terms of the AUH)
B) Assign accusative case to the other macrorole argument (in terms of the AUH)

Standard RRG Case Assignment Rules

[+ - telic] in feature matrix determines case of „other“ macrorole argument
+ Case substitution (= Korean case spreading)

Chelswu-ka [NP] kan-ess-ta
Ch.-NOM [NP] go-PST-DECL
„Chelswu went to [NP]“

[NP]: san-ey
mountain-LOC
→ [-telic]
„Chelswu went towards the mountain“

[NP]: san-lul
mountain-ACC
→ [+telic]
„Chelswu went to the mountain“

Test: Add concessive clause „but he did not arrive“. If [NP]acc, then logical contradiction!

ANALYSIS

Revised RRG Case Assignment Rules for Finnish

A) Assign nominative case to the highest-ranking macrorole argument (in terms of the AUH)
B) Assign partitive case to the other macrorole argument if the verb is [-telic]. If the verb is [+telic], assign accusative by default unless if the conditions specified in C) apply. If so, apply rule C)
C) Replace case marking on the lowest-ranking macrorole argument with partitive case iff it is read as quantitatively indeterminate.

REFERENCES


