

## The Independence of Case and Inner Aspect

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This paper argues that case and inner aspect are independent syntactic relations. In particular I argue that there is no direct syntactic relation between the appearance of accusative case on the direct object and a telic interpretation of a predicate. I argue that accusative case is an Agree relation with  $v^\circ$  and aspect is an Agree relation with  $Asp^\circ$ , an aspectual head between  $vP$  and  $VP$  responsible for syntactically instantiating a mapping from the object to the event. Passives, unaccusatives and statives provide support for this conclusion. This conclusion has consequences for the structure of Finnish, which has been put forth as a language that manifests a direct syntactic relation between case and aspect. I provide an analysis in which there is no direct syntactic relation between case and aspect in Finnish.

### 1. Introduction

This paper focuses on the relation between inner aspect and case. Several authors assume that there is a direct syntactic relation between the presence of accusative case on the internal argument and a telic interpretation of a predicate (Borer 1994, 2005; Kratzer 2004; Ramchand 1997; Ritter & Rosen 1998, 2000; Schmitt 1996), often assuming that accusative case is determined by an aspectual projection (Borer 1994, 2005; Kratzer 2004; Schmitt 1996; Svenonius 2001). As an example of data often put forth as evidence for such a direct syntactic relation, consider the sentences from Finnish in (1).<sup>1</sup>

- (1) a. Maija luki **kirjan** \*tunnin.  
M. read.PST **book.ACC** hour.ACC  
'Maija read (all) the book for an hour.'  
b. Maija luki **kirjaa** tunnin.  
M. read.PST **book.PART** hour.ACC  
'Maija read the book for an hour.'

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<sup>1</sup> Examples in (1) taken from Heinämäki (1984).

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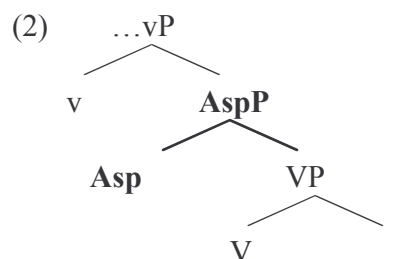
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Observe that in (1a) the internal argument is in accusative case and the predicate is telic, as evidenced by the incompatibility of the durative phrase (e.g. *tunnin* ‘for an hour’). Observe in (1b) that the internal argument is in partitive case and the predicate is atelic, as evidenced by the compatibility of the durative phrase. These data suggest a direct relation between the appearance of accusative case on an internal argument and a telic interpretation of a predicate. In this paper I argue that case and aspect are independent syntactic relations.<sup>2</sup> Accusative case is an Agree relation with  $v^\circ$  (Chomsky 2001) while aspect is an Agree relation with  $Asp^\circ$ .

The paper is organized in the following way: In section 2, I argue for the existence of an aspectual head (AspP) between  $vP$  and VP that syntactically instantiates an object-to-event mapping via an Agree relation with an NP; I conclude that aspect is a relation with  $Asp^\circ$ . I provide evidence from passives, unaccusatives and statives to support this conclusion. In section 3, I offer an account of the Finnish data from (1); I argue that partitive case is assigned by a null  $X^\circ$ . The presence of this extra structure blocks the Agree relation between the NP in partitive and  $Asp^\circ$  resulting in an atelic interpretation of the predicate. In section 4, I briefly recap the discussion and conclude the paper.

## 2. Aspect is a Relation with $Asp^\circ$

In this section I argue for the existence of an aspectual projection (AspP) between  $vP$  and VP (see also Travis 1991). This structure is illustrated in (2). The aspectual interpretations and distributions of bare plurals (BPs) and mass nouns (MNs) provide evidence for this aspectual projection.



Observe standard data that have been put forth as evidence that BPs and MNs elicit the same aspectual interpretation of the predicate (3).

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<sup>2</sup> This paper deals with **inner aspect** and not **outer aspect**. Inner aspect can be differentiated minimally from outer aspect in the following two ways: a) the nature of the internal argument can affect the telicity of the predicate in inner aspect (That is, there is an object-to-event mapping. See also Krifka 1989 and Verkuyl 1972.), as illustrated in (i-ii), while this is not the case for outer aspect, as illustrated in (iii): (i) *John ate cake for an hour/#in an hour.* (ii) *John ate a cake #for an hour/in an hour.* (iii) *John was eating (a) cake for an hour/#in an hour when...* b) Outer aspect in English has an overt morphological manifestation in the form of *ing* and *be* (e.g. *was eat-**ing*** in (iii)); inner aspect has no such overt morphological manifestations. See Smith (1991) for more details on the differences between inner and out aspect. Throughout this paper, a reference to aspect is a reference to inner aspect only.

- (3) a. Darrel ate **a cake** in three minutes/#for an hour.  
 b. Darrel ate **cake/cakes** # in three minutes/for an hour.

When the internal argument is *quantized* (Krifka 1989) or describes a *specific quantity of A* (Verkuyl 1972) as in (3a), the predicate describes an event interpreted as telic. As such, the time span adverbial is compatible<sup>3</sup> and the durative phrase is incompatible<sup>4</sup> (Dowty 1979; Borer 2005 among others). In contrast, when the internal argument is *cumulative* (Krifka 1989) or does not describe a *specific quantity of A* (Verkuyl 1972), the predicate describes an event interpreted as atelic, as in (3b); the inverse patterns of compatibility with the durative phrase and time span adverbial result. BPs and MNs seem to elicit the same interpretation of the predicate.

Contrary to what the data in (3) seem to show and contrary to many assumptions (Borer 2005; Dowty 1979; Pustejovsky 1991 among others), BPs and MNs do not elicit the same aspectual interpretation of a predicate. Observe in (4) that BPs are compatible with a time span adverbial under a particular interpretation, while MNs are not.<sup>5</sup>

- (4) a. Darrel ate **cakes** in three minutes (for an hour straight).  
 b. #Darrel ate **cake** in three minutes (for an hour straight).

Under an interpretation in which for each cake Darrel ate, he ate it in three minutes for an hour straight, the time span adverbial is compatible with the BP in (4a). No such interpretation is available for the MN in (4b); in fact, the MN is not compatible with the time span adverbial. Time span adverbials are compatible with telic predicates (Dowty 1979 among others); as such, in the presence of a BP, the predicate is interpreted as telic. More specifically, a BP elicits a type of telic iterative interpretation in which one cake after another is eaten; I refer to this type of telic interpretation as a **Sequence of Similar Events (SSE)** interpretation. No such interpretation is available for a MN (4b). In contrast to BPs, MNs elicit an atelic interpretation of the predicate. Thus, MNs and BPs have distinct aspectual interpretations. Consider the ditransitive construction in (5).

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<sup>3</sup> I am only concerned with an interpretation of the time span adverbial that picks out the end of the event described by the predicate. I assume that the time span essentially expresses that a certain amount of time passes before the end of the event takes place. The time span can also target the beginning of the event as well (Dowty 1979) in which case it expresses that a certain amount of time passes before the event begins. Telic predicates describe events that are interpreted as being complete, or as having an end. Atelic predicates described events that are interpreted as being incomplete, or minimally, as lacking an end.

<sup>4</sup> The brute incompatibility of a durative phrase with a telic predicate is a simplification of the facts. Note that an iterative interpretation results in the following telic predicate: *John spotted a plane for an hour*. A plane can be spotted over and over; the durative forces an iterative interpretation of the predicate. In (3a) the durative is incompatible with the telic predicate because the nature of the action expressed by the verb is such that the internal object cannot undergo this action more than once; a cake cannot be eaten over and over. See MacDonald (2006) for more details and references.

<sup>5</sup> Filip (1999), referencing Fillmore and Kay (1993), observes a similar fact about the following datum: *Pat built houses (\*) in six months*. She notes that it is "acceptable if it has a generic (habitual) interpretation...whereby each [building event] is associated with a different house whose construction took six months." (ibid:66). (4) above shows us that under an episodic interpretation, the time span adverbial is compatible with a BP as well, resulting in a type of iterative interpretation.

- (5) a. Darrel carried **chairs** into a bedroom in ten minutes (for an hour straight).  
 b. #Darrel carried **sand** into a bedroom in ten minutes (for an hour straight).

In (5a) there is a BP direct object and the time span adverbial is compatible as expected. The BP elicits an SSE interpretation in which one chair after another was carried into the bedroom in ten minutes for an hour straight. No such interpretation is available for the MN. The MN, as expected, elicits only an atelic interpretation of the predicate. Consider BPs and MNs as the complements of a goal preposition (6).<sup>6</sup>

- (6) a. Darrel carried the chair into **bedrooms** for an hour.  
 b. Darrel carried the chair onto **asphalt** for an hour.

The BP elicits an SSE interpretation in which the chair was carried into one bedroom after another for an hour. The MN does not elicit an atelic interpretation; the only interpretation available is one in which the chair was carried onto asphalt, then back off, and back on again for an hour. This is a type of telic iterative interpretation, although not a sequence of similar events (SSE) interpretation, but a sequence of identical events, in which the same object participates in the event repeatedly. Thus, when a MN is the complement of a goal preposition the only interpretation available is a telic interpretation, not an atelic interpretation. Note furthermore, that the time span adverbial is compatible both with the BP and MN complement of a goal preposition, as illustrated in (7a-b) respectively.

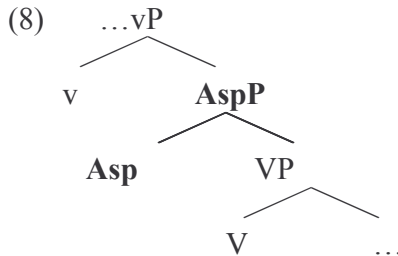
- (7) a. Darrel carried the chair into **bedrooms** in ten minutes (for an hour straight).  
 b. Darrel carried the chair onto **asphalt** in ten minutes (for an hour straight).

Although a bit pragmatically odd because the same chair undergoes the action expressed by the verb in each of the iterated events, the sentences in (7) are fine with the time span adverbial in conjunction with the durative phrase. Moreover, if we remove the durative from (7b) the sentence is perfectly natural, further showing that a MN complement of a goal preposition does not elicit an atelic interpretation of the predicate. BPs and MNs have distinct aspectual distributions.

In order to account for the distinct aspectual interpretations and distributions of BPs and MNs, I claim that there is an aspectual head (AspP) between vP and VP with which BPs and MNs establish distinct relations (8).

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<sup>6</sup> Note that what I refer to as a goal preposition is a preposition that typically expresses that a goal is reached, e.g. *to*, *into*, *onto*. These prepositions induce a telic interpretation when surfacing with a transitive activity (but see footnote 8). I do not consider a preposition such as *toward* or *at* (on the non-location interpretation of *at*) a ‘goal’ preposition per se, as no goal is actually reached; I consider them ‘directional’ prepositions. This is only a matter of terminology. Nevertheless, note that directional prepositions do not induce telicity when they surface with a transitive activity: *John pushed the car (toward/at the building) for an hour/#in an hour*.



I claim that BPs move to Spec, AspP and MNs Agree with Asp°. The most immediate expectation of this proposal is that neither BP nor MN external arguments can affect the aspectual interpretation of the predicate in the relevant ways (see Tenny 1987 for the same conclusion), because they are structurally higher than AspP. This expectation is shown to be borne out in (9-10).

- (9) a. **Wildlife** ate a sheep                    in ten minutes/#for ten minutes.  
 b. **Livestock** destroyed the barn        in ten minutes/#for ten minutes.
- (10) a. **Bears** ate a sheep                    in ten minutes (#for an hour straight).  
 b. **Animals** destroyed the barn        in ten minutes (#for an hour straight).

Observe in (9) that the MN external argument does not elicit an atelic interpretation of the predicate, as indicated by the incompatibility of the durative phrase and the compatibility of the time span adverbial (cf. 3). Additionally, the BP in (10) does not elicit an SSE interpretation. (10a) does not mean that a bear ate a sheep in ten minutes and then another bear ate a sheep in ten minutes, and so on for an hour straight. BP and MN external arguments cannot establish the necessary kind of relation with AspP in order to elicit the relevant respective interpretations because they are structurally higher than AspP.

Let us consider the movement account of BPs in more detail. I assume that BPs are existential quantifiers and in order to elicit an SSE interpretation, they must bind a variable inside a syntactic domain of aspectual interpretation defined as everything dominated by AspP.<sup>7</sup> Thus, they must originate from a position below AspP and move to a position above AspP. Evidence for the movement of BPs comes from what I consider to be an island for BP movement in (11).

- (11) a. #Milo destroyed a row of **houses**        for an hour.  
 b. #Milo ate a box of **cookies**                for an hour.

<sup>7</sup> MacDonald (2006) argues for a domain of aspectual interpretation in which only elements within this domain can contribute to the aspectual interpretation of a predicate. He puts forth as evidence the inability of location prepositions (in contrast to goal prepositions) to affect the telicity of the predicate, the inability of external arguments (as seen above in 9-10) to affect the telicity of the predicate, and he adopts arguments from Hay, Kennedy, and Levin (1999) that show that the predicate CAUSE that introduces external arguments does not affect the telicity of the predicate either. All of these elements are structurally higher than AspP, and as such are outside the domain of aspectual interpretation.

The BPs in (11) do not elicit an SSE interpretation. Thus, (11a) does not mean that Milo destroyed one house, then another and so on for an hour. Likewise, (11b) does not mean that Milo ate one cookie then another and so on for an hour. The lack of an SSE interpretation can be explained if we assume that the complex NPs in (11) do not allow the BP to move out; as the BP cannot move out it cannot move to Spec,AspP and elicit the SSE interpretation. Let us consider the Agree account of MNs in more detail.

I claim that the Agree relation with Asp<sup>o</sup> is the syntactic instantiation of the object-to-event mapping well-known in studies on inner aspect (Verkuyl 1972; Krifka 1989). The object-to-event mapping occurs when a property of the internal argument affects the telicity of the entire predicate. Consider the example in (12).

- (12) a. Bud drank **a pitcher of beer** # for ten minutes/in ten minutes.  
 b. Bud drank **beer** for ten minutes/#in ten minutes.

The noun phrase in (12a) *a pitcher of beer* has a property that elicits a telic interpretation of the predicate, resulting in the incompatibility of the durative phrase and the compatibility of the time span adverbial. The noun phrase in (12b) *beer* has a property that elicits an atelic interpretation of the predicate, resulting in the compatibility of the durative phrase and the incompatibility of the time span adverbial. This is the object-to-event mapping.

I refer to the property of an internal argument NP that participates in this object-to-event mapping as a [q] feature ([q] for *quantized* (Krifka 1989) and for *specific quantity of A* (Verkuyl 1972)). If the NP that Agrees with and values Asp<sup>o</sup> is [+q] the predicate can be interpreted as telic.<sup>8</sup> If the NP that Agrees with and values Asp<sup>o</sup> is [-q] (e.g. a MN), the predicate will be interpreted as atelic.<sup>9</sup> The Agree relation captures a local relation that an NP has with the verb phrase in which the core aspectual interpretation of the predicate is affected. The core aspectual interpretation of a predicate is the basic telic/atelic distinction. This local relation, and its affect on the core interpretation of the predicate, is intuitively parallel to the local relation between a

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<sup>8</sup> I say *can be interpreted as telic* because of the existence of transitive activity predicates in which the [+/-q] feature of the internal argument does not affect the aspectual interpretation of the predicate: *John pushed the car/stereo equipment for an hour/#in an hour*. Although note that when a goal phrase is added, these predicates behave exactly like the predicates in (12): *John pushed the car into the garage #for an hour/in an hour*. *John pushed stereo equipment into the garage for an hour/#in an hour*. MacDonald (2006) argues that the goal phrase here adds a property that the predicates in (12) already possess. This property is similar in spirit with to the null telic morpheme of Snyder (1995). Transitive activities project AspP, but the object-to-event mapping is irrelevant without this extra property. Further discussion of these predicates takes us well beyond the focus of the present paper, thus I direct the reader to MacDonald (2006) for a full syntactic account of these predicates and the relevance of this extra property for deriving a syntactic typology of aspectual predicates types.

<sup>9</sup> Some have put forth a sentence such as *John found water in ten minutes/#for ten minutes*. as an example of a predicate that takes a MN (i.e. a [-q]NP) internal argument but yet still surfaces as telic. MacDonald (2006) argues that a sentence like this falls into a class of predicates he calls *psych-achievements* in which the surface subject is actually derived from a position below AspP and higher than the surface direct object. This predicts that the argument that Agrees with Asp<sup>o</sup>, and enters into the object-to-event mapping, is the derive subject. Observe that in the presence of a MN subject the durative phrase improves: *Wildlife found the body of water for an hour*. Also a BP subject elicits an SSE interpretation as well: *Animals found the body of water for an hour*. See MacDonald (2006) for other arguments supporting this analysis of these data.

verb and its complement. When the complement of the verb varies, the core meaning of the predicate varies as well (Marantz 1984). Examples that show this are given in (13).<sup>10</sup>

- (13) a. take a book from the shelf  
 b. take a bus to New York  
 c. take a nap  
 d. take an aspirin  
 e. take a letter in shorthand

I conclude, therefore, that Agree with Asp° is the syntactic instantiation of the object-to-event mapping; aspect is an Agree relation with Asp°.

Assuming this conclusion to be correct, and assuming that accusative case is an Agree relation with v° (Chomsky 2001), it follows straightforwardly that aspect and case are independent syntactic relations. If this line of reasoning is correct, we expect the possibility of establishing either of these relations independently of the other. That is, for example, we expect to observe cases in which there is an object-to-event mapping without the presence of accusative case. Passive constructions show that this expectation is met (14-15).

- (14) a. **A bottle of beer** was drunk # for an hour.  
 b. **Beer** was drunk for an hour.  
 c. **Bottles of beer** were drunk in three minutes (for an hour straight).
- (15) a. **A stereo** was destroyed # for an hour.  
 b. **Stereo equipment** was destroyed for an hour.  
 c. **Stereos** were destroyed in three minutes (for an hour straight).

The derived subjects of passives are in nominative case; accusative is not available (14-15). In the (a) examples, the subjects are [+q]NPs and the predicate is telic. In the (b) examples the subjects are [-q]NPs and the predicate is atelic. There is no accusative case, yet there is an object-to-event mapping. Furthermore, in the (c) examples, the subject is a BP and the result is an SSE interpretation. These facts suggest that AspP is present in the syntax although accusative case is not available. We find the same pattern with the derived nominative subjects of unaccusatives (16-17).<sup>11</sup>

- (16) a. **A window** broke # for an hour.  
 b. **Glass** broke for an hour.  
 c. **Windows** broke for an hour.

<sup>10</sup> Examples taken from Kratzer (1996).

<sup>11</sup> Note that the time span adverbial is odd even with the BPs in (16c) and (17c). This is a result of the time span adverbial only being able to target the beginning of the event in achievements; unaccusatives behave like achievements. This is not counterevidence to the claim that BP derived subjects of unaccusatives elicit an SSE interpretation.

- (17) a. **A keg** arrived # for an hour.  
 b. **Beer** arrived for an hour.  
 c. **Kegs** arrived for an hour.

These data suggest that a telic interpretation of a predicate is not dependent on the presence of accusative case. More technically, the presence of AspP in the syntax is not dependent on the presence of accusative case. Stative predicates provide data that suggest the presence of accusative case is not dependent on the presence of AspP either. Consider the stative predicates in (18-19).

- (18) a. John loved **a woman/wildlife** for a year/#in an year.  
 b. John owned **a car/stereo equipment** for a year/#in a year.
- (19) a. John loved **books** for a year/#in a year.  
 b. John owned **cars** for a year/#in a year.

(18) shows that the alternation between a [+q]NP and a [-q]NP does not affect the telicity of a predicate. There is no object-to-event mapping with statives, and yet accusative case is available. (19) shows that a BP with a stative does not elicit an SSE interpretation. These facts suggest that statives do not project AspP (see MacDonald 2006 for this conclusion).<sup>12</sup> If statives lack AspP, this explains the patterns from (18-19) straightforwardly; BPs and MNs cannot establish the relevant relation with AspP because it is not present in the syntax. If this is the correct account of the syntax of stative predicates, then the data in (18-19) provide evidence that the presence of the accusative case is not dependent on the presence of AspP in the syntax.

We have seen that the presence of accusative case is not dependent on the presence of AspP, and that the presence of AspP is not dependent on the presence of accusative case. Case and aspect are independent syntactic relations. Aspect is an Agree relation with Asp<sup>o</sup> and accusative case is an Agree relation with v<sup>o</sup>.

### 3. Case and Aspect in Finnish

Let us reconsider the Finnish data from (1), repeated below in (20) for convenience, in the light of the conclusions drawn from the previous section on case and aspect.

- (20) a. Maija luki kirjan \*tunnin.  
 M. read.PST book.ACC hour.ACC  
 ‘Maija read (all) the book for an hour.’  
 b. Maija luki kirjaa tunnin.  
 M. read.PST book.PART hour.ACC  
 ‘Maija read the book for an hour.’

<sup>12</sup> MacDonald (2006) provides other arguments for the lack of the presence of AspP in statives, related to the inability of goal prepositions to create a telic interpretation out of a stative (vs. a transitive activities; see footnote 8), and the inability of stative predicates to participate in the *do so* construction (in contrast to eventives).

If there were a direct relation between case and aspect in Finnish, as the data in (20) seem to suggest, we would not expect the same behavior from Finnish passives, unaccusatives and statives that we saw from English passives, unaccusatives and statives above. That is, we do not expect to find nominative subjects of passives and unaccusatives in Finnish that are interpreted as telic, and we do not expect to find stative predicates whose internal argument receives accusative case. Consider first passives and unaccusatives in (21-22) respectively.

- (21) a. Hän luki **kirjan**.<sup>13</sup>  
 s/he read.PST **book.ACC**  
 ‘S/he read the book (and finished it).’  
 b. **Kirja** luettiin.  
**book.NOM** was.read  
 ‘The book was read (and finished).’
- (22) a. Vieraat saapuivat.<sup>14</sup>  
 guests-NOM arrived  
 ‘The guests arrived.’  
 b. Karhu-t kuol-i-vat.  
 bear.PL.NOM die.PST.3PL  
 ‘The bears died.’

(21a) is the active form of the verb *read* in Finnish and as the translation indicates, the predicate is telic. Observe that when passivized, the derived subject appears with nominative case. In (22), both of the derived subjects of the unaccusative verbs surface with nominative, and as the translations indicate, they receive a definite interpretation, typical of a telic predicate. Consider the stative predicates in (23).<sup>15</sup>

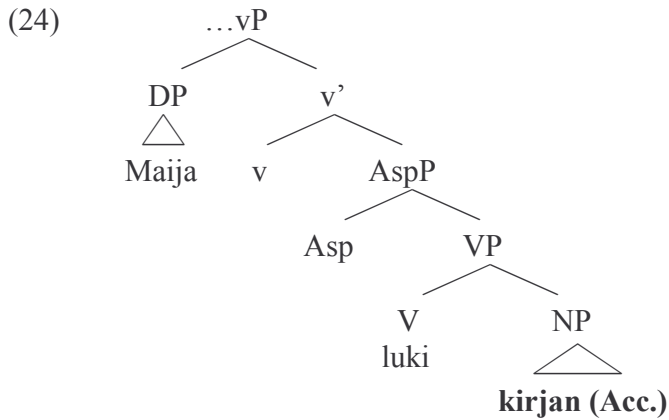
- (23) a. Omist-it nämä talo-t vuode-n / (\*vuode-ssa)  
 own.2SG these.ACC house.PL.ACC year.ACC year.INESS  
 ‘You owned these houses for a year (\*in an year).’  
 b. Tunnen hänet hyvin epätäydellisesti.  
 I.know her.ACC very incompletely  
 ‘I know her very incompletely.’

Just as occurs in English, stative predicates in Finnish take internal arguments that surface in accusative case. Finnish passives, unaccusatives and statives pattern with English passives, unaccusatives and statives. This is unexpected for a language in which there might be a direct syntactic dependency between the appearance of accusative case on the internal argument and a telic interpretation of a predicate. Therefore, I conclude that in Finnish, there is no direct syntactic relation between case and aspect. We must now explain the facts from (20). To do so, I propose the structure in (24) for the *telic-accusative* utterances in Finnish.

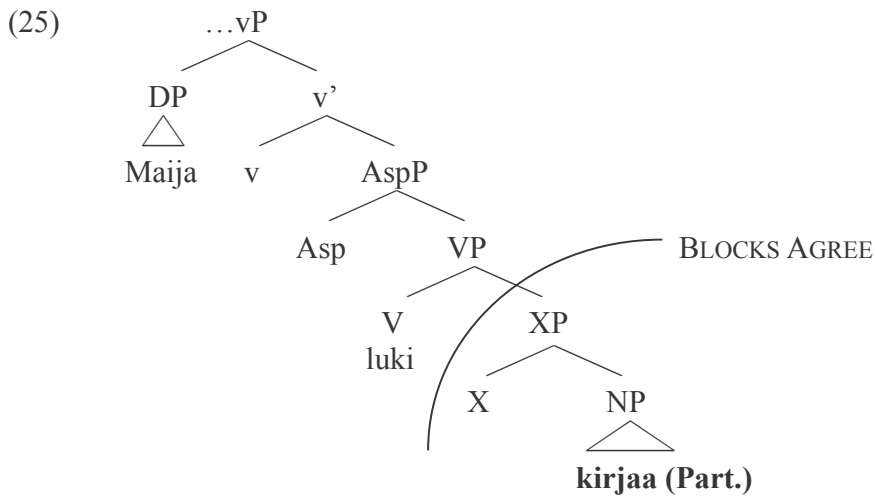
<sup>13</sup> Examples in (21) taken from Pereltsvaig (2000).

<sup>14</sup> Example in (22a) taken from Heinämäki (1984). Example in (22b) taken from Kiparsky (1998).

<sup>15</sup> The example in (23a) is from Kiparsky (1998:283). The example in (23b) is from Heinämäki (1984:165)



I assume that accusative case results from Agree with  $v^\circ$  (Chomsky 2001). In the structure in (24) the internal argument can freely Agree with  $v^\circ$ . Given the structural proximity of  $v^\circ$  to  $\text{Asp}^\circ$ , there is no syntactic reason why the internal argument cannot Agree with  $\text{Asp}^\circ$  as well. Thus, I assume that when accusative case appears on the internal argument, the internal argument NP can Agree with  $\text{Asp}^\circ$  and does so, valuing it such that the predicate is interpreted as telic. The structure I propose for the *atelic-partitive* constructions of Finnish is given in (25).



I claim that the argument in partitive is the complement of a null  $X^\circ$  that is in turn a complement of the verb.<sup>16</sup> I assume that this null  $X^\circ$  is responsible for partitive case on *kirjaa*. With respect to aspect, I assume that the null XP blocks Agree with  $\text{Asp}^\circ$ . Minimally, the NP *kirjaa* does not Agree with  $v^\circ$ , otherwise it would surface with accusative case; thus, it is likely that it cannot

<sup>16</sup> Schmitt (1996) makes a similar proposal, assuming that  $X^\circ$  here is  $P^\circ$ , although she still assumes a significant relation between case and aspect. Kratzer (2004) suggests that there may be an unpronounced D head responsible for partitive because partitive surfaces DP internally (from Kratzer 2004:400, bolding mine):

i) *Ammu-i-n kaksi karhu-a.*  
shoot.PAST.1SG two.ACC bear.PART

Agree with  $\text{Asp}^\circ$  either. I claim that the extra structure blocks these Agree relations, and the result is an atelic interpretation of the predicate. Consider utterances in English that have a similar structural configuration with the same aspectual result (26).<sup>17</sup>

- (26) a. John complained to his boss for an hour.  
b. Fred talked to his buddy for an hour.

The NPs *boss* and *buddy* are [+q] NPs. If they could Agree with  $\text{Asp}^\circ$ , we would expect a telic interpretation of the predicate. It seems that they cannot Agree with  $\text{Asp}^\circ$ ; the result is an atelic interpretation of the predicate. Observe another fact surrounding the data in (26); they cannot take internal arguments, regardless of the presence of the goal phrase. This is illustrated in (27).

- (27) a. John complained (\*his pay) to his boss.  
b. Fred talked (\*the story) to his buddy.

Given that no direct object can be present in the sentences in (27), and the NP complements of the goal preposition cannot Agree with  $\text{Asp}^\circ$ , I conclude that there is no NP that Agrees with  $\text{Asp}^\circ$  at all in these constructions. If no NP Agrees with  $\text{Asp}^\circ$ , I assume that  $\text{Asp}^\circ$  receives a default value such that the predicate is interpreted as atelic. Observe that when there is no internal argument present in English, the predicate is interpreted as atelic (28).<sup>18</sup>

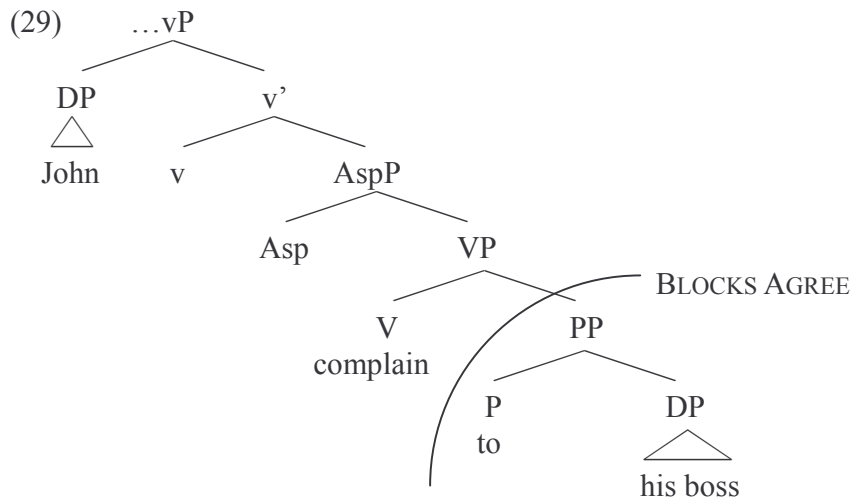
- (28) a. John ate for an hour.  
b. John danced for an hour.

I conclude that the overt preposition has the same blocking effect as the null  $X^\circ$  in the Finnish partitive constructions and I propose the structure in (29) to account for the English sentences in (26).

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<sup>17</sup> Thanks to Bill McClure for pointing these data out to me and for a discussion of them as well.

<sup>18</sup> The lack of an internal argument with a resulting atelic interpretation of the predicate is widely observed (see Borer 2005; Dowty 1979; Filip 1999; Verkuyl 1972 among others).



The parallel syntactic configuration resulting in the same aspectual effect lends support to the proposal that the overt PP in English and the null XP in Finnish blocks Agree with Asp°.

Given these patterns, I conclude that the extra structure in Finnish is responsible for the atelic interpretation of the predicate. I also assume that this extra structure is the source of partitive case as well. This entails that partitive case in Finnish is not structural (cf. Borer 2005). What we expect then, is that an NP that is in partitive can remain in partitive even after movement. Passive-active pairs and unaccusatives show that this expectation is met. They are illustrated in (30-31) respectively.

- (30) a. Hän luki **kirjaa**.<sup>19</sup>  
s/he read.PST **book.PART**  
'S/he read the book (for a while).'
- b. **Kirjaa** luettiin.  
**book.PART** was.read  
'The book was read (for a while).'
- (31) a. **Vieraita** saapuivat.<sup>20</sup>  
**guests.PART** arrived  
'Guests arrived.'
- b. **Karrhu-j-a** kuol-i  
**bear.PLPART** die.pst-3SG  
'Bears died.'

The derived subjects of passives and unaccusatives in Finnish can remain in partitive. This suggests that partitive is a non-structural case and lends further support to the structure in (25) proposed to account for the Finnish partitive construction.

<sup>19</sup> Example in (30) taken from Pereltsvaig (2000).

<sup>20</sup> Example in (31a) taken from Heinämäki (1984). Example in (31b) taken from Kiparsky (1998).

#### *4. Recap and Conclusions*

In this paper I have argued that case and aspect are independent syntactic relations. Case is an Agree relation with  $v^{\circ}$  (Chomsky 2001) and aspect is an Agree relation with  $Asp^{\circ}$ . This conclusion does not entail that there is no syntactic relation at all between case and aspect, just that there is no direct syntactic relation. For if we assume that the presence of accusative case indicates a specific syntactic position in the verb phrase, then the presence of accusative case on a particular argument can indicate which argument is in this syntactic position. Given that the argument in this syntactic position enters into the object-to-event mapping with the predicate, albeit via a relation with a distinct head, accusative case can at best indirectly indicate which argument enters into an object-to-event mapping. However, as we saw above, the object-to-event mapping can still be present even though accusative case is not, and vice versa. Thus while there is an indirect relation between the presence of accusative case and the argument that participates in the object-to-event mapping, case and aspect are still independent syntactic relations.

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