

# Quantifiers and partitive case marking in Finnish

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## Introduction

- The topic of the talk: Finnish number quantifiers ('many', 'several' etc.) quantifying partitive-marked nominals in S/A/O functions.
- Finnish number quantifiers behave like adjectives: they agree with the quantified nominal in number and case.
- Such phrases are thus partitive phrases headed by the partitive-marked nominal.
- The quantificational and (hence) aspectual behavior of such phrases is different from that of bare (unquantified) partitives (Yli-Vakkuri 1979).
- In general, quantified nominals render the clause-level aspect bounded at the collective level, while the component events may be bounded or unbounded.



## Quantifiers and partitive phrases

- In Finnish, an unquantified NP headed by a mass noun or a plural form in the partitive case designates an unbounded quantity (typically) of an indefinite referent:
  - kahvi-a* [coffee-PAR] '(some) coffee'
  - auto-j-a* [car-PL-PAR] '(some) cars'
- A mass or number quantifier specifies this quantity and renders it bounded:
  - paljon kahvi-a* [a.lot.of coffee-PAR] 'a lot of coffee'
  - use-i-ta auto-j-a* [several-PL-PAR car-PL-PAR] 'several cars'
- This quantitative boundedness may contribute to the aspectual nature of the clause where the nominal has the role of an S, A or O argument.

## Number quantifiers

- Finnish number quantifiers indicate meanings such as 'several', 'many', 'few'.
- There are both singular and plural forms of number quantifiers, both referring to a multiplicity of entities, e.g.,
  - moni suomalainen* [many.SG.NOM Finn.SG.NOM] 'many a Finn'
  - mone-t suomalaise-t* [many-PL.NOM Finn-PL.NOM] 'many Finns'
- The SG. and PL. forms are case-inflected throughout the paradigm (of 14 cases).

## Number quantifiers in S arguments

- An S argument that refers to a multiplicity of entities can be in the nominative or in the partitive (the latter in existential clauses), and thus there are many ways of realizing it. However, the expressions are not synonymous:

*Usea*                      *suomalainen*      *hiihtä-ä.*  
 several.SG.NOM   Finn.SG.NOM   ski-PRES.3SG  
 'Several Finns ski ["many-a-Finn skis", favors a distributive-habitual reading].'

*Usea-t*                      *suomalaise-t*      *hiihtä-vät.*  
 many-PL.NOM   Finn-PL.NOM   ski-PRES.3PL  
 'Several Finns ski / are skiing.' [Habitual or actual ongoing]

*Use-i-ta*                      *suomalais-i-a*      *hiihtä-ä.*  
 many-PL-PAR   Finn-PL-PAR   ski-PRES.3SG  
 'There are several Finns skiing.' ["Existential", an ongoing event]



## Number quantifiers in S arguments

- In S argument phrases, nominative (SG or PL) forms of number quantifiers favor or at least allow a distributive reading.
- Quantified partitive S arguments only allow a collective reading (a common feature of partitive S arguments; Schlachter 1958; Huumo 2003):

*(Use-i-ta)*                      *viera-i-ta*              *tanss-i*                  *juhlasali-ssa.*  
 Several-PL-PAR   guest-PL-PAR   dance-PST.3SG   ball-room-INE  
 'There were (several) guests dancing in the ball room.' (Collective)

*?(Use-i-ta)*                      *viera-i-ta*              *tanss-i*                  *hassu-sti.*  
 Several-PL-PAR   guest-PL-PAR   dance-PST.3SG   funny-ADV  
 'There were (several) guests dancing in a funny way.' (Distributive)



## Number quantifiers and A/S marking

- In general, partitive phrases can only be used in the function of the existential S argument (in an existential clause), not as A arguments.
- However, Yli-Vakkuri (1979) shows that partitive phrases containing number quantifiers have been generalized into many contexts where an unquantified plural nominal would be in the nominative.
- The quantified nominative phrase in turn has taken on more specific meanings such as 'several sets of Xs' or 'several of the X's'.
  - The latter is often called a partitive [!] construction.
- This, according to Yli-Vakkuri, is the reason why quantified partitive NPs are occasionally used even in the function of the A argument (the partitive A; Huomo, fc.).



## Number quantifiers and A marking

- Examples of quantified A:

*Hevose-t vet-i-vät reke-ä.*  
 Horse-PL.NOM pull-PST.3PL sleigh-PAR  
 '[The] horses were pulling a/the sleigh.' (Unquantified PL.NOM. A)

*Usea-t hevose-t vet-i-vät reke-ä.*  
 Several-PL-NOM horse-PL.NOM pull-PST.3PL sleigh-PAR  
 'Several [of the] horses were pulling a/the sleigh.' / 'Several [teams of] horses pulled / were pulling a/the sleigh.' (Quantified PL.NOM A)

*Use-i-ta hevosi-a vet-i reke-ä.*  
 Several-PL-PAR horse-PL-PAR pull-PST.3SG sleigh-PAR  
 '[There were] several horses pulling the sleigh.' (Quantified PL.PAR A)



## Case marking of the object

- In object marking, the partitive case has three interrelated and often overlapping functions:

- Quantification: Unbounded O referent:

*Löys-i-n*                      *sien-i-ä.*  
 find-PST-1SG              mushroom-PL-PAR  
 'I found [some] mushrooms.'

- Non-culminating (unbounded) aspect:

*Katsel-i-n*                      *televisio-ta.*  
 Watch-PST-1SG              television-PAR  
 'I watched tv'; 'I was watching tv.'

- Object under the scope of negation:

*En*              *huoman-nut*              *sinu-a.*  
 NEG.1SG    notice-PTC              you-PAR  
 'I did not notice you.'



## Case marking of the object

- The accusative/nominative object (the "total object") is used only if none of the three partitive conditions is met: the O designates a bounded quantity in an affirmative clause with culminating aspect.

*Löys-i-n*                      *siene-n.*  
 Find-PST-1SG              mushroom-ACC  
 'I found a/the mushroom.'

*Lu-i-n*                      *kirja-t.*  
 Read-PST-1SG              book-PL.NOM  
 'I read the books [completely].'



## Case marking of the object

- Often the three functions of the partitive O overlap: e.g., in a replicate event, an unbounded quantity may or may not give rise to non-culminating (imperfective) clause-level aspect:

*Poim-i-n*                      *sien-i-ä.*  
 Pick-PST-1SG                mushroom-PL-PAR  
 'I picked [some] mushrooms.' (perf. aspect, unb. quantity)  
 'I was picking mushrooms.' (imperf. aspect, unb. quantity)  
 'I was picking the mushrooms.' (imperf. aspect, bounded quantity)

- In spite of their partitive case, quantified O phrases show a tendency toward an accusative-like behavior (Yli-Vakkuri 1973; 1979).



## Number quantifiers and O marking

- In spite of the possible partitive case of the object NP (designating unboundedness of quantity or aspect) the number quantifier makes the quantity bounded in partitive O phrases.
- In this respect it resembles mass quantifiers, which quantify a partitive-marked nominal and make the expressed quantity bounded (Karttunen 1975), e.g.

*Jo-i-n*                      *paljon kahvi-a.*  
 Drink-PST-1SG        a.lot.of    coffee-PAR  
 'I drank a lot of coffee'.

- This may affect the clause-level aspect: if the participation of individual referents of the quantified O phrase is sequential (not simultaneous), then the quantifier makes the aspect bounded.
- This can be demonstrated with the classical test of adverbials of duration (INESSIVE 'in a week') vs. temporal measure phrases (ACCUSATIVE 'for a week')



## Number quantifiers and O marking

- Examples:

*Lu-i-n*                      *kirjo-j-a*                      *viiko-n/\*viiko-ssa.*  
 read-PST-1SG      book-PL-PAR                      week-ACC/\*INE  
 'I read books for (\*in) a week.'

*Lu-i-n*                      *kirja-t*                      *viiko-ssa/\*viiko-n.*  
 read-PST-1SG      book-PL.NOM                      week-INE/\*ACC  
 'I read the books in (\*for) a week.'

But a quantified pl. partitive O allows both temporal modifiers:

*Lu-i-n*                      *use-i-ta*                      *kirjo-j-a*                      *viiko-ssa/!viiko-n*  
 read-PST-1SG      several-pl-par      book-PL-PAR                      week-INE/ACC  
 'I read several books in a week (INE).'; 'I read several books for a week each (ACC).'

I.e., the aspect is bounded at the collective level but unbounded at the distributive level of the individual reading events.



## Number quantifiers and O marking

- There is scope alternation between the number quantifier and the durative expressions:
  - The inessive-case "time frame adverbial" takes the quantifier 'several' under its scope: 'all books are read during the same week'.
  - The quantifier 'several' takes the accusative-marked temporal measure phrase under its scope: 'the reading of each book lasts one week'
  - By contrast, unquantified partitive O phrases fall under the scope of temporal measure phrases (the type 'He read books for a week.').



## Number quantifiers and O marking

- The quantifier thus "overrides" the unboundedness of the partitive case and renders the quantity bounded.
- The "expected" form of such O phrases would be the plural nominative (Yli-Vakkuri 1979):

<i>Lu-i-n</i>	<i>usea-t</i>	<i>kirja-t</i>	<i>viiko-ssa/*viiko-n.</i>
read-PST-1SG	several-PL.NOM	book-PL.NOM	week-INE/*ACC
'I read several [of the] books in a week (possibly: each).'			

- However, the quantified nominative O allows a distributive reading for the time-frame adverbial ('in a week each').
- Note that in the pl. partitive examples the partitive may reflect either an unbounded quantity (which is the dominant reading) or a non-culminating aspect of each reading event.
- With the singular partitive, the non-culminating aspect is the only reading.



## Number quantifiers and O marking

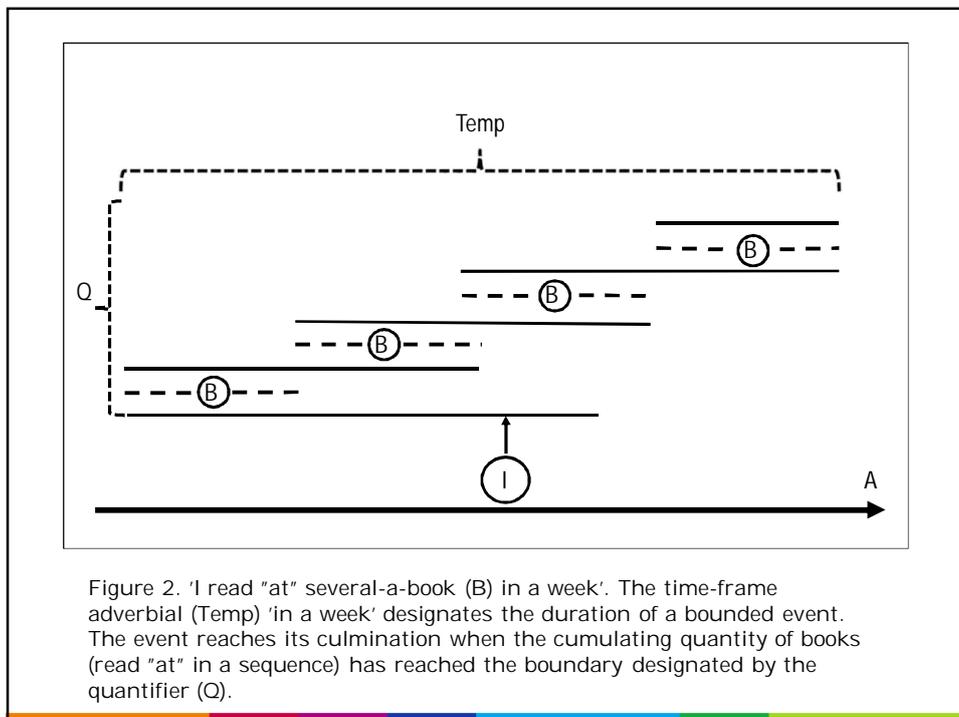
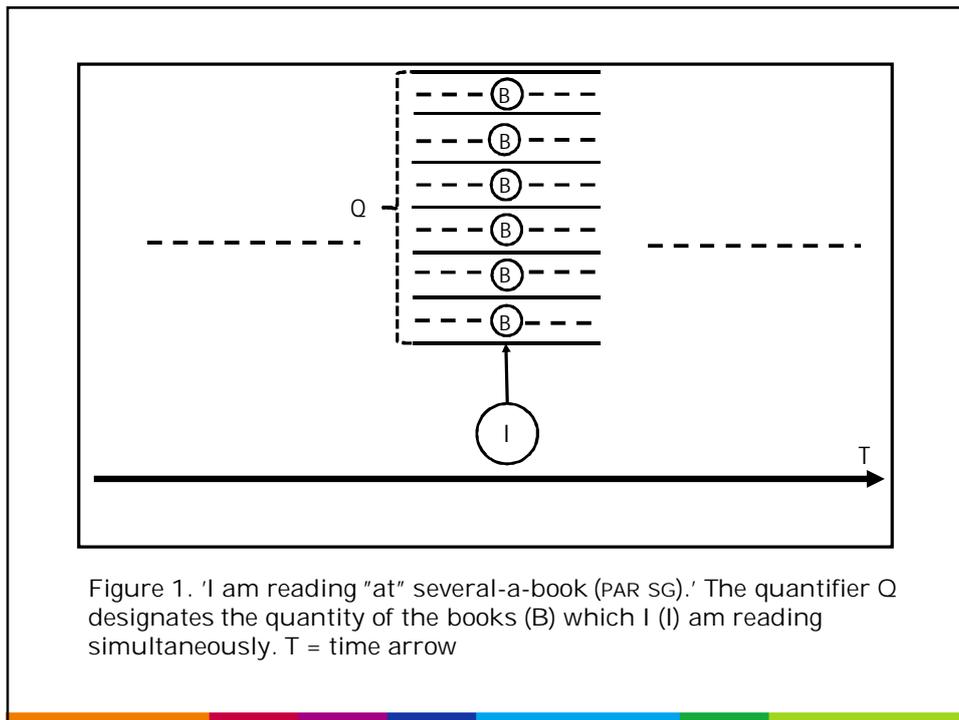
- ...in spite of this, a quantified partitive O in the singular nevertheless allows both kinds of temporal modifiers:

<i>Lu-i-n</i>	<i>usea-a</i>	<i>kirja-a</i>	<i>viiko-ssa / viiko-n.</i>
Read-PST-1SG	several-SG.PAR	book-AG.PAR	week-INE/ACC
'I read "at" several books in/for a week'.			

...where

- *viikossa* 'in a week' takes the quantifier under its scope: 'There were several books "at" which I read [without finishing any of them] during one week.'
- *viikon* is under the scope of the quantifier: 'There were several books at which I read a week each [and possibly finished it].'
- Maybe the following figures help to clarify...





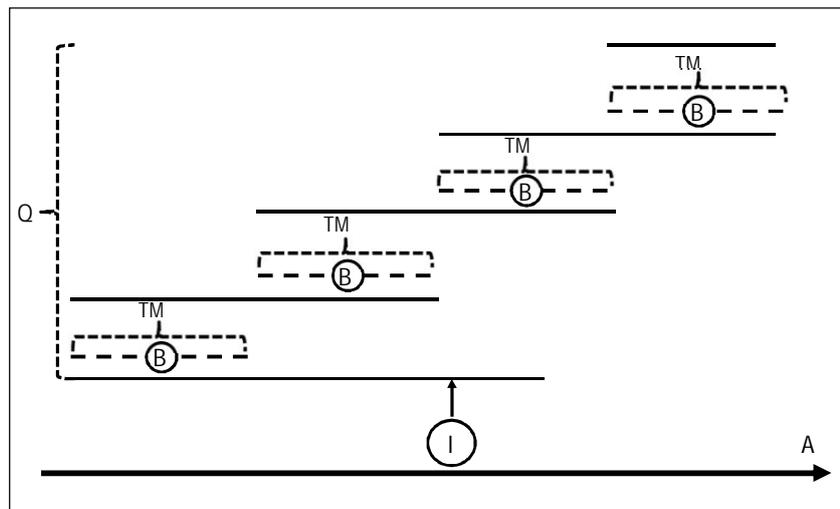


Figure 3.1 read at several-a-book for a week (each).’ The temporal measure phrase (TM) has a distributive reading when it falls under the scope of the quantifier ‘several’: each book is read “at” for a week.

## Number quantifiers and O marking

- A number quantifier establishes a higher-order event (that has individual events as its components).
- Temporal elements of duration can relate either with the component events or with the higher-order event.
- The quantifier can render the higher-order event bounded even if the component events are unbounded (imperfective, atelic), as shown by the SG.PAR object in the following:

*Trump rakasta-a usea-a nais-ta viiko-ssa.*  
 Name love-PRES.3SG several-SG.PAR blog-SG.PAR week-INE  
 ‘Trump loves several women a week.’

## Number quantifiers and O marking

- In such expressions the component events of 'loving' are atelic as such.
  - This is grammatically indicated by the SG partitive marking the O phrase.
  - The verb *rakastaa* 'love' does not allow an aspectual accusative object (outside the resultative Cx).
- What sets a boundary to the higher-order event (and makes the time-frame 'in a week' adverbial acceptable) is the accumulating quantity of women being loved during one week.
- Since the component events are aspectually unbounded, the example alternatively allows a temporal measure phrase (ACC), which then falls within the scope of the quantifier.

## Summary

- Unquantified (SG. or PL.) partitive objects:
  - Fall under the scope of temporal measure phrases, and
  - Reject time-frame adverbials (because non-culminating).
- Unquantified or quantified PL. nominative objects:
  - Reject temporal measure phrases (because culminating; for exceptions, see Huomo 2010)
  - May have scope ambiguities with time-frame adverbials.
- (SG. or PL.) partitive objects with number quantifiers in clauses that allow an aspectual partitive (= atelic or accomplishment clauses):
  - Allow both temporal measure phrases and time-frame adverbials,
  - The temporal measure phrase falls under the scope of the quantifier (because the partitive case makes/allows the sub-events to be non-culminating and thus subject to delimiting).
  - The time-frame adverbial has the quantifier under its scope (because only the collective, higher-level event can be conceptualized as aspectually bounded).

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